

LOS NEWS



NEWSLETTER OF THE

Louisiana Ornithological Society

2003 SPRING MEETING

Cameron, Louisiana

April 25-27, 2003

Knights of Columbus Hall

The LOS will hold its 2003 Spring Meeting on April 25-27 with Friday and Saturday activities at the Knights of Columbus Hall behind Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church. Friday's registration will begin at 6:00 pm. There will be a hospitality table and a sales table. The meeting will begin at 6:45 with a speaker at 7:00pm. To help beginning birders and folks new to Cameron learn its many outstanding birding areas, we will have a field trip leaving from the Cameron Motel parking lot (near the restaurant) at 6:30am Saturday morning. We will carpool as much as possible. We will bird several habitats on both sides of the ferry. Registration for the evening meeting begins at 6:00pm on Saturday. The buffet will be served from 6:30 - 8:00pm. No food will be served after 8:00pm. The meeting will begin at 7:30pm. The Saturday evening speaker is Mark Bonta.

Saturday night presentation

35 Years after Monroe:

Birds and Birding in Honduras

The late Burt Monroe's magisterial 1968 Distributional Survey of the Birds of Honduras remains the centerpiece of Honduran ornithological knowledge. Mark Bonta will briefly summarize Monroe's contributions as well as what came before it, then discuss recent Honduran developments in both knowledge and conservation of avifauna. The talk is focused on Mark's 1991-present study area, the province of Olancho.

The first part of the talk will summarize Honduran avifaunal diversity using several categories (e.g. population status, scarcity, endemism, etc.) derived from the speaker's new annotated checklist of Honduran birds. Emphasis will be placed on the new areas surveyed since Monroe and the regions yet to be birded (a large portion of the country). Highlighted species include the Red-throated Caracara, the Scarlet Macaw, and the Honduran Emerald. The latter is Honduras's

only known endemic, and is found in threatened thorn forest.

The second part of the talk will cover the Honduran conservation movement, particularly avian conservation. Mark's field research into local knowledge and appreciation of birds ('ornithophilia') will be discussed as part of a hopeful solution he calls "conservation geography" that is being integrated gradually into village- and landscape-based conservation schemes.

Mark Bonta is Assistant Professor of Geography at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi. He was born and raised in central Pennsylvania, where he became a birder around the age of two. He participated in Christmas Bird Counts, Big Days, the Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas, and he compiled an inventory of the birds of Brush Mountain. Before becoming a cultural geographer specializing on Central America, he traveled to five continents, both as a nature-lover and as a student of human cultural diversity.

Mark accepted a two-year Peace Corps position in Honduras in 1991. He was assigned to the cloud forest conservation sector under leading Honduran environmentalist Jorge Betancourt. His site was the Sierra de Agalta National Park. He organized a bird inventory of the park and surrounding regions, where the current species total stands at 478. He was a co-founder of the El Boqueron Natural Monument.

After Peace Corps, he earned an M.A. in Geography from the University of Texas-Austin. Under Robin Doughty, he wrote a thesis entitled 'Shared worlds: people and birds in central Olancho, Honduras.' A vastly expanded version of this will be published in July 2003 as *Seven Names for the Bellbird: Conservation Geography in Honduras*.

Bonta earned a Ph.D. in Geography at LSU in 2001 and shortly thereafter accepted a job at Delta State. He continues to produce bird-oriented works,
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**LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
WINTER MEETING
LAKE CHARLES • JANUARY 24, 2003**

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by President Rosemary Seidler. She thanked Louise Hanchey for coordinating the meeting, Billie Fay Spencer and Ann Frohlich for working the registration table and Judith O'Neale. Pete Lund of the Gulf Coast Bird Club welcomed the group to Lake Charles.

Rosemary introduced the Officers and Board Members: Past President Marty Guidry, Vice President Karen Fay, Secretary/Treasurer Judith O'Neale and JLO editor Jim Ingold. Board Members Gay Gomez and Lee Ellis were unable to attend.

Louise Hanchey informed people about the field trips and where to meet the trip leaders on Saturday morning.

Sweatshirts donated by the Lafayette Museum of Natural History and Planetarium were given as door prizes to two lucky LOS members.

Jim Ingold gave an interesting program on The History of Ornithology in Louisiana. Jim mentioned the early European references, 1804-1806 exploration, McIlhenny Bird City, Marsh Island, James Tanner and the Ivory-billed Woodpecker Singer Tract, George Lowery, Robert Newman, Horace Jeter, Danny Pence, J.V. Remsen Jr., Nancy Newfield, Paul Leberg, and Frank Moore.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by Judith O'Neale

**LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
LAKE CHARLES • JANUARY 24, 2003**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 p.m. by President Rosemary Seidler.

Attending: Past President Marty Guidry, Vice President Karen Fay, Secretary/Treasurer Judith O'Neale and JLO editor Jim Ingold. Board Members Gay Gomez and Lee Ellis were unable to attend.

Judith presented the financial report. Organizational assets \$26,500.54 which included \$10,000 life member reserve and \$2,521 Ted Parker Youth Scholarship Fund. We received \$100 in donations from CBC group. It was decided that the 2002 CBC data will be published in the JLO. Marty Floyd will be assembling state data.

Vacant Board Member position for North Louisiana was discussed. Joan Brown will be asked to serve out the term vacated by Rosemary Seidler when she became President.

The Cameron East Jetty observation tower was discussed and Rosemary will continue to try and talk with Tina Horne regarding the status of this project.

Marty will be taking nomination for the Lowery and President's awards for the spring meeting. Several names were brought up for consideration.

The Ted Parker Youth Scholarship Fund did not have a recipient this year. Nancy Newfield hopes to have a nominee for the 2003 scholarship. There were no applicants for the Research Grant program this year. Send out notices of availability to state colleges and universities.

Roger Breedlove and Charlie Lyon hope to have the *Bird Finding Guide to Louisiana* to ABA by mid-April.

The 2004 winter meeting will be in Monroe, January 23-25, coordinated by Joan Brown and the Northeast Louisiana Bird Club. Need to check with Dave Patton to see if Lafayette is interested in hosting the 2005 meeting.

There was a discussion on speakers for the spring and fall meeting. Continued discussion regarding the changing of the fall meeting to earlier in the month to maximize migration.

The board decided that it would decline Jay Huner's invitation to join the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

It was suggested that Nancy Newfield write up something for the LOS News regarding the youth scholarship fund in hopes of getting more interest from our membership.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Submitted by Judith O'Neale

**LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
WINTER MEETING
LAKE CHARLES • JANUARY 25, 2003**

Several door prizes were given out during the banquet, including a mini-finch feeder from Wild Birds Unlimited in Lafayette and several bird prints donated by Kelly Bryan.

President Rosemary Seidler expressed our thanks to Louise Hanchey for coordinating the meeting, Billie Fay Spencer and Ann Frohlich for working the registration table and Judith O'Neale and Elouise Mullen for Sales Table.

Rosemary introduced the Officers and Board Members: Past President Marty Guidry, Vice President Karen Fay, Secretary/Treasurer Judith O'Neale and JLO editor Jim Ingold. Board members Gay Gomez and Lee Ellis were unable to attend.

Karen Fay read the checklist with a total of 160 species seen on Saturday by individuals and on field trips.

Roger Breedlove announced that he and Charlie Lyon are working on the *Bird Finding Guide to Louisiana* and hope to send it to ABA by mid-April.

The 2004 winter meeting will be in Monroe, January 23-25, coordinated by Joan Brown.

Marty Guidry introduced Kelly Bryan, who lives in Fort Davis Texas and has done extensive bird studies in the area of the Davis Mountains. Kelly gave an excellent slide and audio program on the birds of the Davis Mountains including some rare first record birds which he has discovered.

Submitted by Judith O'Neale

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2003 LOS SPRING MEETING

most notably Birding Honduras: A Checklist and Guide, co-authored by David L. Anderson (an ornithologist and fellow ex-Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras). Birding Honduras is the first full-length birding guide to the country, and includes a new biogeographic classification scheme as well as an annotated checklist of the 701 fully accepted Honduran species.

Submitted by Rosemary Seidler

LOUISIANA BIRDS WINTER 2001-2002

(1 December – 28 February)

Joseph P. Kleiman

[**KEY: boldfaced species** are on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List; documentation is on file, and eventual acceptance of these records is pending evaluation by the LBRC. **ad.** = adult; **imm.** = immature; **Lowery (1974)** = Louisiana Birds by George H. Lowery, Jr., 3rd Edition; **m.ob.** = many observers; **NWR** = National Wildlife Refuge; **ph** = photograph to be deposited in LBRC archives at Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science (LSUMNS); **vt** = videotape to be deposited in LBRC archives at LSUMNS; **WMA** = Wildlife Management Area. **Parish names** are in *italics*. This is the protocol used by Steve Cardiff when he wrote these columns for the LOS News.]

Before I start this report, I should mention that some records are missing and have not been found as yet. Unfortunately, therefore, this report will necessarily be incomplete.

A Common Loon was found on 29 December on Indian Creek reservoir, *Rapides* (RJB). Sewage ponds seem to be prime habitat for Eared Grebes. On 4 January, 3 were found at the Crowley Wastewater Treatment Facility, *Acadia* (BF, TG). These same observers also found a Neotropic Cormorant at the same place, again on 4 January. This cormorant is rare inland during the winter. An Anhinga was found on the Venice Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on 29 December, *Plaquemines* (JWB, RDP, GO, CR, LE, EW).

A Green Heron was found 1 mile east of Fort Jackson, *Plaquemines*, on 29 December (MS, CL). There were quite a few winter reports of Yellow-crowned Night Herons. Two were found in *Cameron* on 15 December (LE); 8 adults were found on the Grand Isle CBC on 21 December on the road to Elmer's Island, *Jefferson* (LR, BR, SR), and another was found near the Nature Conservancy property on Grand Isle (JPK, MG); another was at Bayou Sauvage NWR, *Orleans*, on 23 December (LE); and 2 were found on the Venice CBC on 29 December, *Plaquemines* (DPM, et al). A Roseate Spoonbill was found in the rice fields near Gueydan, *Vermilion*, on 4 January (VR, DL).

Ross's Geese have become so plentiful in the rice fields and marshes of Louisiana that cards are not submitted as often as they used to be. We had 3 reports: 2 reports of 2 birds each in *Cameron* on 15 December (JWB, CKL, GO) and one or more with a flock of Snow Geese across the Mississippi River from Fort Jackson, *Plaquemines*, on 29 December (CL, MS). A Canada Goose was heard near Echo, *Rapides*, on 29 December (RJB) and 5 were on a lake at the LSU Rural Life Museum, *East Baton Rouge*, on 5 January (AT, Mitch and Mae Lopez, Don Thibodeaux). There were several reports of Greater Scaup, 3 on 15 December at Recovery Lake, *Orleans* (PAW, CS), and 2 on the Reserve Sewage Pond, *St. John*, on 26 December (MW). A male COMMON MERGANSER was reported from West Cove, Sabine NWR on 15 December (CF and Chris, the Refuge Manager), *Cameron*, and a male and female were

found on the Pipeline Road Canal, *St. Tammany*, on 28 December (René Henry).

Ospreys winter in small numbers in Louisiana. One was found on Bayou Queue De Tortue, *Lafayette*, on 4 January (RBH). White-tailed Kite is a species more common in fall and winter in our state. On 18 December, 1 was found in northern *Calcasieu* (Jeff Boundy). Two adult Bald Eagles showed up on CBCs: 1 on Lacassine Pool, *Cameron*, on 14 December (JPK, RBH, MG, KF) and 1 on 4 January near Lyons Point, *Acadia* (MDF). Surprisingly, these were the first reports of this species on both the Lacassine and Crowley CBCs. A NORTHERN GOSHAWK was reported from *Evangeline* on 27 December (WLW, RJB). Several Broad-winged Hawks lingered in Louisiana: 1 at Bayou Sauvage NWR, *Orleans*, on 23 December (LE); 1 on 28 December in *St. Tammany* (Jane and Doug Wilds); and 2 on the Venice CBC, *Plaquemines*, on 29 December (DPM). The WHITE-TAILED HAWK found at its usual wintering spot, the Welsh Landfill, *Jefferson Davis*, in late November was seen again on 26 December and was still present on 10-12 January (GJP). An adult GOLDEN EAGLE was found on the Upper Ouachita NWR, *Morehouse*, on 4 December (Kelby Ouchley, Gypsy Langford). There were 4 GOLDEN EAGLES reported on the Lacassine CBC on 14 December, 2 in the air at the same time at Lacassine Pool, *Cameron* (JPK, RBH, KF, MG) and 2 in *Jefferson Davis* (JPS, BF). Another find on the Lacassine CBC was a CRESTED CARACARA, *Cameron* (DPM, BMM).

There were 2 reports of Sandhill Cranes from the Pine Prairie CBC in *Evangeline* on 27 December: 6 birds west of Chicot State Park (Bill Vermillion, Brigitte Firmin) and 10 east of Miller's Lake (DLD, SWC).

An American Oystercatcher was seen on the northwest side of Grand Isle, *Jefferson*, on 21 December (JPK, MG). Black-necked Stilts are continuing their range expansion. Thirteen were present at the Madisonville Sewage Plant, *St. Tammany*, on 29 December (DNP, RWP). An American Avocet was seen in *Vermilion* on 4 January (CGB). There were 2 Sanderlings, rare "inland" in winter, on Lake Pontchartrain, *Orleans*, on 23 December (DPM, KVR). These same observers found a much more interesting bird for Louisiana birders, a PURPLE SANDPIPER (DPM, KVR-ph) on the same day in *Orleans*.

A Pomarine Jaeger was seen offshore from the mouth of the Mermentau River, *Cameron*, on 17 December (DP, CL). A LITTLE GULL was found on the Cameron Sewage Ponds on 16 December (BMM, PAW). Another Sewage Pond in Crowley, *Acadia*, provided habitat for a Bonaparte's Gull on 4 January (BF, TG). On 16 December, a Sandwich Tern was at Martin Beach, *Cameron* (RD, PC). There were 2 reports of Common Tern in *Cameron*: a bird on Martin Beach on 16 December (BMM) and another at the mouth of the Mermentau River on 17 December (DP, CL).

White-winged Doves continue their range expansion in Louisiana. One was at the home of Gene Street in Laplace, *St. John* on 26 December (m.ob.) and another on the same date also in *St. John* (NLN, GO, Gene Street). As many as 70 were seen in downtown Baton Rouge, from 26 December to 8 January (MS).

What should be the status of Monk Parakeets in Louisiana? They are definitely here and breeding successfully. Is it time to add them to our state list? Eight birds were found in *Arabi, St. Bernard*, on 3 December (JOC, TDC); several others were also found in *St. Bernard* on earlier dates. They have also been reported from *Metairie, Jefferson*, on 15 January (Matthew Pontiff).

A Barred Owl, rare in southwest *Cameron* was found on 15 December in west Hackberry (GO, Bill Hemeter). A LESSER NIGHTHAWK was found near Venice, *Plaquemines*, on 29 December (DPM). A goatsucker sp., probably a Chuck-Will's-widow, was flushed at the Nature Conservancy property on Grand Isle, *Jefferson* (JPK, MG, CB).

Last winter was spectacular for hummingbirds in Louisiana. We are learning much about these population trends due to the many people who maintain their hummingbird feeders in the winter and especially due to the efforts of our dedicated hummingbird banders: Nancy Newfield, Linda Beall, and Dave Patton. There are too many reports to detail separately, but I will give a short summary of some of the results:

: BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD, 6 LBRC reports (DPM, NLN, LB, BM, SM, MLD) in *Orleans, St. Tammany, Lafourche, and East Baton Rouge*;

: CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD, 15 LBRC reports (John Conover, NLN, DLD, CF, LB, Yvonne and Al Bordelon, DP) in *Lafourche, East Baton Rouge, St. Tammany, Iberville, Ascension, Jefferson, and Lafayette*;

: BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD, 13 LBRC reports (LCB, NLN, DP, Olga Clifton, Trina Drury, Cathy Welles, Sue Wilson, DL) in *East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, St. Tammany, Iberville, Jefferson, and St. Martin*;

: ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD, 6 LBRC reports (DP, NLN) in *Lafayette, East Baton Rouge, Lafourche, and St. Martin*.

There were numerous reports of Buff-bellied (13 birds), Black-chinned, Ruby-throated, and Rufous Hummingbirds throughout the winter period.

The LBRC received a report of a GREEN KINGFISHER on 12 February (Jeannette Quaid) from *St. Mary*. This will be a new addition to the state list if accepted.

Two empid sp. were reported in Slidell, *St. Tammany*, on 28 December (Jane and Doug Wilds, Janis and Jerald Simpson). A SAY'S PHOEBE was found south south-west of Welsh, *Jefferson Davis*, on 14 December (CW). It was subsequently seen the next day (MS-vt), on 12 January (GJP), and then on 9 February (JPK). Vermilion Flycatchers, 12 individuals were reported from 14 December to 5 January (Winston Caillouet, Brian Henderson, NLN, John Owens, Michael Seymour, Joseph Smith, Walker Wilson, SWC, DLD, JW, DL, JPK, RBH, KF, MG) in *Cameron, St.*

Tammany, Acadia, and East Baton Rouge. A BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER was found on the Venice CBC, *Plaquemines*, on 29 December (BMM, PAW). A COUCH'S KINGBIRD (specimen, LSUMNS) was found on 27 December (SWC, DLD) in *Evangeline*. A Western Kingbird was observed in *Orleans* on 2 December (PAW, BMM) and another was found in Johnsons Bayou, *Cameron*, on 16 December (JWB, GO, LE).

A White-eyed Vireo was present in *Rapides* on 29 December (RJB). A BELL'S VIREO was reported from *Jefferson* on 13 January (DPM, BMM). A CASSIN'S VIREO was found in *Cameron* on 14 December (DPM). The final interesting vireo to be found was a Warbling Vireo at the LSU Bird Sanctuary on University Lake, *East Baton Rouge*, on 5 and 8 January (LCB).

There were quite a few reports of Carolina Chickadee in *Cameron* where they are normally uncommon. All the reports were on 15 December (MW, GO, BH, LE, Jessica Kilgore, JW). A Tufted Titmouse was heard at the Triumph Woods in Venice, *Plaquemines*, where they are unusual, on 29 December (JWB, RDP, CR, GO, LE, Ed Wallace). A Bewick's Wren was found on the Pine Prairie CBC, *Evangeline*, on 27 December (RJB). A Sprague's Pipit was observed near Hackberry, *Cameron*, on 15 December (JW).

A report of a TROPICAL PARULA in *Cameron* on 22 December was submitted to the LBRC (MS-ph). One of the fruits of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker hunt was the observation of a Black-throated Green Warbler at the Bogue Chitto NWR, *St. Tammany*, on 13 February (Alan Wormington). Two Yellow-throated Warblers were present at Fort Jackson, *Plaquemines*, on 29 December (CL, MS-vt). A Palm Warbler was found near the Overton Lock and Dam, *Rapides*, on 29 December (Kermit Cummings). A WESTERN TANAGER has been present at the LeBlanc residence in Baton Rouge for several years. It was seen on 27 December (JPK) and on the CBC on 5 January.

Two Lark Sparrows were videotaped on 29 December near Fort Jackson, *Plaquemines* (MS, CL). A Grasshopper Sparrow turned up on the New Orleans CBC at the old BFI landfill / Crescent Acres, *St. Bernard*, on 23 December (DLD). A Lincoln's Sparrow observed on 11 February on the Pearl River WMA, *St. Tammany*, was unusual for the area (Richard L. Knight).

There were 2 reports of BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK: 1 in *St. Martin* (RD-ph) from 30 November until at least 19 December, and 1 in *Lafourche* from 17 to 25 January (Jo Ledet). Also, a Painted Bunting was found near Fort Jackson, *Plaquemines*, on 29 December (MS-vt).

Unfortunately(?), we now have more evidence of Great-tailed Grackles expanding their range, as 10 were found on the Bossier, Caddo, Bienville CBC on 5 January (Hubert Hervey). The birds were just north of Elm Grove, *Bossier*. On the Sabine CBC on 15 December, at least 5 Bronzed Cowbirds were found in or near the town of *Cameron* (RS, LE, Elaine and Jessica Kilgore). Another Bronzed Cowbird was observed near Chackbay, *Lafourche*, on 30 December (SM, SR). There were 4 reports of Baltimore Orioles: a

female in Baton Rouge from early December to at least 5 January (CW); a male at a feeder in Reserve, St. John seen from early December (RS); a bird found in East Chackbay, Lafourche, on 30 December (SM, SR); and another one in Baton Rouge at Jefferson Terrace BREC Park on 5 January (Sally Allen, Janie Barre). A more unusual oriole for winter was the Orchard Oriole found near Duvic, Plaquemines, on 29 December (DPM, KVR-ph).

The list of observers follows. It includes those who reported hummingbirds but were not mentioned in the text.

Linda Beall, James W. Beck, J. Bergeron, L. C. Binford, Beth & Taylor Brantley, Christopher G. Brantley, Roger J. Breedlove, Steven W. Cardiff, Paul Conover, Jennifer O. Coulson, Tom D. Coulson, Miriam Davey, Dot DeBosier, Donna L. Dittmann, Rob Dobbs, Lehman Ellis, Charlotte Fanz, Karen Fay, John Fitzpatrick, Marty D. Floyd, Carol Foil, Bill Fontenot, Marty Guidry, Toddy Guidry, Robert B. Hamilton, Bill Hemeter, Gail Kinney, Joseph P. Kleiman, Dan Lane, Clint K. Loftin, Charlie Lyon, Mike MacDonald, Satya Maliakal, Beth Maniscalco, Sammy Maniscalco, Peggy & John McConnell, David P. Muth, B. Mac Myers III, Mary Nadler, Nancy L. Newfield, Susie Nowell, Glenn Ousset, Margaret Owens, Dave Patton, Gary J. Pontiff, David N. Purvis, R. Dan Purrington, Richard W. Purvis, Vicki & David Reed, Van Remsen, Christie Rhiel, Betsy Ristroph, Lisa Robichaux, Stephanie Rodrigue, K. V. Rosenberg, Lynda & Lew Roussel, Diane Sanders, Peggy Siegert, Curt Sorrells, Linda Stewart, Ron Stein, Mark Swan, Al Troy, Ed Wallace, Phillip A. Wallace, Melvin Weber, Jason Weckstein, Jim Whelan, Chris Witt

Member from North Louisiana. Joan is a native of the Monroe area. She was a 'backyard birder' for many years until she started going on weekly field trips with the Northeast LA Bird Club. After that, she was hooked on birding. She is now treasurer of the Bird Club, does volunteer work at both D'Arbonne and Black Bayou National Wildlife Refuges, and is compiler for the D'Arbonne Christmas Bird Count. The North Louisiana birders can contact Joan at: bljnbr@colla.com.



Louisiana Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program

Audubon is working to identify a network of sites that provide critical habitat for birds. This effort, known as the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program, recognizes that habitat loss and fragmentation are the most serious threats facing populations of birds across America and around the world. By working through partnerships to identify those places that are critical to birds during some part of their life cycle (breeding, wintering, feeding migrating) we hope to minimize the effects that habitat loss and degradation have on bird populations. Unless we can slow the rapid destruction and degradation of habitat, populations of many birds may decline to dangerously low levels. The IBA program is a global effort to identify areas that are most important for maintaining bird populations, and focus conservation efforts at protecting these sites. In the U.S. the IBA program has become a key component of many bird conservation efforts. Examples include Partners in Flight, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan.

The identification of IBAs is an important first step in larger bird conservation initiatives. IBA inventories provide a scientifically defensible method for prioritizing conservation activities and allocating limited conservation dollars to ensure the maximum benefit to birds.

The IBA program offers opportunities for participation by volunteer citizen scientists in projects such as monitoring programs, which provide much-needed data. Such participation promotes local stewardship and advocacy. The IBA program is therefore a starting point for site-based conservation efforts, and stakeholders are included in the process at many levels.

Conservation activities at IBAs reflect the unique circumstances of each site, such as size, location, and ownership. For example, public areas may be conserved by open-space acquisition and by working with land managers to improve habitat management practices for key species of birds. Private lands may be conserved through public-private partnerships such as easements and through landowner education.

New Members

- Linda Adrion, Shreveport, LA
- Ron & Victoria Moseley Bayless, Baton Rouge, LA
- Morris M. Clark, Pensacola, FL
- Ben C. Garmon, Mobile, AL
- Brian Henderson, Lake Charles, LA
- Pat & Mike Istre, Abbeville, LA

Life Member

Gay Gomez, Lake Charles LA
(LOS Board Member)

Deaths

Life Member: Walter N. Day, Norco LA

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You can help identify, monitor, and conserve Important Bird Areas. Here are a few examples of opportunities:

- ◆ Nominate a site or organize volunteers to fill out nomination forms for sites in our area. Contact the Louisiana IBA coordinators to find the status of nominations in your state.
- ◆ Organize a bird survey at an IBA or potential IBA for a watch List species.
- ◆ Adopt an IBA and help to develop a conservation plan for the site in partnership with IBA staff and local stakeholders.
- ◆ Conduct a habitat restoration project or invasive plant species eradication project at an IBA
- ◆ Advocate for land acquisition funds for an IBA where land acquisition is underway.
- ◆ Recruit and organize volunteers to help an IBA managed by a refuge, State Park, or land trust
- ◆ Advocate for changes in laws and policies that would benefit birds of concern at IBAs.
- ◆ Participate in a Christmas Bird Count in or near an IBA.
- ◆ Develop a birding field trip program to IBAs in your area.
- ◆ Write letters and articles about IBAs in newsletters, magazines, newspapers, and other outlets to teach the public about the important bird habitats in their area.
- ◆ Help provide financial support to an IBA program

Please contact the Louisiana IBA coordinators, Dan Hendricks or Michael Crago, for additional information or site nomination forms. You also can obtain information at www.jjaudubon.net/iba.htm

Dan Hendricks, Email: dhendricks@lsufoundation.org

Michael Crago, Email: mcrago@bellsouth.net



Beach Restoration Protects Peveto Woods Sanctuary in Cameron Parish

Have you seen heavy equipment and construction on the beach along Hwy. 82 on your way to Peveto Woods Sanctuary from Holly Beach? Have you noticed that the beach has grown in width over about a 5+ mile reach in the past six months?

What is going on? The Holly Beach Sand Management Project! Louisiana's Department of Natural Resources is restoring the beach area from Holly Beach to Constance Beach along Hwy. 82, a total distance of 27,900 linear feet of beach fill. The beach is being replenished by pumping in new sand on to the beach from an offshore source. In addition to restoring the beach, the project protects La. Hwy #82 and the vast marshland to the north of Hwy. #82. Hwy. 82 is built on top of a cheniere ridge which protects wetlands to the north.

What causes beach erosion?

The area in the vicinity of Constance Beach has been suffering erosion rates of approximately 5 feet per year from wave action, especially severe during winter storms. Natural sand sources that would replenish the beach have been blocked by man-made structures such the Calcasieu Ship Channel jetties which trap sand that formerly moved west with prevailing currents.

How will this project help the Sanctuary?

Though the project area stops east of the Sanctuary in the vicinity of Constance Beach, prevailing winds and westerly shore currents are expected to carry some of the newly placed sand west to the Sanctuary and beyond. This sand should help replenish the beach area behind the Sanctuary. The shoreline west of Constance Beach is not eroding as significantly as the beach within the project area and is somewhat more stable. Also the project protects Hwy. 82 which takes you to the Sanctuary.

How does the project work?

This restoration project replenishes beach by pumping in dredged material from an offshore borrow source. 1,775,000 to 2,000,000 cubic yards of sand were placed on the beach in designated areas. The sand material was excavated by the Weeks Marine, Inc. dredge "Beachbuilder," a special large and powerful dredge designed for this purpose. The sand material was pumped 5 miles through a sub-sea pipeline lying on the bottom of the Gulf, to the shore. Then the material was pumped approximately 3 miles via a land pipeline to build the eastern half of the project, then 3 miles via a land pipeline to build the western half of the project. Thus, some of the sand material was actually pumped through a combination of pipelines that totaled 8 miles in length (5 + 3). The new material was placed to construct a "plateau" of beach sand at the shoreline to elevation +5 for a width of 140-160 feet, with a gradual slope of 1 on 32 to the average surface of the water.

What is the source of sand?

The source of the sand material is an old sandbar deposited by an ancient course of the Sabine River. It consists of a mixture of coarse and fine sand material with some very minor amounts of clay and wood. The borrow source is located by exploration via core borings and soundings with samples of the material evaluated for suitability. Material in the borrow source comes from depths of -27 feet to -65 feet of water. The borrow source was located approximately 5.3 miles offshore at the approximate center of the project.

What was the cost?

Total Project costs at this time are estimated at \$18,600,000....Funding sources are: 50% Coastal Wetlands, Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act, 25% Coastal Impact Assistance Program, and 25% State Wetlands Trust Funds..

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Sugar Content of Hummingbird Plants in Louisiana Gardens

Dennis K. Demcheck

Hummingbirds have always fascinated me. I have deployed feeders for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds every spring since the early 80s, strictly following the standard 1:4 sugar:water ratio. In the early 90s I began to hear stories about hummingbirds from the western U.S. wintering in southern Louisiana, and quickly got hooked on the various methods of attracting and hosting them. A key ingredient is to plant winter-blooming perennials, and lots of them.

In 1998 I subscribed to the listserv Humnet and discovered that I was actually a moderate in a subculture of hummingbird fanatics. Every issue under the sun was discussed on the listserv, including the origin of the 1:4 sugar:water mixture. I was surprised to learn that nobody seemed to know where that formula originated or who developed it. All that was certain was that 1:4 worked. Further, there were reports that sugar concentrations greater than 1:4 may actually harm the birds. But I could find no reports documenting this.

In discussions with other wintering hummingbird fanatics I discovered that several people increased the percentage of sugar in their "winter-mix" to 1:3, 1:2, and even 1:1. The reasoning was that the birds needed extra energy for the cold winter days and nights, and also that high-sugar solutions froze at a lower temperature, reducing the chance that the birds would visit a frozen feeder. Cautionary tales sprang up, however, about possible adverse effects. The adverse effects included everything from swollen feet to liver damage.

A solution to this dilemma is to know what the hummers are drinking in nature. But there was a problem. Several people on the listserv bemoaned the fact that it was difficult to get information on the sugar percentages in their garden favorites. Apparently, total sugar percentages are so old-fashioned that the numbers are impossible to find. Of course the percent sugar of nectars in many plants had been investigated over 100 years ago. In the heyday of natural history in the 1800s many medical doctors were also natural historians. In fact, there were no sharp distinctions among doctors of medicine, scientists, and natural historians. These gentlemen-scientists investigated botanical subjects including nectar concentrations as naturally as treating the ill or recording the weather. But now it's hard to locate these kinds of data. It's easier to get on the Internet and read about biochemical pathways of radioactive-labeled sucrose isomers in a salvia than it is to find a total sugar concentration in a salvia. And doing-it-yourself seemed to require expensive scientific equipment and expertise. This was the beginning of my involvement. I thought, "Why not use a refractometer?" Refractometers are simple, reliable, and relatively inexpensive, beginning around \$150. They have no batteries, no moving parts, and operate on the principle of refractive index. A refractometer is basically just a prism in a tube you hold up to your eye. Place a drop of liquid on the prism, and light will be bent, or refracted, to an extent that depends on the amount of dissolved sugar. The reading shows up as a line in the eyepiece that crosses a concentration scale. It's easy. Sugar refractometers, called Brix refractometers, have long been used by the fruit and beverage industry to determine when fruit or juices are ready for market. They also are used by beer and wine makers. Refractometers

measure only the total amount of sugar in solution. They can not tell what kinds of sugars (sucrose, glucose, fructose, etc) are present, or in what relative percentages. But that was not my objective. I wanted to know the total concentration of sugars in various hummingbird-attractive flowers and compare that to the concentration in my feeders.

A refractometer is a simple tool to answer a simple question. But I soon learned that there are no simple answers in nature.

First I had to learn how to get nectar out of a flower. The standard method is to use capillary tubes. These are just small-diameter glass tubes that pull liquid up by capillary action, the same method that hummingbirds use. They are cheap and available from chemical-supply houses such as Cole-Parmer, Inc. Capillary tubes work well for relatively large tubular flowers like the big *Salvias* and *Abutilons*, but are difficult to use on small blooms. By trial-and-error, I found that 20-microliter (μL), 50 μL , and 100 μL tubes were the most useful.

I spent some frustrating hours trying to extract nectar through small-diameter tubular flowers like Firebush (*Hamelia patens*). Then I realized I could simply cut the base of the bloom with scissors and squeeze the nectar directly onto the prism of the refractometer. It worked fine. I now use several methods to get a reading. If all that is needed is a concentration, capillary tubes are the preferred, but not the only, option. Capillary tubes are essential, however, if individual blooms produce too little volume to get a reading. Most refractometers require at least 7 μL for a reliable reading. With capillary tubes composite readings are simple. For example, I can usually extract only 1 or 2 μL of nectar from the small blooms of a *Salvia coccinea*. By probing multiple blooms with a single capillary tube there is enough nectar for a reading.

My first day of measuring sugar concentrations in my yard was, frankly, shocking. I've spent the last year and a half confirming what I learned the first day. Hummingbird flowers have a lot of sugar in them.

My first refractometer could measure concentrations from 0-32%. I thought that would be an adequate range. After all, if we use a 1:4 mixture of sugar-to-water (20%) in our feeders, the average concentrations in plants should be about that. The very first flower I measured, a *Salvia guaranitica* hybrid called Remsen's Sage, was off-scale! Too high to measure! I was perplexed. Was the refractometer broken? But in the next few days I found that the *Salvia guaraniticas*, including Anise and Costa Rica Blue, were running 25%, 28%, and 31%. All of the salvia readings were near the top of the scale or off-scale.

(Time-out: Let's do the math on sugar percentages and ratios. First, our time-tested mixture of 1 part sugar and 4 parts water equals a solution that is 20% sugar. A common mistake is to say 1:4 is one-fourth, or 25%. Wrong. Think of it this way: If you have one part sugar and four parts water, you have a total of 5 parts. One of those 5 parts is sugar—1/5, or 20%. Similarly, 1:3 is 25% sugar, 1:2 is 33% sugar, and 1:1 is 50% sugar.)

Concentrations: I spent the summer of 2001 getting readings from as many nectar-producing plants as possible. Off-scale readings,

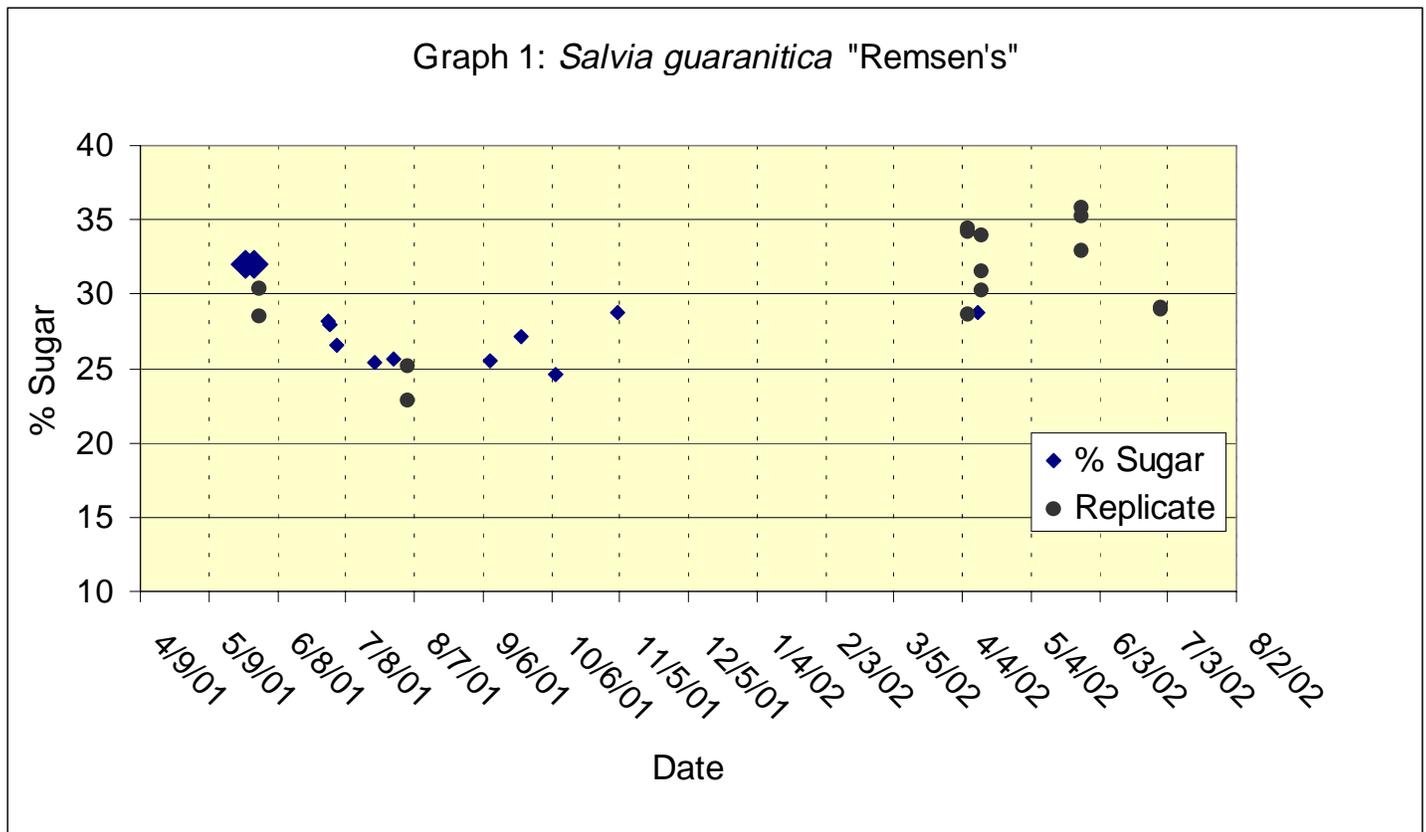
and they were common if salvias were the targeted plant, were recorded with great frustration as “Greater than 32%. In early 2002 I located and purchased 2 new Leica automatic temperature-compensated refractometers. One reads from 0-35%, and the other reads from 35-65%. Beginning around April 2002 those annoying ”Greater than” readings were gone forever.

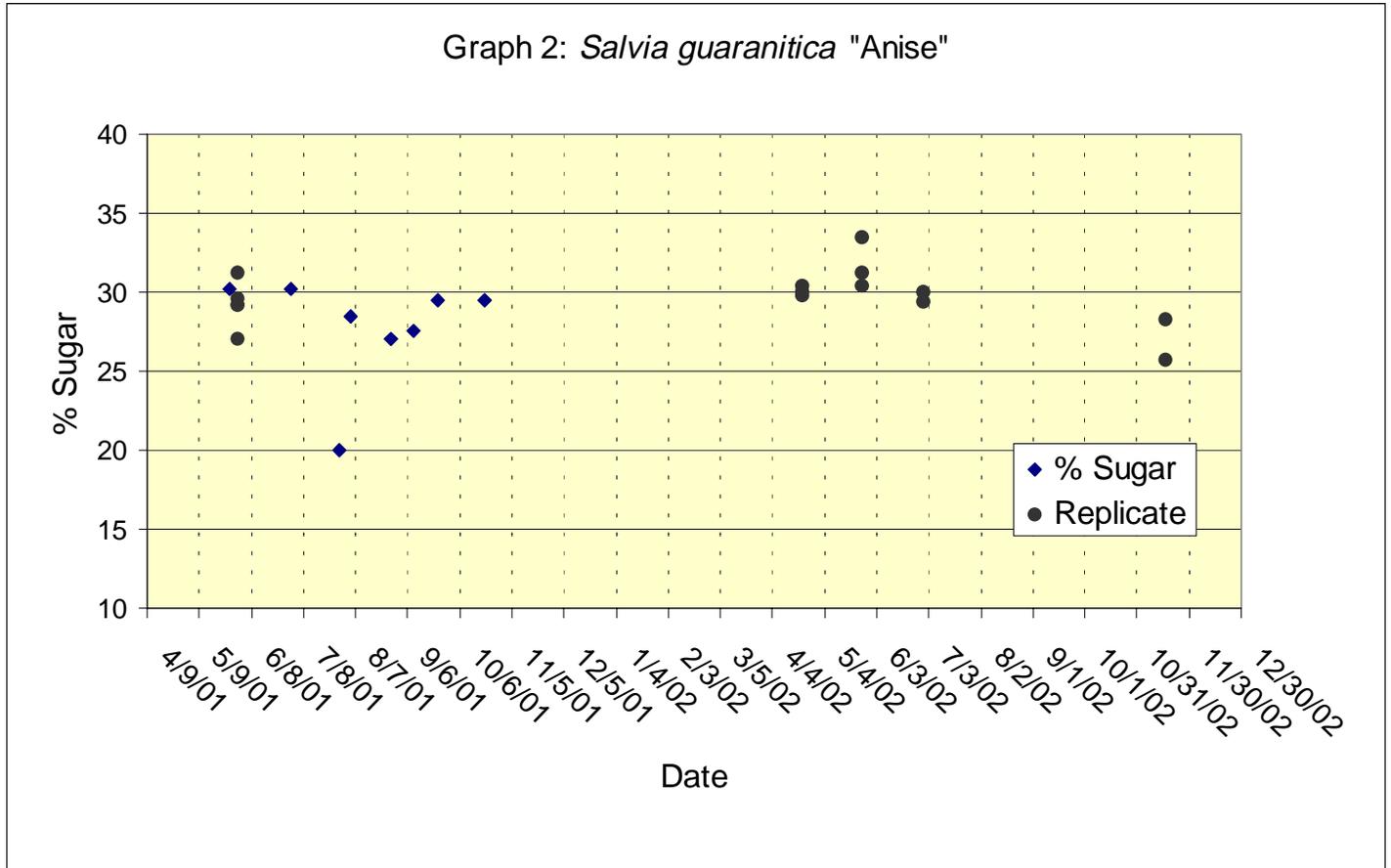
Graphs 1 and 2: *Salvia guaranitica* hybrid called “Remsen’s Sage” and *Salvia guaranitica* “Anise” -- The original Anise salvia stock was given to me by Nancy Newfield sometime in the early 90s. It has since spread in my hummingbird garden and is a key plant. The Remsen’s Sage was cultivated by Bill Fontenot of Prairie Brasse Nurseries in Carencro, La. Its exact parentage is unknown, but it is some kind of *S. guaranitica* hybrid, larger than Anise sage, with deep blue flowers. Bill found this volunteer growing in Van Remsen’s garden in St. Gabriel, La (hence the name Remsen’s Sage).

The two salvias shown on the graphs were picked to show the concentrations over time and also to show variability among different blooms on a single plant. Above all, the graphs show the dangers in using any single concentration to represent the desirability of a plant type to hummingbirds. Nature is too complex for a single number.

Graph 1, Remsen’s Sage: – This graph shows two kinds of variability; a variability over time and variability in nectar concentrations in different blooms during a single sampling time. The concentrations in 2001 range from greater than 32 % (the first 2 symbols in the 2001 dataset—graphed as 32% with larger diamond symbols) to 23% in August. There is a general decline in the percent sugar into the summer, and a recovery in the fall. What causes this pattern? Too much water? Too little water? Too much/little fertilizer? The seasonal pattern for 2002 is not apparent at all. The Remsen’s sage did not thrive in 2002 as it did in 2001 and ceased blooming in early July, for reasons unknown.

The second kind of variability is shown by the replicate measurements. These are readings taken at the same time but from different blooms on the plant. Sometimes they were close (from 35.8% to 35.2% on 5/26/02) and sometimes not (from 34.4% to 28.6% on 4/06/02). Why were the concentrations so different? All readings were taken in the morning. Rain and dew can dilute the nectar and give a low reading, so readings were always taken at least one full day after a rain.





Graph 2, Anise Sage – This shows another problem with getting a single reading. The concentrations for 2001 show a consistent pattern—with the exception of that 20% outlier on July 29. There was no obvious reason to ignore or discard that reading, as the bloom seemed to be fresh and plump. There was no rain or dew to dilute the nectar. It points out the danger of drawing conclusions from a single sample.

continued

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The following table lists maximum, minimum, and average concentrations, and number of samples from 30 plants. The Maximum and Minimum columns show the range or variability of sugar concentrations in a single plant type. In general, the more samples the greater the reported range. Perhaps more informative is the Average column (in bold). After many samplings a fairly narrow range of concentrations are repeatedly measured, and this shows up most clearly as an average. Individual blooms may have surprisingly high or low concentrations, but an orange *Abutilon pictum*, for example, generally has a sugar percentage in the low 20s.

Sugar concentrations for 30 selected plants, May 2001-November 2002

Plant	Minimum % sugar	Maximum. % sugar	Average % sugar	Number of Samples
Forsythia Sage: <i>Salvia madrensis</i>	28.2	33.6	*31.4	16
Anise Salvia: <i>Salvia guaranitica</i>	20.0	33.5	29.0	23
Remsens' Sage: <i>Salvia guaranitica</i> hybrid	22.8	35.8	*29.1	24
Orange Mountain Sage: <i>Salvia regla</i>	26.6	>35	*32.0	11
Mexican Bush Sage: <i>Salvia leucantha</i>	27.2	>32	*31.2	10
Mexican Bush Sage, "Waverly" <i>Salvia leucantha</i>	26.6	29.0	27.7	4
Belize Sage: <i>Salvia miniata</i>	21.8	>32	*27.1	7
Lady in Red Salvia: <i>Salvia coccinea</i>	30.4	38.7	33.2	3
Red Hot Sally Salvia: <i>Salvia splendens</i>	16.5	18.9	17.6	4
Van Houttii Salvia: <i>Salvia splendens</i>	18.6	28.6	22.3	16
Winter-blooming Shrimp plant: <i>Justicia sp.</i>	23.0	>32	*27.3	9
Summer-blooming Shrimp plant: <i>Justicia brandegeana</i>	23.5	>35	*29.7	11
Trumpet vine: <i>Campsis radicans</i>	27.8	34.3	*31.2	10
Giant Turks Cap: <i>Malvaviscus pendulaflora</i>	17.0	24.6	20.5	14
Sultan's Turban: <i>Malvaviscus drummondii</i>	16.0	>32	*22.2	7
Chinese Lantern, Orange variety: <i>Abutilon pictum</i>	14.9	26.0	21.7	23
Chinese Lantern, Pink variety: <i>Abutilon pictum</i>	19.5	40.1	*29.4	6
Cigar Plant: <i>Cuphea ignea</i> "David Verity"	24.6	28.0	26.8	6
Mexican Cigar: <i>Cuphea micropetala</i>	27.1	29.6	28.1	6
Yellow Justicia: <i>Justicia aurea</i>	22.3	25.8	24.5	3
Firespike: <i>Odontonema stricta</i>	15.6	21.0	19.2	10
Coral honeysuckle: <i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	18.5	24.0	20.6	13
Firecracker vine: <i>Manettia cordifolia</i>	13.1	29.4	21.7	8
Firebush: <i>Hamelia patens</i>	20.2	22.4	21.3	4
Lion's ear: <i>Leonotus leonurus</i>	15.3	19.2	16.9	3
Crybaby tree: <i>Erythrina bidwillii</i>	18.2	22.5	20.2	3
Cape Honeysuckle: <i>Tecomaria capensis</i>	17.7	18.3	—	2
Tree Tobacco: <i>Nicotinia glauca</i>	—	—	26.9	1
Cardinal flower: <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	13.7	15.2	—	2
Blue Porterweed: <i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i>	26.5	27.6	—	2
Red Morning glory: <i>Ipomea coccinea</i>	—	—	25.2	1

Note: * indicates that Greater Than (>) values were used in computing the average.

> 32% was averaged as 32%; >35% was averaged as 35%

Consistently high-sugar plants include: All of the salvias, especially *S. madrensis*, *S. guaranitica* in all of its varieties, *S. regla*, and *S. coccinea*. Also very impressive are the various Shrimp plants, including *Justicia brandegeana*.

Other consistently good performers include: Firespike: *Odontonema stricta*, and the Malvaceae, including Giant Turk's Cap: *Abutilon pictum*, and the orange Chinese Lantern, *Abutilon pictum*.

These selected hummingbird-friendly flowers seem to fall into two broad groups—the plants that have through word-of-mouth become the focal points of hummingbird gardeners with average concentrations of 27-33%, and a group of good performers with

average concentrations around 20%. Perhaps it is better to think of the nectar concentrations ranging from 10-40%, with two peaks: one around 27-33%, and another peak around 20%. *Justicia aurea*, for example, falls between these two groups. Interestingly, the plants with the highest sugar concentrations have all been selected, promoted, and shared by gardeners. All I have done is put some numbers on what gardeners are already doing. And I can't emphasize enough that I have sampled only a few of the many nectar-producing plants out there. This is a first step, not a final analysis.

Yields: By far the hardest question to answer is, "How much nectar is in a flower?" As soon as I began posting my sugar

concentrations results on Humnet, I was bombarded with questions, suggestions, and requests. The requests fell into 2 main groups:

1. Have you measured my favorite plant?
2. What is the volume or yield of the flower? Concentrations are nice, but without an idea of the amount of nectar produced per flower, you can't rate a plant on its desirability to hummers.

Answering question number one was easy. It was almost always, "No, but I'll try to get to it." But question number 2 was painful. The problem with yields can be summed up in one word: variability. Consider what hummingbird expert Dr. Fernando Ortiz-Crespo wrote in a post to Humnet about yields on July 27, 2001 only a few months before his untimely death in a boating accident in Ecuador:

"...I pondered some of the same nectar yield questions...The sources of variability in nectar samples is endless, i.e., botanical species and race, season, hour of day, age of flower, exposure to sun, wind, rain, and pollinators, wind speed and direction, soil moisture, air temperature present and past, etc., etc."

Some generalizations can still be made, however. I began to get some useful yield numbers after receiving help from Rob Rovanssek and Nancy Tindle on how to determine the blooms most likely to contain nectar before sampling. Previously I had simply started probing flowers more or less at random. Many blooms contained no nectar at all. Sometimes the bees and hummers got to the flowers first. I tried covering the flowers with netting and paper bags. That worked to some extent, but often the bags would fall off during the night, or the stems would break. Rising before dawn and getting the jump on my avian and insect competitors was the best method, but seldom-used. Then Nancy Tindle pointed out that you can actually see the nectar in salvias by simply holding them up to the sun and backlighting them. I modified that by using a small flashlight to backlight the blooms. I also learned from Ron how to recognize younger blooms most likely to contain nectar. Around October of 2001 using a combination of methods and gaining in experience I began to record yields.

The salvias earn their reputation as great hummingbird plants with high yields considering the size of the flower. Yields are recorded in microliters (abbreviated as μL), the standard measurement unit for capillary tubes. How much is a microliter? For reference, one drop from a standard glass eyedropper contains about 35-40 μL . Thus a *Salvia* bloom has a relatively large amount of nectar. The largest yield recorded was an *Abutilon pictum* containing 365 μL , equivalent to about 10 drops of nectar in a single bloom! Similarly, *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis* (Blue Porterweed) and *Savia coccinea* contain a lot of nectar considering how small the individual blooms are. *Odontonema stricta* (Firespike) and *Lonicera sempervirens* (Coral Honeysuckle) often contain less nectar than expected, considering the relatively large blooms. Some examples of maximum yields:

- Salvia guaranitica* hybrid, "Remsen's" – 50 μL
- Salvia guaranitica* "Anise" – 30 μL
- Salvia guaranitica* "Purple Majesty" – 40 μL
- Salvia splendens* Van Houttii – 15 μL
- Salvia madrensis* – 20 μL
- Salvia coccinea*, Lady in Red — 3 μL
- Abutilon pictum*, Orange Chinese Lantern – 365 μL

- Malvaviscus pendulaflora*, Giant Turk's Cap, – 110 μL
- Malvaviscus drummondii*, Sultan's Turban, — 90 μL
- Odontonema stricta*, Firespike – 10 μL
- Justicia brandegeana*, Shrimp plant – 15 μL
- Justicia sp.*, Winter Shrimp Plant – 28 μL
- Cuphea ignea*, Cigar Plant, "David Verity" -8 μL
- Cuphea micropetala*, Mexican Cigar — 45 μL
- Lonicera sempervirens*, Coral Honeysuckle – 15 μL
- Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*, Blue Porterweed – 1 μL
- Manettia cordifolia*, Firecracker Vine – 15 μL

Conclusions: Certainly there is insufficient information to recommend one plant over another. The division of plants into two major groups is based on the combination of high sugar concentration and high yield for certain plants, especially certain *Salvias* and *Justicias*, and my observations that hummingbirds clearly prefer them in both my garden and other gardens in south Louisiana.

In the winter of 2001-2002 I hosted a female Black-chinned hummingbird. Until a freeze got the salvias, she always hit the *S. madrensis* and *S. guaranitica* first. The concentrations were around 30-33% at the time, so that hummer was essentially voting for 1:2. Of course she also went to the Firespike, with its lower concentration. Every morning she fed from the *S. madrensis* first, then the Winter Shrimp Plant, and lastly the feeder.

Although the non-*Salvias* and non-*Justicias* I have sampled generally have lower sugar concentrations, I have found one major exception: the ubiquitous Trumpet Vine, *Campsis radicans*. That flower has the highest sugar concentration I have measured in a non-cultivated hummingbird plant (34.3%) and the volume of nectar also is large. This vine should serve as a warning of how limited and preliminary my efforts to date have been. I can't emphasize enough that I have concentrated my efforts on garden plants.

There truly seems to be a basis for the classic 1:4 ratio. Based on my 18 months of sampling selected plants, 20%, or 1:4, is a good mix that hummers routinely and perhaps predominately get in their lives. However, it is not what they clearly prefer and receive in our gardens. If people are concerned that nectar concentrations greater than 20% could be harmful, then we have to pull up most of the best hummer-attracting plants in our yards.

Finally, people ask me what ratio I use in my feeders. Based on my readings, I have switched to 1:3 (25%) as my year-round standard mix. 1:3 is well within the range of sugar concentrations found naturally in my yard. I am not recommending that all hummingbird enthusiasts change their ratios. There is no doubt that hummers prefer the higher concentrations, natural or artificial. I wonder, however, if there is more to the story than simple preference. Is it a case of going for that rich dinner with dessert, when a more sensible diet is advisable? The fact that many plants have a sugar concentration closer to 1:4 is intriguing. That is why I am cautiously avoiding 1:2 and 1:1. And of course, I have to close with the standard plea, Further Studies are Needed.

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