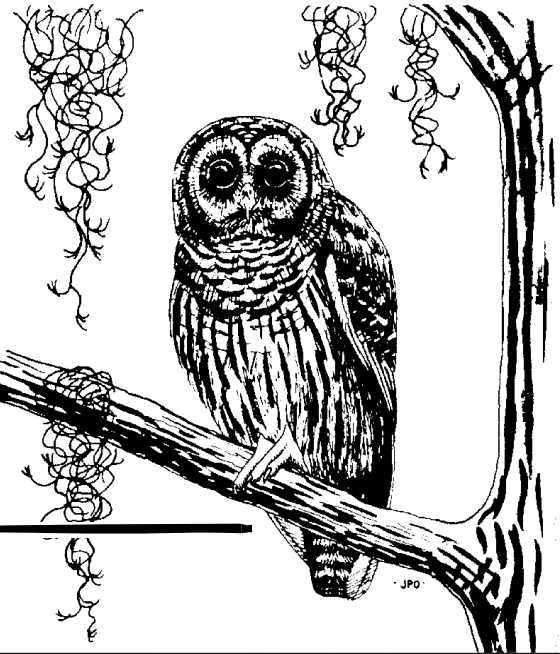


# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XLIX, Number 1

1st Quarter, 2022



Dave Patton and David Booth organized a spring cleanup work day at Peveto Sanctuary recently. The signs for the sanctuary were damaged in recent storms and needed to be replaced. The new signs went up perfectly. The water feature has been reworked and the trails are nicely cut. The sanctuary is ready for spring.!

*Thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers!*



# Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary Progress

In our last newsletter I mentioned the unsettling news that the sanctuary took a big hit by hurricane Ida. A great group of volunteers came out to help with the cleanup. Members of The Chainsaw Gang cut up some of the trees and cleared a path across the ditch and into the sanctuary. Clearing a path allowed us to have a culvert installed so we have a good access route. The large white oak trees that fell in the front of the sanctuary will likely become a permanent part of the landscape.

Information for the new sanctuary has been added to our website. You can find it at <http://braudubon.org/conservation/sanctuaries#ARWS>

Our beautiful sanctuary sign is ready! An Eagle Scout has taken on the project of building a sign kiosk so hopefully we'll get that up in a few weeks!

The preliminary trail map has been completed. Trails are marked with various colors of contractor tape at the moment. Soon we'll have more permanent trail markers. Please note that these are very primitive trails. They are muddy and there is often

standing water, as well as tripping hazards like cypress knees, fallen branches and vines. Knee high rubber boots are highly recommended.

We are also working on abatement of the invasive plant *Coral Ardisia*. We had a great turnout by helpers and got a lot done. Thanks a million to everyone that came out!

Our friend Jimmy Lawrence has donated two red mulberry trees to the sanctuary. We love that! If anyone has any other plants to donate to the sanctuary, please let us know!

Marie Varnes donated bird boxes for the sanctuary and Katie Barnes, Debbie Taylor, and Mark Pethke helped to put them up. We put one in the parking lot area for bluebirds and 3 of them further in the sanctuary for Prothonotary Warblers. Fingers crossed they have some tenants this year.

- Jane Patterson



Amite River Sanctuary hurricane recovery work crew

# THE BATON ROUGE CITY NATURE CHALLENGE

**APRIL 29 -  
MAY 2, 2022**

The City Nature Challenge is a four-day friendly nature competition that goes on across the globe April 29 to May 2, 2022.

Baton Rouge is competing against the Greater New Orleans area, the Southwest Louisiana area and 400+ other cities all over the world!

The goal is to see which city can show the most wildlife in their area, including wild plants, animals, insects, mushrooms, fish, turtles — everything! Let's show off Baton Rouge's amazing wildlife diversity and unique ecosystems.

## **TAKING PART IS EASY! ANYONE CAN DO IT!**

✓ Find wildlife. It could be a bird, insect, plant or any other sign of life.

✓ Take a picture. Snap a photo of what you find with your smartphone or digital camera.

✓ Share! Upload your observation to iNaturalist.org or with the iNaturalist mobile app and it will be automatically added to the contest project.

New for 2022! Now eBird.org and eBird app observations will count toward the Baton Rouge City Nature Challenge too.

Any observations made in these parishes during the official event period will automatically count toward the challenge: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

## **SPREAD THE WORD!**

Encourage your friends and family to participate in the City Nature Challenge. Show off your fun and finds in social media while you are making observations using these hashtags!  
#brnaturechallenge  
#citynaturechallenge

Share the City Nature Challenge Baton Rouge Facebook event with your Facebook friends and groups!

***Not familiar with iNaturalist?  
Here's a link to tutorials!***

<https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/video+tutorials>

Event sponsors include: Baton Rouge Audubon Society, Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater Baton Rouge, Coastal Plains Outdoor School, BREC, Port Hudson State Historic Site, Louisiana Hiking Club, LSU Ag Center Botanic Gardens, Wild Birds Unlimited, Purple Martin Conservation Initiative, LSU Hilltop Arboretum, East Baton Rouge Parish Library, West Baton Rouge Parish Library, Louisiana Master Gardeners, Louisiana Amphibian and Reptile Enthusiasts





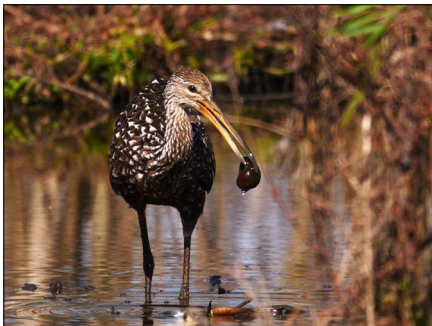
# Leaping Limpkins!

by Jane Patterson

**H**ave you located a Limpkin in Louisiana yet? It's all the rage!

These large wading birds have invaded our state, in search of another invader. The first Limpkins were reported in Louisiana on the Christmas Bird Count in late 2017 in Terrebonne parish. The following spring, a pair was documented making a nest just off a busy highway in Houma and they successfully fledged offspring. Now a boat trip into the swamps and marsh around Gibson, Louisiana will yield sightings of a couple dozen of these intriguing birds!

Rob Dobbs, non-game biologist with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, filled us in on the comings and goings of this species that is new to Louisiana in our March program. Prior to their recent expansion, the only US location for this was Florida and birders often had to take a boat trip to view these birds. Their excellent camouflage coloring can make them difficult to see in the swamps. But you'll know they're there by their voice! They make a loud wail and a series of loud clucks when conversing with each other or other Limpkins.



These birds are most closely related to cranes and rails. They have the long legs and neck of a wading bird and a strong double-chisel bill that is purpose-built for handling their favored prey: apple snails. In Florida and points south, where Limpkins have historically occurred, there is a native apple snail that they snacked on. But in recent years, another apple snail, *Pomacea maculata*, has found its way to our environment via aquarium owners who grew tired of tending to their tanks. This large fist-sized snail is a voracious feeder and proliferates rapidly. It spreads by laying eggs well above the flood line. These egg masses are bubble-gum pink and hard to miss amidst the greens, grays and browns on the natural swamp. These snails are spreading by shutting off their shells and floating from one body of water to the next; widespread flooding has only made this worse. The snails first appeared in Louisiana in 2006. Somehow, the Limpkins, normally a non-migratory species, got the word and started following their food supply across the Gulf South and beyond.

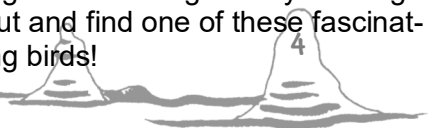
Limpkins are showing up all over! As of Rob's program in early March, Limpkins have now been reported in 19 southern Louisiana parishes. One was seen by many

as it fed on apple snails in the pond at the Walden subdivision in the heart of Baton Rouge. One showed up in a back yard in Lafayette. One in a mall in Metairie (hopefully that one found its way to the swamp!). But mostly they are being seen in the more remote locations of the state in our marshes and swamps. Rob said that many of the first sightings in new areas are from hunters and fishers who are curious about this new, loud, swamp inhabitant.



I go birding regularly at the Joyce WMA Swampwalk near Ponchartroula since I live here. I first heard Limpkins out in the marsh at this location on March 24, 2022. They have been regularly seen from the boardwalk over the past year. This year, almost precisely a year later, the first Limpkin nest has been found and the first set of babies has been sighted close to the boardwalk. The babies are precocial and are up and running as soon as they hatch, but are tended and fed by both parents. They closely resemble fuzzy cypress knees.

You can look for Limpkins reported near you by using the Explore Species Maps at [ebird.org](http://ebird.org). Change the date to the current year to find the most recent sightings. I encourage everyone to go out and find one of these fascinating birds!





# Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary Progress



**Katherine Gividen, lumberjack, helps to clear trees post-Ida**



**The Chainsaw Gang at work**



**Crystal and Jim attacking the invasive coral ardisia**



**Paul Davidson installs the duck boxes that were made and donated by the Girl Scouts**



# Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary Progress



Sue Broussard works on the culvert that she helped to get installed



The crew at the Legacy Live Oak at the heart of our sanctuary. This tree is estimated to be 350-400 years old



Jimmy Lawrence plants one of the red mulberry trees that he donated to the sanctuary.



Katie Percy and Debbie Taylor install a birdhouse for a Prothonotary warbler donated by Marie Varnes



## Featured Plant for Birds: Red Buckeye

**T**he only hummingbird that breeds in Louisiana is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. This bird winters primarily in the tropics of southern Mexico and Central America. The earliest scouts generally begin returning in the first two weeks of March. One of the plants that has emerged from its winter sleep and is leafing out nicely by this time is the very attractive large shrub or small tree: the native Red Buckeye. This plant blooms well before many other native plants and provides a significant nectar source for the returning hummingbirds. And a wonderful thing about this plant is that it produces spikes of blooms when it's only a few feet tall!

Red Buckeye grows in a wide range of soils in zones 6-9 and will do well in partial shade to full sun, but seems to prefer an understory site with a high canopy. It will accept moist soils but does not tolerate prolonged flooding. It grows easily from the large seeds. Propagation basically consists of dropping the seed onto the ground and stepping on it to ensure good contact with the soil. Red Buckeye is attractive in the woodland border, although in our area it can lose all its leaves by the end of August and basically sit dormant for half the year, so it's best to combine it with other plants that will fill in the spot in late summer and fall. It will be a showstopper in spring though, and the hummingbirds will appreciate your effort!



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:  
LOS Spring Meeting - April 22-23, 2022  
Hackberry LA - [losbird.org](http://losbird.org)**

# Board Member Elections - May 2022

by Jane Patterson

**Our annual** board member elections are held in May each year, as our fiscal year runs from July 1 - June 30.

I would like to solicit nominations from the membership for a new Vice President that would fill that position for a year and then plan to run for President the following year. Debbie Taylor is our current VP but would rather not run for the president position. I've been President far too long and would \*love\* for someone else to take on the role! By serving as VP for a year you will get to know the board and our processes and be prepared when the time comes. Please give it serious consideration! Below are the duties of the President. Please note that what is \*not\* required is knowing anything about birds! (although it certainly helps if you love them :) ) I do plan to continue my role as Education chairperson.

## Monthly

- Schedule and participate in BR Audubon board meetings Jan - May, Sept - Dec (summers off). Once a month is ideal
- Create an agenda for the meeting. Share ahead of time if possible.
- Present any items for a vote to the board. Call for votes as appropriate.

## Annual

- Gather information from other board members for the annual report
- Log in to the chapter portal and complete the annual report. Information must be entered by Jan 31 for the chapter to be eligible for the annual stipend

## Ongoing

- Answer correspondence addressed to the President
- Sign documents as an official representative of the organization

**I would also like to find someone to act as point person for our Programs.** We generally offer 7 programs a year (Jan - April, Sept - Nov). We have been offering the programs via Zoom and plan to continue to do so, but also to meet in person for those who wish to socialize. We also save our programs to our YouTube channel. So this role has technical aspects to it that I hope we can find someone to fulfill. Please let me know if you're interested. The duties are as described below:

- Contact potential speaker and arrange for a live or zoom presentation (~1 hr) on bird or wildlife subject. Other members of BRAS board

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Email List Change Update from Jane Patterson

**Baton Rouge Audubon Society** is converting from Mailchimp as our email management platform to groups.io. If you are a member of our email list, you should have received an email about this conversion. We have found Mailchimp a bit unwieldy and I personally have found that gmail which I use for personal email tends to stick Mailchimp messages into a Promotions folder no matter what I do so I don't see the messages. Hopefully using groups.io will change that and people will miss fewer messages from us!

To be added to the email list, simply send an email with only your name in the body of the email to [braudubon+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:braudubon+subscribe@groups.io)

If you have any questions, please email me at [president@braudubon.org](mailto:president@braudubon.org)

## Baton Rouge Audubon YouTube Channel

**Do you subscribe to the Baton Rouge Audubon YouTube channel?**

<https://tinyurl.com/28h2cjxt>

Subscribe now and get a notification when a new video is uploaded our channel. All of our monthly programs will be stored there, as well as other special programs.





## Board Member Elections - May 2022

(Continued from page 8)

- may be available to assist with this.
- Get bio from speaker for introduction
  - Get description of the program for the email announcement
  - Programs are held in Jan, Feb, Mar, April, Sep, Oct, Nov
  - Two to 3 weeks before the program, send an email to the braudubon and labird email groups.io lists to announce the program at Bluebonnet Swamp education building.
  - Include recurring Zoom meeting link (participants will register for the meeting)
  - Let folks know we will meet in person with refreshments for social half hour at 6:30 and the program will start at 7pm
  - Program will air in person, on Zoom, and on Facebook live
  - Optional: add the program to the BRAudubon.org website as an event under Events/Calendar (must be set up as an editor. Separate instructions will be necessary)
  - Optional: add the program as an Event to the Baton Rouge Audubon facebook page (must be set up as an editor)
  - The night of the meeting, set up computer at Bluebonnet Swamp education building for Zoom meeting. Connect to the overhead projector and the speaker system. Test by 6:45pm.
  - Upload completed recording to YouTube Channel



### Do you have your 2022 sanctuary patch yet?

Please send an email to our membership chair Heather at [membership@braudubon.org](mailto:membership@braudubon.org) if you would like to claim your patch!

### 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 spam, we promise! To be added to the email list, simply send an email with only your name in the body of the email to [braudubon+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:braudubon+subscribe@groups.io)

**AND** If you would prefer to receive the BRAS "Barred Owl" newsletter in electronic form **ONLY** (rather than the printed version thereby lessening your carbon footprint) please email our Membership chair and let her know! Drop her a line at [membership@braudubon.org](mailto:membership@braudubon.org)

Also please follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/BRAudubon](http://www.facebook.com/BRAudubon)

## Baton Rouge Audubon Officers

### President

Jane Patterson  
[president@braudubon.org](mailto:president@braudubon.org)

### Vice-President

Debbie Taylor  
[vice-president@braudubon.org](mailto:vice-president@braudubon.org)

### Treasurer

Mark Pethke  
[treasurer@braudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@braudubon.org)

### Secretary

Donna LaFleur  
[secretary@braudubon.org](mailto:secretary@braudubon.org)

## Committee Chairs

### Conservation

Richard Condrey  
[conservation@braudubon.org](mailto:conservation@braudubon.org)

### Education

Jane Patterson  
[education@braudubon.org](mailto:education@braudubon.org)

### Fieldtrips

Daniel Mooney  
[fieldtrips@braudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@braudubon.org)

### Hospitality

Debbie Taylor (see VP above)

### Membership

Heather Wilson 985/768-9285  
[membership@braudubon.org](mailto:membership@braudubon.org)

### Newsletter

Steve Mumford  
[newsletter@braudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@braudubon.org)

### Programs

Katie Percy  
[programs@braudubon.org](mailto:programs@braudubon.org)

### Sanctuaries

Dave Patton  
[sanctuary@braudubon.org](mailto:sanctuary@braudubon.org)

### Webmaster

Daniel Patterson  
[webmaster@braudubon.org](mailto:webmaster@braudubon.org)

### At Large Members...

Erik Johnson  
Marie Varnes  
Casey Wright

## The Barred Owl

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



Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society

**Baton Rouge Audubon Society**

P.O. Box 67016

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896

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Join online at [www.braudubon.org/join.php](http://www.braudubon.org/join.php)

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Permit No. 29

### Keep Your Membership Current!

If your membership expires, you will no longer receive *The Barred Owl*. We'll eventually 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](http://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](http://www.braudubon.org), or send this form with your check to: BRAS, P.O. Box 67016, BR LA 70896.

#### Patches!

Extra sanctuary patches or patches for NAS members are \$10 each and can be ordered by using the form to the right. 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
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total remitted with form

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

- Electronic version of newsletter **only** (do not mail)
- Add me to the BRAS email list (to be informed of field trips, etc.)

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

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

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

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

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