

# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

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3rd Quarter, 2022

## It's Winter Hummingbird Season

Erik I. Johnson  
Board-Member-At-Large,  
Baton Rouge Audubon Society  
Director of Conservation Science,  
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Since the 1999-2000 winter season, Louisiana birders have contributed to one of the longest-running community science hummingbird databases in the world. Tom Sylvest began requesting and compiling wintering hummingbirds reports through the LABird list serve. Soon after, Kevin Morgan helped the effort by creating an online SQL database framework that has been incredibly helpful for maintaining, querying, and reporting data.

Since 2013, Tom graciously allowed me to pick up the torch to continue tallying reports, which is now a 23-year database. The premise is simple – attract hummingbirds to your yard through plants and feeders, and report your wintering hummingbirds.

Today, reporting can be done in a variety of ways, including through the LABird list serve, emailing me directly at [Erik.Johnson@audubon.org](mailto:Erik.Johnson@audubon.org) and through various Facebook groups (e.g., “Louisiana Birds,” “Winter Hummingbirds – Eastern U.S.,” “LOS – Louisiana Ornithological Society,” “LABIRD”).

Wintering hummingbirding in Louisiana began even before the establishment of this database, when Nancy Newfield as one of the first licensed hummingbird banders in the country began investigating wintering hummingbirds starting in 1979. At the time there were only five species documented in the state (Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Buff-bellied, Rufous, and Allen’s), and through her work in documenting birds and increasing the awareness and popularity of winter hummingbird feeding, Louisiana now boasts 14 species on its state list.



Adult Male Rufous Hummingbird

**Please Send in your Reports!**

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# Change in LDWF Fee Structure for 2022

**Many birders access** LDWF-managed lands like WMA's or Elmer's Island Refuge because these are great places to find birds. Be aware that you need a permit to access these areas even if you do not hunt or fish. (This applies to state-owned and managed properties only; it does not apply to federal properties like National Wildlife Refuges).

If you are a hunter or fisher, you may already know that the permit structure changed for LDWF licenses starting June 1, 2022. One of the biggest changes is that each license purchased will be good for 365 days and not from July 1 - June 30 year.

The other big change is that if you are NOT a senior (over 60) even if you have an annual hunting/fishing license, you ALSO need a WMA access permit to hunt or fish on LDWF-managed lands such as a WMA, state wildlife refuge or state wetlands conservation

area. The annual \$5.00 Senior (60+) hunting or fishing licenses DO include WMA access. All of the LIFETIME licenses do include access to LDWF-managed lands.

If you're not a hunter / fisher and require access to lands managed then you need a WMA Access Annual permit at a cost of \$20 per year. It is required for everyone 18 and over INCLUDING SENIORS (this is a change, since 60+ seniors were not required to buy a Wild Louisiana Stamp). But Seniors can just get the \$5.00 annual hunt/fish license if they wish.

Bottom line is, for many of us who are over 60, you now need to buy some kind of license where you may not have needed to do so in the past. If you are a user of the LA wallet app on your smartphone, your electronic permit can be kept there so you don't have to keep up with a piece of paper.

Also it's absolutely essential that you do the WMA check in / check out either with the physical cards or with the LDWF WMA check-in app each time you visit a WMA. These statistics help LDWF know who's using their lands and will help influence how the lands are managed.

You can find the chart for the new fee structure from LDWF on their website at

<http://wlf.louisiana.gov>



## New BRAS Officers Are In Place!

Our annual officer election results are in! Your Baton Rouge Audubon officers for the next year are as follows:

- President** - Jane Patterson
- Vice President** - Katherine Gividen
- Secretary** - Donna LaFleur
- Treasurer** - Mark Pethke

Debbie Taylor, our previous VP, will stay on as a Board Member At Large. Many thanks to Debbie for her time as VP!

Our other appointed board members are:

- Membership:** Heather Wilson
- Conservation:** Richard Condrey
- Field Trips:** Dan Mooney
- Sanctuary:** Dave Patton
- Programs:** Colette Dean, Katie Percy, and Marie Varnes
- Education:** Jane Patterson
- At Large:** Casey Wright and Erik Johnson

# A Swift Night Out

Erik I. Johnson

Board-Member-At-Large, Baton Rouge Audubon Society  
Director of Conservation Science, Audubon Delta,  
National Audubon Society

**The Chimney Swift** is a long-distance migratory aerial insectivore (a bird that catches and eats insects while flying) that nests throughout the eastern United States. Prior to European colonization, it was thought to have primarily used old-growth trees and their large cavities to nest within. As those forested landscapes were cleared and replaced with houses, the swifts adjusted to nesting within Chimneys.

Today, however, more and more homes use wildlife-exclusion devices on their chimneys, and we no longer have extensive old-growth forests, causing Chimney Swift populations to be declining. In addition, most aerial insectivores and long-distance migratory birds in the United States are declining because of other stressors, like habitat loss on the non-breeding grounds and the widespread decline of insects in our environment.

To better understand Chimney Swift populations, Georgean and Paul Kyle begin an initiative over 20 years ago they called “*A Swift Night Out*”. This was designed to coordinate fall counts at migrating Chimney Swift roosts to identify important sites and better understand population changes. Audubon and the Louisiana Ornithological Society would like to



continue this tradition in Louisiana, and encourage people to count Chimney Swifts entering roosts at least once between September 9-11, 2022. Please share your count data with me, and if so inclined, also submit it to eBird.

Finding a Chimney Swift roost isn't always easy, but now is the time to begin looking. Listen and look for groups of swifts about an hour before sundown, and see if you can follow them (by foot or car) as sundown approaches to a central location. Often the roost tower will be fairly tall, but not always. Roosts are often in older structures such as incinerator smoke stacks in old factories or schools, old Victorian homes or businesses, antebellum buildings, and civic buildings that are no longer used.

After the sun sets, swifts will tornado above the roost for a couple minutes, and then just before dark, will dive down into the roost. It may take a few evenings of trial and error before actually locating the roost. A few birds may enter early and also may exit, but once the group begins to enter, they do so quickly. For smaller roosts, you may be able to count each bird that enters. For larger ones, you may have to estimate groups of 10, 20, or even 50 as they pour into the opening. Facing east with the remaining sunlight on the roost is often helpful.

If you have identified a swift roost and would like to volunteer to host a “count party” during the September 9th to 11th window, please let me know (Erik.Johnson@audubon.org) and I will help advertise it through Audubon's networks. This is a great opportunity to engage bird-curious people into bird watching and conservation. Happy swift counting!

## MEET OUR NEW VICE PRESIDENT!



**Katherine Gividen** is a Louisiana Master Naturalist, as well as an Advanced Florida Master Naturalist. She serves as vice-president on the Louisiana Master Naturalist state board, and president of the Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater Baton

Rouge chapter. She serves on the board of Atelier de la Nature as Secretary. She is the chapter coordinator of Cajun FrogWatch of Louisiana. Katherine received the Louisiana Wildlife Federation's Governor's Award for Conservationist of the Year for 2018 for her work to educate citizens about conservation in Louisiana.

# It's Winter Hummingbird Season

Please Send in your Reports!

(Continued from page 1)

The **Winter Hummingbird Database** is designed to track when birds first arrive and how long individuals stay. Having hummingbirds banded by licensed banders can help hosts keep track of those individual birds, and provides additional insights into migratory connectivity and between-year site fidelity. If you have wintering hummingbirds, I encourage you to report the following pieces of information to the

## Winter Hummingbird Database:

- Species
- Age/sex (if known, and send photos so I can help confirm)
- Location (Town and Parish)
- First arrived date (or first observed date if you haven't been keeping daily tabs)
- Last observed date
- If banded, by whom, and when

Note that Ruby-throated Hummingbirds count as "wintering" only if staying past November 15, but I do welcome reports of all other species from any time of year. Rufous are typically the first non-Ruby-throats to arrive each fall, often showing up somewhere in the state during the last week of July, so we have officially entered winter hummingbird season! See Table 1 for the average first arrival for five most common western wintering species.



Rufous Hummingbird being banded

**Table 1.** Average first arrival dates for five species of regularly occurring wintering hummingbirds in Louisiana, plus or minus the standard deviation.

## Species Average First Arrival Date $\pm$ Standard Deviation (days)

- Rufous Hummingbird Jul 30 7
- Buff-bellied Hummingbird Sep 3 26
- Calliope Hummingbird Sep 26 34
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird Sep 27 84
- Black-chinned Hummingbird Sep 28 16

Over the last 23 years, the **Winter Hummingbird Database** has accumulated 10,181 reports with Rufous and Rufous/Allen's (a term for when the two species cannot be distinguished) accounting for more than half of all the records. Wintering hummingbirds have been reported from 54 of the 64 Louisiana Parishes, with East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, St. Tammany, Lafourche, and Jefferson Parishes representing the top five.

So how did the winter of 2021-2022 stack up? After one of the best winter hummingbird seasons ever in 2020-2021, this past winter was relatively slow ranking 15th best across the 23 years tracked. A total of 312 individuals was reported across 127 sites, with the best site reporting 10 individuals (Elaine Bourque, Lafayette Parish). As usual, Rufous dominated, and it was a reasonably good year for Ruby-throated in second place, followed by Black-chinned, Buff-bellied, Broad-tailed, and Calliope (**Table 2**).

The two Louisiana Bird Records Committee "Review List" species were Broad-billed Hummingbird, with three reported, and a 3rd ever state record of Blue-throated Mountain-gem. Winter hummingbirds were reported from 29 parishes with East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and Calcasieu reporting the most individuals.

# It's Winter Hummingbird Season

**Please Send in your Reports!**

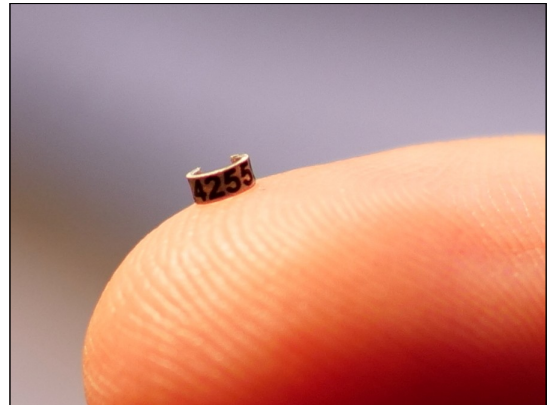
*(Continued from page 4)*

**Table 2.** The number of individuals reported for each hummingbird species in Louisiana during the 2021-2022 winter season.

## Species Number Reported

- Ruby-throated Hummingbird 49
- Black-chinned Hummingbird 33
- Ruby-throated/Black-chinned 8
- Rufous Hummingbird 74
- Allen's Hummingbird 1
- Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird 91
- Calliope Hummingbird 9
- Broad-tailed Hummingbird 13
- Buff-bellied Hummingbird 31
- Broad-billed Hummingbird 3
- Blue-throated Mountain-gem 1

I'm looking forward to see how the 2022-23 season shapes up! Western hummingbirds have started to arrive, so keep your feeders fresh, a sharp eye peeled, and please continue to submit your reports.



hummingbird photos by Jane Patterson

## **Yellow Rails and Rice Festival 2022**

**Registration is now open for the 2022 Yellow Rails and Rice Festival.  
Spots fill up quickly so register now before the window closes!**

I think every birder in Louisiana should take part in this special event. This wonderful example of a cooperative venture between birders and rice-growers has become an internationally known agri-eco-tourism event that has brought in birders from most other states and many other countries. The idea is that Yellow Rails, a notoriously hard bird species for birders to see, are present in the rice fields of southwest Louisiana in the fall. When the rice combines trudge through the fields, these small, shy birds are kicked up and give birders a quick look...but quick is good enough for a tick! Plus research organizations like the

Audubon society have started banding efforts during these events so these elusive birds can be studied. You may get to see a Yellow Rail up close and personal!



Visit <https://www.yellowrailsandrice.com/> for more information and to register.

# A Sweet Bouquet of Natives

by Linda Barber Auld,  
NOLA BugLady

In the last few years, a tremendous interest to grow native plants has occurred in the gardening world. A combination of my Geaux Grow Natives project, the founding of our local Native Plant Initiative (NPI-GNO), Susan-Norris-Davis' publishing of her book, "The Big Easy Native Plant Guide", and Louisiana Native Plant Society's Certified Habitat Program have helped to create this surge. Responding to the demand for these plants, local growers are producing a wider variety for the retail market. As an assortment became available, I began planting them to gain experience at how they perform in the garden setting. This little 6-foot x 8-foot patio bed has given me endless enjoyment as I watch each day to see which ones are blooming. Many of these are my first attempt adding these to my existing beds. As you can see, they

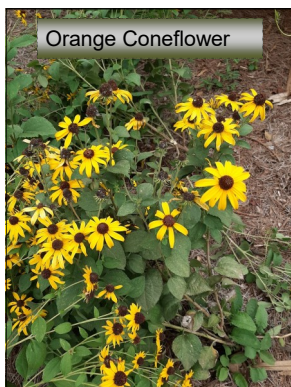


are really packed in there because in the wild this is how most of them develop. I laughingly say, "I do square inch gardening!"

The most interesting and unusual addition is the Hooker's eryngo, which is an annual herb in the Apiaceae (Carrot) family. Xerces Society reports that it is of special value to native bees and beneficial insects. Described as "prickly-leaved, one to two feet high, with gray-green, deeply lobed foliage, which later turns to purple.

Flowers are small clusters with spiny bracts. Found in Gulf Coast Prairies." Yes, I can confirm that they definitely have prickly leaves! The three locations where I planted it provided the information that it most definitely needs full sun. It became lanky, droopy, and just plain unhappy in the shady and partly shady spots. What I really love about this plant is how the lower bright purple petals seem to light up the flower blossom, showcasing its beauty.

There are many different ways to use these plants. You can start from scratch or add some to your established gardens. Native plants can also blend in very well with non-natives. I use this as an experiment opportunity to witness which plants the bees and butterflies choose. Next time you visit your local garden center, ask about their native plant section and discover all the fun for yourself!



Orange Coneflower



Hooker's Eryngo



Purple Coneflower

# Fundraising Request

## Our new Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary needs some help!

**William Monroe**, life scout and grandson of one of our members has designed a project that will benefit the sanctuary. He plans to install fencing around the parking area. He has approval from his council and is all set to go but needs help with purchasing materials. His budget is \$700 to buy materials. If anyone is inclined to contribute to this cause, you can send checks to our PO Box 69016 BR, LA 70896. We can also accept PayPal (use [webmaster@braudubon.org](mailto:webmaster@braudubon.org) to pay). If you send a donation, please also send an email to our treasurer ([treasurer@braudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@braudubon.org)) letting him know that the funds should be earmarked for the Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary.

We also have discovered that an oak tree near the front of the sanctuary and very near our newly installed culvert is dying and will need to be removed. No idea what that will cost yet, but we know it's not going to be cheap.

We also are just beginning the process of trying to get boardwalks and bridges installed at the sanctuary. It's going to be a big process and will require grant applications and lots of support. If anyone wants to support that effort monetarily, it would be appreciated!

## BRAS Program Schedule

Programs are held 6:30-8pm the second Thursday of each month (September through May) at the Bluebonnet Swamp education building (10533 Glenstone Place, Baton Rouge 70810) and via Zoom. The program recordings will be stored on our YouTube channel. Check back here for month-specific info!

- **Sept 8, 2022** - Karis Ritenour with Manomet.org will be speaking about shorebirds
- **Oct 13, 2022** - TBA
- **Nov 10, 2022** - Irving Louque with International Crane Foundation will speak about Whooping Cranes in Louisiana
- **Dec 8, 2022** - Holiday potluck dinner

# Gardening for Hummingbirds & Butterflies

by Donna LaFleur

**F**or the past 20 years my back yard garden has catered to nectaring visitors. Both butterflies and hummingbirds are welcome to find nourishment in my little oasis in the suburbs. I prefer to plant food sources rather than hang and maintain hummingbird feeders, and gardening has given me a setting to relax and enjoy the blooms along with my visitors. Learning about plants has been a direct result of my love for birds and butterflies, and my attempts to invite them and provide for their needs.



Cuphea

The top favorite plants for hummingbirds, at least in my back yard, are Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus arbors*) and Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta sp*). Both plants are structured to accept those tiny hummingbird bills, and provide ample nectar throughout the spring and summer. Other popular plants include Penta, Verbena, and Cuphea. They are all perennials, so once planted, reliably return each spring, and save you money in the long run.



Black-n-Bloom

In the last two years, I have been adding more salvias to the garden, so that now I care for over a dozen different varieties. They are an excellent nectaring plant, and come in a wide assortment of colors and sizes, so they can fit in the front or back of your borders.

*Salvia coccinea* is one of the easiest to grow, self-seeding and generous blooms make it one of the best salvias to plant. Varieties, including

“Lady in Red” and “Coral Nymph,” are easy to find at local nurseries. Two salvias that spread into a broad shrub are Pineapple Sage (*Salvia elegans*), with blooms of red (and yes, the leaves smell like pineapples), and Mexican Bush Sage (*Salvia leucantha*), which sends out fabulous, fuzzy, blue blooms in the fall. For large, show stopping blooms, try *Salvia guaranitica*. Beautiful shades of blue and purple can be found in these varieties: Argentine Skies, Black & Blue, Black & Bloom, and Van Remsen. Native plant growers shouldn't miss the petite Lyre-leafed sage (*Salvia lyrata*); light blue flowers are delicate, and the plant spreads its seed readily, making a naturalized colony over time.



Lady In Red

More hybrid salvias are on the market each year, offering new colors, and other features that are sure to tempt you to try out just one more. “Wendy's Wish” is one such hybrid I brought home, featuring lovely bright pink blooms and dark maroon stems that really stand out. Give salvias a try, the hummers will love them!

photos by Donna LaFleur



Salvia Coral Nymph



Wendy's Wish



# 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.

## 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)



### 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

Katherine Gividen  
[vice-president@braudubon.org](mailto:vice-president@braudubon.org)

### Treasurer

Mark Pethke  
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### Secretary

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

## Committee Chairs

### Conservation

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### Education

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### Fieldtrips

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### Hospitality

Debbie Taylor

### Membership

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### Programs

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& Marie Varnes  
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### Sanctuaries

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### Webmaster

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### At Large Members...

Erik Johnson  
Debbie Taylor  
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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## 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