Can’t believe that summer is nearly gone. Some of our feathered friends have already begun the long haul back to the tropics. As we haul ourselves back to the coast, we can only hope that a few wrong turns birdwise, not peoplewise) will spice up our gathering.

The LOS will hold its 2004 Fall Meeting on October 29-31 in the seaside community of Cameron. Our Friday and Saturday evening activities will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Registration will begin at 6:00 pm on Friday and a hospitality table will be set up so you can come and enjoy a snack before the evening program begins at 7:00 pm. Please complete the attached registration form and return it, along with your registration fee, to Marriana Tanner Primeaux at the address listed on the form.

Registration for the Saturday evening meeting will also begin at 6:00 pm. The KCs will provide a tasty buffet dinner on Saturday night for the modest price of $12. Please add that cost to your registration fee if you plan to take advantage of this great bargain. The buffet will open at 6:30 pm. No food will be served after 8. The program will begin at 7:30 pm and the reading of the bird sightings list and business meeting will follow.

The birding around Cameron is excellent, which is why we make the semiannual pilgrimage to the land of the cheniers. Hope you can join us!

Friday night presentation: “Natural Colors: a High Speed Survey of Birds, Insects and Reptiles” by Dennis Demcheck from Baton Rouge.

Dennis Demcheck and Kay Radlauer 8934 Alma Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70809-1834 (h) 225.923.1437 (fax) 225.216.7003 kayrad@bellsouth.net

Dues are payable January of each year; Please check your mailing label.
Minutes of the LOS Spring Meeting

Cameron - April 23, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. by Vice President Bill Fontenet.

He expressed thanks to Marrian Tanneur Primeaux, Judy Fruge, Judith O’Neale, Joelle Finley, and Elisha Mullen for their work at the registration and sales tables and Janis Harrison for arranging for the hospitality table. LOS officers and Board Members were introduced:

Secretary Joelle Fontenet, Treasurer Rosemary Seidler, Board Members David Booth and Lee Ellis. Also introduced were LOS News Editors Kay Radlauer and Dennis Demcheck and JLO Editor Jan Ingalad.

Absent: President Karen Fay was unable to attend because of a prior birding commitment.

Bill acknowledged David L’Hoste for his continued great work on the LOS website and online store. You can buy bird books, binoculars and lots of birding needs at this online store. www.losbird.org

Bill introduced Marty Guidry who announced the 2004 award winners. The recipients of the President’s Award for spring 2004 were as follows:

1. David L’Hoste for his dedicated work on the LOS website
2. Richard Demey for his work with the Barataria Estuary Program
3. Rosemary Seidler for her work in the hospitality area

Bill introduced a proposal by Steve Cardiff to change the checklist to a “List of Record.” The list would include all birds seen Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes. The “List of Record” would contain date, time, location and number of individuals seen. “Out of date or uncommon birds” would require a 3 card.

An argument against the “List of Record” was made based on the fact that one could no longer compare the current list with the lists from past years.

Steve Cardiff said that this would be an experiment for now and the bugs would have to be worked out. Someone would have to volunteer to compile the list.

Bill called the checklist and Judith O’Neale tallied the results. 201 species were seen in Cameron Parish on Saturday and a total of 211 species were seen in Cameron and Calcasieu Parishes on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Bill introduced Juan Carlos Calvachi from Quito, Ecuador, who presented a video program entitled “Ecuador: A Birding Paradise.” Beautiful scenes of Ecuador and its bird fauna grace the two video screens. Juan Carlos also owns a Bird and Breakfast outside Quito and his own tour company.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Joelle Fontenet, Secretary

Cameron - April 24, 2004

Vice President Bill Fontenet opened the meeting at 8:30 p.m. giving thanks to Marrian Tanneur Primeaux, Judy Fruge, Judith O’Neale, Joelle Finley and Elisha Mullen for their work at the registration and sales tables. Janis Harrison was thanked for the Friday night hospitality table along with the Light House Bakery, Dauphin Island, Alabama, for their donation of 2 cinnamon rolls.

The officers and board members of LOS were introduced:

Secretary Joelle Fontenet, Treasurer Judith O’Neale, SW LA Board Member David Booth, SELA Board Member Lee Ellis and Past President Rosemary Seidler. Also introduced were the JLO Editors Jo Ingold and the LOS News Editors Kay Radlauer and Dennis Demcheck.

Bill acknowledged David L’Hoste for his great work on the LOS website and online store. You can buy bird books, binoculars and lots of birding needs at this online store. www.losbird.org

Bill asked that all new LOS members please stand to be recognized and welcomed. Cameron Parish Birders of River Ridge was welcomed.

The following special guests were welcomed:

Richard DeMay, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
Carolyn Lynn and Andy Loker, daughter and son-in-law of the late George H. Lowery.

Bill introduced Marty Guidry who announced the 2004-award winners.

The proposed LOS dues increase for LOS Membership starting in 2005 to be voted on at the October meeting:

 Regular: Family: $25.00
 Junior (under 18): $15.00
 Senior (over 65): $20.00
 Student: $10.00
 Library: $15.00 (Please add $20 for foreign subscriptions)
 Contributing: $100.00
 Sustaining: $100.00
 Life: $500.00
 Family Life: $200 (includes membership in local chapter)

The George H. Lowery Award for 2004 was presented by Marty Guidry and Carolyn Lynn Lovker to Donna Dittmann and Steve Cardiff for their continued efforts to educate ornithologists and promote field ornithology.

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DISCUSSION OF LARGER ISSUES

The Gulf Coast Bird Club held its first meeting on April 13th 1983 in Frasch Hall, McNeese State University, Lake Charles. Sixty-three people attended the first meeting. The Club constitution and by-laws were completed and adopted in the Spring of 1984.

Purpose

The Gulf Coast Bird Club is dedicated to promoting the knowledge and conservation of birdlife, other wildlife, natural habitats and natural resources; and to fostering an appreciation of our natural environment and the significance of its influence upon our lives.

Meetings and Field Trips

We welcome all who are interested in birding and nature to attend our educational meetings and participate in our field trips. The Club meets September through May on the second Thursday of the month, at 7 p.m. in Frasch Hall of the McNeese State University campus.

Field trips take place the Saturday after the Thursday meeting. Field trips will be announced at the meeting and at the club bulletin board. The Club also offers guided birding tours in Southern Louisiana. The Club has an Up Coming Meeting Calendar on the club’s website.

The club’s newsletter, Pelican Papers, contains a report on our field trip and club member “Bird Sightings” of the previous month. It announces the program for our upcoming meeting. The Sept. issue includes a club membership list. Currently the club has ninety-seven members.

Favoriite Birding Areas

In Calcasieu Parish: Alysia area: Hwy. 1133 (between Hwy 108 and Dave Dugas Rd.) ponds, bushes & trees for ducks. Anhinga, pitpis, migrating graybirds; Roads west of Hwy 27 (Choupique, Gum Island, Fabacher, Gum Cove, Charlie & Ellis Moss) for hawks, Caracara, White-tailed Kite, Great Horned Owls, Ring-necked Pheasants, and migrating songbirds.

Lake Charles Airport area: Roads between Hwy. 385 (Common St.) & Hwy. 27. Flooded rice fields contain lots of shorebirds, and migrating songbirds can be spotted in the trees. In these two areas after strong northwest winds have moved through, we have found western hawks and other small western birds.

In Cameron Parish: Black-billed Blackbirds may be seen at the Farmer’s Race Mill on the east side of Hwy. 397 below Hwy 90. In the Spring, the six parish parks are very birdy and have nice restroom facilities, but on weekends because of the many duck hunters and fewer birds. Agistage Park (W. W. corner of parish) has a pair of Swallow-tailed Kites that are sometimes seen there. We have seen them as far south as Fabacher Rd.

In Cameron Parish: We go to all NWR’s and Pereve Woods. Sabine NWR’s new one mile “Blue Goose Trail” north side of Headquarters with a large parking lot is a good inland stop for migrating songbirds. Common Nightjars also nest there.

Texas Areas: Sabine Pass-It is a 40 minute drive from Peveo. “Sanibel” is a causeway by Highway 441; Texas Point NWR; pilot station and the “Willos” raised walkway on Hwy. 87, part of State Rm State Park, (for migrating songbirds and shorebirds). Sabine Lake & Intracoastal Waterway (Gal.-Fish for loons & ducks). Beaumont-Tyrell Park & Cattail Marsh in Winter for ducks. In September Smith’s Point.

Lake Hubert watch tower is awesome! Thousands of hawks, Anhingas & kites pass over. We also have seen Magnificent Frigatebirds fly in over the tower from Galveston Bay. It is near Anahuac NWR.

Our club for the year 2004-5 included the state of Florida and Dry Tortugas, Trinidad & Tobago and all the coast of Texas.

I was also asked what was my best birding trip? All! Everyone all the time. I go, I get excited with the anticipation of perhaps seeing a new bird. And my most exciting bird spot? Everyone is that a new bird for me! When it happens. I can’t tell you how it feels. I am so excite.

Respectfully submitted by Joelle Finley, Secretary.
The Atchafalaya Basin Floodway in south-central Louisiana supports a diverse and productive freshwater ecosystem that is without parallel in this nation. Annual rice cropping is the basis for maintaining high biodiversity and productivity. As the river water spreads over the lower basin each year, it picks up detritus and nutrients from the forest floor and these serve as the food source for hundreds of bottom-dwelling organisms, crawfish, fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds. These organisms are highly dependent upon the 350,000 acres of annually flooded forest habitat. Headwater and backwater hardwoods and open areas are also of vital importance to habitat diversity in this area.

The US Army Corps of Engineers has recognized the importance of this ecosystem in the region, both from an ecological as well as an economic viewpoint. In developing the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana, project, in concert with cooperating state and Federal agencies, a balanced approach to addressing water resources problems in the Atchafalaya Basin has been implemented, while providing for the safe passage of the project design flood in an environmentally-acceptable manner. Congress has authorized our agency to provide the following project specific objectives for the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway:

1) To implement a flood control system that will pass the project design flood in an environmentally-sound manner and reduce to the extent practical, deposition of sediments that reduce the ability of the floodway to pass the project flood.
2) To restore, and protect the unique environmental features of the floodway, and maintain or enhance the long-range productivity of the wetlands and woodlands.
3) To control land-use changes, and,
4) To maximize public opportunity to observe and utilize the fish and wildlife resources of the floodway, by providing public access and public recreation facilities.

Much of the final three objectives listed above are addressed through implementation of the authorized Public Access Feature, contained in the 1982 Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System Feasibility Study/Environmental Impact Statement. This feature provides for the Corps of Engineers to purchase approximately 50,000 acres within this large overflow swamp for the public access to recreational and commercial activities, as well as to restore and preserve unique environmental values, and control land-use changes in the Atchafalaya Basin. Based on the 1982 study, the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System project as providing benefits that are national in purpose. As such, the public access feature was purchased at 100 percent Federal expense, and the Federal share of the resulting cost of operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation of this feature is 75 percent Federal.The Louisiana Ornithological Society recognizes and honors David L’Hoste on this 24th day of April 2004 for leading the LOS Wintering in Lafayette. For more information, interested in receiving any of our free educational products, please call us at 800 259-0869.

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What is your Colonial Waterbird Survey research? During 2004 and 2005, we conducted spring ground counts are conducted during spring months (April-June) to coincide with peak nesting season of colonial waterbirds. Although some species begin nesting earlier (e.g. great egret) and some end later (e.g. brown pelican) over these months generally provide the highest density of nesting waterbirds. What is your research time line? When will results be available to the public? The project runs through Sept 2005. The database is stored with Louisiana Natural Heritage Program. We have plans to publish the research side of the project (indicator species analysis, spatial methodology, etc.) but that may be over a year away from completion. What is “plasticity”? Plasticity in regards to waterbird colonies refers to the tendency for (or lack thereof) a species or specific colony to fluctuate spatially and spatially in size, species composition and location. Some colonies tend to remain the same year in and year out while other colonies fluctuate dramatically over a period of years. Additionally, some colonies may shift spatially over time. Lake Martin appears to be a good example of this as birds are nesting closer to the boulter land and further away from the entrance to Rookery Road than they have in years past. Currently, little light has been shed upon the underlying reasons for the plasticity of the waterbird colonies. Long-term data on the number of waterbird colonies suggest habitat changes both within and adjacent to a rookery probably influence size, species composition, and location. Habitat changes that affect waterbird colonies can be natural (e.g. drought, hurricanes) or human-induced (e.g. development). Disturbance may also influence the plasticity of waterbird populations. Social interactions within and between colonies can reduce the plasticity of a colony. Where are new rookeries? Our aerial and ground surveys have located new rookeries throughout the Atchafalaya Basin. For example, in 2004 we identified over 10 new rookeries within the Atchafalaya Basin as well as several new rookeries in southwestern Louisiana. Since 2004 and central Louisiana have not been surveyed in its entirety for almost 3 years, we found over 25 new colonies in our 2004 surveys. What is “visibility bias”? Visibility bias, in the case of waterbird surveys, refers to the difference in the detectability between white-plumaged birds (e.g. snowy egrets) and dark-plumaged birds (e.g. little blue herons). This bias is of concern in waterbird surveys because our eyes, either from an aircraft or on the ground, will generally sight the white birds first and may overlook the darker species. This bias can lead to possible underestimation of dark-plumaged species. Aerial surveys have several advantages over ground surveys. Because white and dark-plumaged birds differ greatly in their detectability, we are investigating “indicator species analysis” to determine if survey protocols can be adjusted to better accommodate the understanding of less visible species. Indicator species analysis is a method often used to look at species associations or the tendency for certain species to be found together. For example, preliminary results suggest great blue herons and neotropic comorants tend to nest together in the same colony. One of these species may serve as an indicator of the presence of the other species. It is in our hope that our research will yield certain “indicator species” that can be used to infer the presence of less detectable species. Further questions or comments are welcome. By Gay Gomez Whether you are an ornithologist working in the field or a birder on the road, getting away from home usually necessitates seeking out places to eat. Is there not, after all, a flock of hungry people who body can tolerate? If you find yourself getting hungry while traveling the Creole Nature Trail or to one of southwestern Louisiana’s birder hotspots, here are a few suggestions.

Return to Holly Beach and the northbound trip along Hwy. 27 west of Calcasieu Lake, birder traveling through Sabine NWR before reaching the next potential dining spot, Brown’s Grocery in Holly Beach. Brown’s is a large grocery with a fine deli that offers nicely dressed sandwiches, as well as tasty boudin and bakery items. I always enjoy a turkey sandwich here, along with some homemade cookies.

The road north of Hackberry brings visitors to the Elletts Bridge over the Atchafalaya Waterway and eventually into Sulphur, where number of restaurants await. When I have guests, I especially enjoy to eat alligator, I take them to Cajun Charlie’s, located along Hwy. 27 just north of the interstate. Cajun Charlie’s has a large buffet and good menu items (including the replet). A good choice is a local specialty: fried shrimp and cajun fish sandwiches, and fried appetizer items (including “poppers”). Be aware, however, that the “shrimp burgers” here are not in the style of those found in a New Orleans burger joint.

Dining Opportunities for Birders Along the Creole Nature Trail First in a Series First in a Series First in a Series First in a Series First in a Series

Sharpie, another of southwestern Louisiana’s birder hotspots, here are a few suggestions. Returning to Holly Beach and the northbound trip along Hwy. 27 west of Calcasieu Lake, birder traveling through Sabine NWR before reaching the next potential dining spot, Brown’s Grocery in Holly Beach. Brown’s is a large grocery with a fine deli that offers nicely dressed sandwiches, as well as tasty boudin and bakery items. I always enjoy a turkey sandwich here, along with some homemade cookies.

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What is your Colonial Waterbird Survey research?  What is your research time line?  When will results be available to the public?

Statewide Colonial Waterbird Survey: evaluation of temporal trends, visible indicator species and sampling biases.

Clay Green and Paul Leberg, Department of Biology, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

What is your Colonial Waterbird Survey research?

In 2004, we completed colony surveys for northern and central Louisiana. Since 1999, this team has initiated numerous projects including:• Developing educational information• Promoting avian tourism• Restoring habitat• Directing research projects Each of these programs has resulted in the development of partnerships. In some cases, these partnerships are quite large and include collaboration by many organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. Promoting avian tourism

Many of the efforts thus far have focused on the development of educational information that do two things: one, inform people of the importance of coastal Louisiana’s habitats to birds, and two, encourage locals and others to experience the great birding opportunities that we have to offer. This information comes in the form of videos, posters, maps, brochures, documents, web sites, and the newest – a bird calendar for 2005. This information has been distributed free of charge at festivals, meetings, conventions, and directly through the mail to anyone who requested it. You are likely to be familiar with some of these products, as they have received wide exposure and distribution. One example, “Wings Over the Wetlands” is a 30-minute documentary video on the continued on page 6

September 2004 LOS Newsletter

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Birding On US Army Corps of Engineers Properties in Louisiana:

I. ATCHAFALAYA BASIN - SOUTH FARM

By Christopher G. Brantley & Michael E. Stout

The Atchafalaya Basin Floodway in south-central Louisiana supports a diverse and productive freshwater ecosystem that is without parallel in this nation. Annual rice production in the Atchafalaya Basin has increased from 10,000 acres in 1938 to 665,000 acres in 2004, increasing its diversity and productivity. As the river water spreads over the lower basin each year, it picks up nutrients and the forest floor and these serve as the basic food source for the bottom-feeding organisms, crawfish, fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds. These organisms are highly dependent upon the 350,000 acres of annually flooded forest habitat. Headwater and backwater floodplains and open areas are also of vital importance to habitat diversity in this area.

The US Army Corps of Engineers has recognized the importance of this ecosystem to the region, both from an ecological as well as an economic viewpoint. In developing the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana project, in concert with cooperating state and Federal agencies, a balanced approach to addressing water resources problems in the Atchafalaya Basin has been implemented, while providing for the safe passage of the project design flood in an environmentally-acceptable manner. Congress has authorized our agency to provide the following project specific objectives for the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway:

1) to implement a flood control system that will pass the project design flood in an environmentally-sound manner and reduce to the extent practical, deposition of sediments that reduce the ability of the floodway to pass the project flood, rate, retain, and restore, and protect the unique environmental features of the floodway, and maintain or enhance the long-range productivity of the wetlands and woodlands, control land-use changes, and, maximize public opportunities to observe and utilize the fish and wildlife resources of the floodway, by providing public access and public recreation facilities.

Much of the final three objectives listed above are addressed through implementation of the authorized Public Access Feature, contained in the 1982 Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System Feasibility Study/Environmental Impact Statement. This action of the Corps of Engineers to purchase approximately 50,000 acres within this large overflow swamp for the public to access for recreation and commercial activities, as well as to restore and preserve unique environmental values, and control land-use changes in the Atchafalaya Basin. Based on the 1982 study, the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System project has been placed in Congress in Public Laws 99-88 in 1985 and 99-662 in 1986. Congress considers fish and wildlife enhancement measures carried out as part of the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System project as providing benefits that are national in purpose. As such, the public access feature was purchased at 100 percent Federal expense, and the Federal share of the resulting cost of operation, maintenance, renovation, or improvement of the feature is 75 percent. The non-federal project sponsor (State of Louisiana) is expected to bear the remaining 25 percent cost.

As of August 2004, some 1,429,282 cubic yards of earth material have been hydraulically pumped at a cost of $1,772,818 to construct half (60,000 feet) of the proposed project. This fall, after the site partially dries, construction equipment will be used to shape the ridge and flanking marsh. Soon, the grass seeds will be aired onto the site adjacent to the large sand plant growth and stabilize the ridge to reduce erosion. In early 2005, several different species of grasses including Subgrass, Seaside Paspalum, and Smooth Cordgrass will be planted throughout the site. These plants were selected for their salt tolerance, as it is expected that soil salinities will initially be quite high. After soil salinities have moderated, woody plants will be planted including, Live Oak, Hackberry, Red Mulberry, Black Mangrove, French Mulberry, and Yaupon.

This area is planned to be a premier birding destination. Plans include the construction of foot, bridges, interpretive kiosks, observation platforms, benches, etc. over much of the area. A small educational center next to LA 1 and the entrance to the site is also being considered. To promote this concept, the Greater Lafourche Port Commission has already set aside the entire property north of the Port as a wildlife sanctuary. No fishing, hunting, or any other use is allowed on the property.

In the not-too-distant future this site will be a true birder’s paradise. In fact, this goal is already becoming a reality. Many birds, including Least Terns, Black Skimmers, Wilson’s Plovers, and Common Nighthawks, are nesting throughout the area. Many other birds are foraging on the shallow hard-bottom edges of the ridge and the adjacent marshes.

For more information, please visit the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program’s web site www.btnep.org and click on “birds” at the top of the site. If you are interested in learning more about any of our free educational products, please call us at 800 259-0869.

Los Awards

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
February 18-20, 2005
The LOS Winter Meeting
in Lafayette

Because Mardi Gras is February 8th, the winter meeting was moved to a later date.

It will be held at the Best Western Hotel Acadiana and details will be posted on the website after the full meeting and be in the next LOS Newsletter.

Our Saturday night speaker will be Alain Clouette, Canadian film maker, who recently has been developing his own nature-documentary about the migration of birds through North America for French television, which will air next year. This movie was shot in part in Louisiana in 2004.

Please see the Registration Form on back page.

September 2004

LOS Newsletter

New Members

Karen Gay, President, LOS

Jackie Landry 1310 Henry Clay Ave, New Orleans 70118 504-891-5095
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Julie Talbot, 943 Azalea St., Lafayette 70506 337-232-3807
Ellen Toppert, 517 Wayne Drive, Shreveport 71105 318-865-2921
"..."
Bill acknowledged David L’Hoste for his continued great work on the LOS webpage and online store. You can buy bird books, binoculars and lots of birding needs at the online store. www.losbird.org

The following special guests were welcomed:

Richard DeMay, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
Carolyn Lynn and Andy Loker, daughter and son-in-law of the late George H. Lowery.

Bill introduced Marty Guidry who announced the 2004 award winners.

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Carolyn Lynn and Andy Loker, daughter and son-in-law of the late George H. Lowery.
Saturday night presentation: “Birds and Butterflies of the Texas Big Bend; What, Where and When”

Tonight we will travel to one of America’s premier national parks, Big Bend. At Big Bend, the Rio Grande River forms the distinctive outline that gives Texas one of the most recognizable borders in the world. It also forms the southern border of a huge national park that is mostly known in birding circles as the only nesting locale for the Colima warbler in the US. But the park is much more. ... especially when the desert is in bloom. And the park is home to many more unique species of plants, reptiles and insects.

Ro Wauer is uniquely qualified to take us on a tour of the park. Ro retired from the National Park Service in 1989, after a 32-year career as a park ranger, working at Crater ... on the Board of Scientists of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute and Advisory Board of the Big Bend Natural History Association. Ro has authored more than 170 nature articles for magazines and journals and 21 books, including Birding the ... Tours, so we are very happy to have him tonight to discuss one of his favorite places to look for birds and butterflies.

Can’t believe that summer is nearly gone. Some of our feathered friends have already begun the long haul back to the tropics. As we haul ourselves back to the coast, we can only hope that a few wrong turns birdwise, not peoplewise) will spice up our gathering. The LOS will hold its 2004 Fall Meeting on October 29-31 in the seaside community of Cameron. Our Friday and Saturday evening activities will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Registration will begin at 6:00 pm on Friday and a hospitality table will be set up so you can come and enjoy a snack before the evening program begins at 7:00 pm. Please complete the attached registration form and return it, along with your registration fee, to Marianna Tanner Primeaux at the address listed on the form.

Registration for the Saturday evening meeting will also begin at 6:00 pm. The KCs will provide a tasty buffet dinner on Saturday night for the modest price of $12. Please add that cost to your registration fee if you plan to take advantage of this great bargain. The buffet will open at 6:30 pm. No food will be served after 8. The program will begin at 7:30 pm and the reading of the bird sightings list and business meeting will follow. The birding around Cameron is excellent, which is why we make the semiannual pilgrimage to the land of the cheniers. Hope you can join us!

Friday night presentation: “Natural Colors: a High Speed Survey of Birds, Insects and Reptiles” by Dennis Demcheck from Baton Rouge.

There it was, out of nowhere, a bright red, leaf bird raised on stilts staring directly at me. The underbelly was sky-blue and the spindly legs were brilliant scarlet – a stark contrast from the black feathers of its back. This picture of a Sally Lightfoot crab, taken by Dennis on Isla Espanola, was so stunning, I prevailed on Dennis to show us a sampling of his favorite slides taken on birding trips or even a chance encounter in his yard. Whatever struck his fancy. So tonight, Dennis will regale us with his most colorful encounters with nature. He has been birding for more than twenty years and has had a keen interest in photography for even longer. If you have ever birded with Dennis, you quickly discover he has many talents and interests including astronomy, geology, botany and even the sugar content of nectar. And, he does a terrific job as our newsletter co-editor and resident cartoonist! (let’s hear it for Sluggo!!).

Saturday night presentation: “Birds and Butterflies of the Texas Big Bend; What, Where and When” by Ro Wauer from Victoria, TX.

Tonight we will travel to one of America’s premier national parks, Big Bend. At Big Bend, the Rio Grande River forms the distinctive outline that gives Texas one of the most recognizable borders in the world. It also forms the southern border of a huge national park that is mostly known in birding circles as the only nesting locale for the Colima warbler in the US. But the park is much more. ... especially when the desert is in bloom. And the park is home to many more unique species of plants, reptiles and insects.

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Submitted by Karen Fay, LOS President