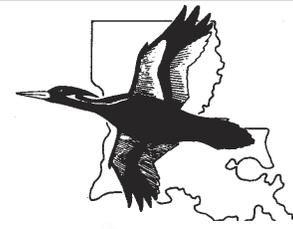


LOS NEWS



www.losbird.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE

Louisiana Ornithological Society

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Submission Deadline Date for
Spring LOS News is March 17, 2006

Journal of Louisiana Ornithology
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2006 LOS Winter Meeting LSU Shreveport, Louisiana Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, January 27-29, 2006

The Shreveport Society for Nature Study, Inc., Bird Study Group (BSG) is sponsoring the annual winter meeting.

The Power of Nature

Birders, more than many people, have intimate knowledge of the power of nature. Most of the time our experiences give rise to life-affirming images such as the awesome spectacle of thousands of cuckoos, thrushes, warblers, vireos and other migrants streaming past an oil platform in the gulf in April or dripping from trees at Peveto Woods. We may hear the noise and bustle of the heron rookery at Lake Martin in June or the rattle of the cane in fields near Vacherie after a million swallows have funneled out of the darkening November sky but have not yet settled for the night. But at the end of the summer, nature showed her other side – ugly and deadly. As far as we know our members are safe, though scattered and many have lost everything. I would like to thank Van Remsen for providing a forum for tracking information on members of our birding community after the storms. Our prayers are with those who lived in the hurricane-ravaged regions and face an uncertain future. And I'm sure all our members stand ready to aid anyone who needs our help in putting their life back together. Katrina and Rita left pain, death and destruction in their wakes, but we will rebuild – better and stronger than ever. Friendship, spirit, determination, perseverance – these are forces that can never be destroyed.

So, take a breather and join us for the 2006 LOS Winter Meeting January 27-29 at LSU Shreveport.

Friday, January 27, 6:00 p.m.

LOS registration will begin at 6:00 p.m. in the Science Lecture Auditorium at LSU in Shreveport with the meeting beginning at 7:15 p.m.

Bill Wayman has graciously produced a short, but spectacular, video on a pair of nesting Loggerhead Shrikes, which we will show while we are munching on our potpourri of goodies. This video sets a new standard for "getting stuffed."

Saturday, January 28, 6:30 p.m.

Registration will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the University Center at LSU in Shreveport. A buffet dinner will be served from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. The program and business meeting will follow immediately in the Science Lecture Auditorium at LSU in Shreveport.

Friday night presentation:

"Developing and Marketing the America's Wetland Birding Trail along the Louisiana Great Gulf Coast." by Carol Dwyer of Fermata, Inc.

Carol will discuss Fermata's role in developing Louisiana's Red River and Mississippi Birding Trails. Carol is Fermata's Director of Marketing and Trail Development.

Saturday night presentation:

"Evolving Species and Species Concepts (or why the AOU just won't leave your life list alone)" by Mike Braun.

First they were named the Tufted Titmouse (*Paris bicolor*) and the Black-crested Titmouse (*P. atricristatus*). Then they were lumped into Tufted Titmouse (*P. bicolor*). Now they are split into Tufted Titmouse and the Black-crested Titmouse once again. This scenario has been repeated with towhees, flickers, orioles, etc. Tonight Mike Braun will explain why it isn't a conspiracy to sell field guides that are almost always out of date before they hit the bookshelves. Mike is eminently qualified to discuss this topic as he is currently a research scientist at the Smithsonian using molecular genetic technology to study avian diversity. His research is focused in four areas: hybrid zones and speciation, molecular phylogenetics, genetic structure and diversity of natural populations and neotropical biogeography. An important goal of his fieldwork is to build and diversify the Smithsonian's genetic resource collection to support comparative molecular research. For the past 7 years, Mike's fieldwork has been focused on conducting an in-depth survey of

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Minutes of the Spring LOS Meeting

Friday, April 27, 2005
Creole, Louisiana

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 P.M. by President Karen Fay. Karen recognized all new members and guests. Marianna Primeaux, Judith O'Neale, Joelle Finley, Elouise Mullen, and Joseph Vallee were thanked for their help with registration. Karen Fay and Joelle Finley were thanked for providing the "Ecuador" food. Officers and members of the Board were introduced: Secretary Joelle Finley, Treasurer Judith O'Neale, Vice-president Bill Fontenot (not present), Southeast Board member Lee Ellis, board members Joan Brown and David Booth were not present.

Karen introduced the program "Birding in Ecuador and the Galapagos" presented by Karen Fay and Joelle Finley. Karen and Joelle traveled to Ecuador in July, 2004 and presented a video and slides of the trip.

Announcements:

1. The "Sureway Woods" have been purchased by the Orleans Audubon Society. Donations are being accepted.
2. A Garden Affair will occur May 3rd at Thistlethwaite Wildlife Management Area.
3. America's Wetlands Birding Trail maps are now available at welcome centers along I-10, visitor's centers and other major spots along the trail.
4. Karen Fay will lead the birding trip on Saturday beginning at 7:00 A.M. in the parking lot of the Cameron Motel
5. Volunteers are needed to clean up the meeting room so that LOS can get the deposit returned.
6. Lighthouse Road will not be open tomorrow due to work currently being done along the road. A van will take you out and will run hourly.
7. Lee Ellis will present the Saturday night program and will talk of his birding experiences in New Zealand.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 P.M.

Submitted by Joelle Finley, LOS Secretary

April 28, 2005
Creole, Louisiana

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by President Karen Fay. Karen recognized all new members and visitors. She thanked Marianna Tanner, Judy Fruge, Elouise Mullen, Joseph Valle, Joelle Finley and Judith O'Neale for their work at the registration table. The officers and board members were introduced: Joelle Finley, Secretary, Judith O'Neale, Treasurer, Rosemary Seidler, Past President, Lee Ellis, Board Member. Not present were Vice President Bill Fontenot, Board Members Joan Brown and David Booth.

Marty Guidry presented the LOS President Award to the following:

1. Sara Simmonds for her behind-the-scenes work for LOS
2. Kay Radlauer for the multitude of things she has done to promote birding and birds
3. The Butch Crain Family-accepted by Hilda Crain for their generosity in allowing LOS to bird on their private land

Marty Guidry and Carol Lynn Lowery Loker presented the George H. Lowery Award to Sid Gauthreaux for his work in radar ornithology. Sid was a student of the late George Lowery.

Lee Ellis presented a slide show on Birding in New Zealand. Lee visited many habitats in New Zealand and was the only person on a pelagic trip because of very bad weather! He shared with us the wealth of beauty and birds.

Marty Guidry called the checklist. A total of 206 species were seen on Friday and Saturday. (Weekend total was 226)

Announcements:

1. Mac Myers, representing the Orleans Audubon Society, announced that OAS along with The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana has a 6 month option to buy the Sureway Woods on Grand Isle. This is the last significant patch of oak woodland on Grand Isle. They need to raise \$500,000 and are asking for individual donations.
2. Baton Rouge Audubon Society has purchased the house next to Peveto Sanctuary and is asking for donations to help with the purchase.

Karen gave a big thanks to Tutt Savoie and her crew for cooking and serving the wonderful banquet.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Submitted by Joelle Finley, LOS Secretary

Make a note ...

Upcoming Meetings 2006

Winter Meeting – Shreveport

Jan. 27-29, 2006

Spring Meeting – Grand Isle

April 28-30, 2006

Election of Officers

Nominating Committee proposed slate of officers for LOS election Winter Meeting January, 2006

President: Bill Fontenot

Vice President: Nancy Menasco

Secretary: Joelle Finley

Treasurer: Judith O'Neale

Southeast Board Member: Ed Wallace

Louisiana Ornithological Society

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Winter Meeting – continued from page 1

the birds of Guyana. Mike received his B.A. from Cornell and his PhD. From LSU Medical Center. He also did postdoctoral work at the National Cancer Institute. Mike grew up in Texas and has had an avid interest in natural history from an early age. Let's hope he can convince us that all these changes really do make a lot of sense.

Submitted by Karen Fay, LOS President

Please see the Pre-Registration Form on back page of this newsletter.

Winter Meeting Location and Directions

Headquarters for the meeting will be Louisiana State University in Shreveport. The Friday and Saturday night programs and meetings will be held in the Science Lecture Auditorium at LSUS; the Saturday night banquet will be in the University Center. LSUS is located in southeastern Shreveport and is bordered on the west by Youree Drive (LA 1) and on the east by East Kings Highway; the main entrance is on Youree Drive about 0.4 miles south of its intersection with Bert Kouns Loop (LA 3132). Take the southern loop around the campus and park in the parking lot nearest to the KDAQ Public Radio tower and the LSUS Museum of Life Sciences. Signs will direct you to the Science Lecture Auditorium (SLA) and the University Center (UC). Field trips will depart from this parking lot. If you need assistance, there will be someone at the Museum all day Friday and Saturday.

Hotel Information

The Clarion Hotel, 1419 East 70th Street, Shreveport, LA 71105, will hold a block of rooms at \$72 per night until January 7, 2006; a free continental breakfast is included in that rate. Contact the Clarion at (318) 797-9900 or (800) 321-4182 for reservations; mention the Louisiana Ornithological Society to get the special rate. To reach LSUS from the hotel, go east on East 70th Street 0.5 miles and turn south (right) on Youree Drive (LA 1); proceed 1.3 miles on Youree Drive to the university entrance.

The Shreveport/Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau's phone number is 888-45-VISIT or 318.222.9391

Meeting and Dinner Registration

Registration for the winter meeting is \$10 since our costs have increased substantially. The dinner on Saturday is \$15. Call Karen Fay (225-784-0052) or Judith O'Neale (337-981-1011) if you need transportation. Even if you lost your wheels, we want you there!

Field Trip Registration

Field trip costs are included in your meeting registration fee with the exception of an additional charge of \$20 per person for the Red River by boat trip. Trips are limited to 12 participants each except for Red River by boat, which is limited to 15 participants. Additional field trip information may be found on the Bird Study Group website at www.birdstudygroup.org; click on the link "Just for LOS." Please register early. Field trips are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis.

How to pre-register:

Please use email or phone to pre-register so we can estimate numbers. Email is preferred.

Email: LOS_BSG@birdstudygroup.org. Or phone Nancy Menasco at 318-868-3255. Please do not mail your registration since mail delivery may be erratic at this time. Please pay at the door.

Field Trip Information

Field trips will depart from the LSUS parking lot nearest to the KDAQ Public Radio tower and the LSUS Museum of Life Sciences. All-day trips will depart LSUS at 7:30 a.m. and return by 5:00 p.m. and will include a lunch stop at a restaurant along the route. Morning trips will depart LSUS at 7:30 a.m. and return by 12:00 noon, except for the Bayou Bodcau trips, which will depart at 7:00 a.m., and the Sunday Shreveport Regional Airport trip, which will depart at 8:00 a.m. Afternoon trips will depart at 1:30 p.m. and return by 5:30 p.m., except for the Red River and Cross Lake by boat trips, which will return by 6:00 p.m.

Please bring two-way radios if you have them. Radios are especially important in caravans to keep all vehicles in contact and to allow the leader to alert participants to birds seen along the way.

All-day Trips (leaving at 7:30 a.m.)**Saturday**

- Northern Caddo Parish and Caddo Lake (car-side birding and light walking)
- Cross Lake area and Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park (car-side birding and light walking)

Sunday

- Red River NWR Bayou Pierre Unit, Lock and Dam No. 4, and Natchitoches Parish (car-side birding and light walking) – this trip down LA 1 is particularly suitable for participants heading south on Sunday as you'll be partway home. You may leave the trip whenever you like.

Half-Day Trips**Saturday morning (leaving at 7:30 a.m. except where noted)**

- C. Bickham Dickson Park (moderate walking)
- Red River National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters Unit and Red River Research Station (car-side birding and light walking)
- Red River by boat (\$20 fee)
- Yearwood Road and Bayou Pierre WMA (car-side birding)
- Eddie D. Jones Park (moderate walking)
- Bayou Bodcau WMA (moderate walking and some car-side birding)

Saturday afternoon (leaving at 1:30 p.m.)

- C. Bickham Dickson Park (moderate walking)
- Red River National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters Unit and Red River Research Station (car-side birding and light walking)
- Red River by boat (\$20 fee)
- Bishop Point & Red River NWR Bayou Pierre Unit (car-side birding and light walking)
- Cross Lake by boat

Sunday (leaving at 7:30 a.m. except where noted)

- C. Bickham Dickson Park (moderate walking)
- Red River National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters Unit and Red River Research Station (car-side birding and light walking)
- Yearwood Road and Bayou Pierre WMA (car-side birding)
- Eddie D. Jones Park (moderate walking)

- Bayou Bodcau WMA (moderate walking and some car-side birding) – this trip is particularly suitable for folks heading east on Sunday
- Cross Lake by boat
- Shreveport Regional Airport for Smith’s Longspurs and Sprague’s Pipits (moderate walking)

LOS Winter 2006 Field Trip Schedule:

FIELD TRIP	Saturday morning	Saturday afternoon	Sunday morning
Northern Caddo Parish & Caddo Lake	All day		
Cross Lake area by caravan	All day		
C. Bickham Dickson Park	X	X	X
Red River NWR Headquarters Unit & Red River Research Station			
River Research Station	X	X	X
Red River by boat (\$20)	X	X	
Yearwood Road and Bayou Pierre WMA	X		X
Eddie Jones Park	X		X
Bayou Bodcau WMA	X		X
Bishop Point & Red River NWR Bayou Pierre Unit		X	
Cross Lake by boat		X	X
Red River NWR Bayou Pierre Unit, Lock & Dam No. 4, & Natchitoches Parish			X
Shreveport Regional Airport			X

Registration and field trip information submitted by Nancy Menasco, 318-868-3255

Please see the Pre-Registration Form on back page of this newsletter.

BOOK REVIEW



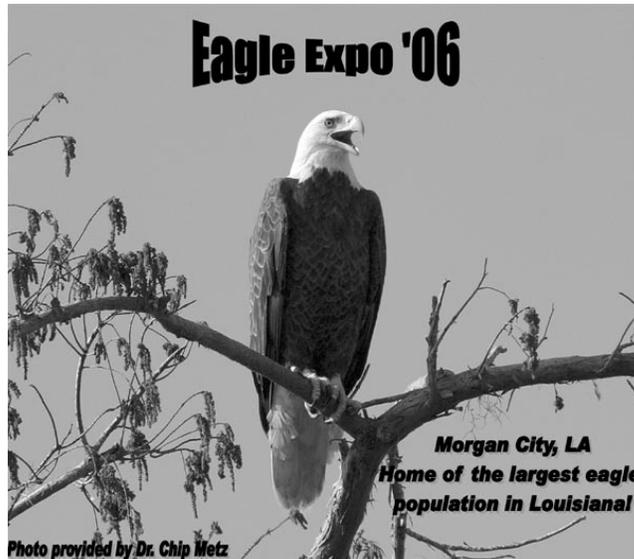
by Elouise Mullen

Title: **LOUISIANA BIRD WATCHING: A Year-Round Guide**
 Author: Bill Thompson III
 Publisher: Cool Springs Press
 Price: \$11.55

A very informative section was authored by Bill Fontenot, current Vice President of LOS. Bill’s contribution in LOUISIANA BIRD WATCHING is an excellent overview of Louisiana’s geographical location and why it is a natural bird watcher’s paradise. The ecoregions are presented and in each region, habitats and bird species expected to be found there are listed. A map of Louisiana shows the ecoregions and their positions in the State.

Also, Bill birds the State by seasons. During each season, he provides bird species usually found, including regular residents and migratory fly-throughs.

Other areas in the book on bird houses, feeders, and photographic profiles were interesting and helpful. I think this book would be a useful supplement to a birder’s field guide.



- Boat tours into Lake Palourde, Lake Verret, Grassy Lake, Intracoastal Waterway via Bayou Black, and the Atchafalaya Basin to view eagle’s nests
- Presentations on the American Bald Eagle, wildlife, flora, fauna and the culture of the area by wildlife professionals & photographers
- Guided tour of Brownell Memorial Park, a designated birding sanctuary
- Hospitality hour, dinner and breakfast

Admission:

Friday only: \$50.00 / Saturday only: \$50.00 / Friday & Saturday: \$65.00

Contact: Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau
 www.cajuncoast.com (985) 395-4905 or (800) 256-2931

National Audubon's Coastal Bird Conservation Program in Louisiana: A First Comprehensive Breeding Census of Beach Nesting Birds in Coastal Louisiana

by Margo Zdravkovic

The first step in preserving coastal bird populations begins with identifying nesting habitats and taking an accurate census of breeding pairs. Audubon's Coastal Bird Conservation Program has identified the Gulf Coast as its first high priority region to increase conservation measures for breeding Snowy and Wilson's Plovers, wintering Piping Plovers and other beach nesters. The Coastal Bird Conservation Program is a field-based, science-driven effort. Our goals are to: 1) to lead or assist in the assessment of coastal species populations and sites of critical importance, 2) conduct intensified and expanded field surveys and map populations of priority species, 3) conduct field research, draft comprehensive reports, training texts and publish our findings, 4) monitor and protect important nesting and foraging sites and 5). Establish long-term protection programs for these birds and sites with the express purpose of maintaining or increasing their populations.

In 2003 the CBCP, conducted the first breeding Snowy and Wilson's Plover census of the lower Laguna Madre region of south Texas and in 2004, with the help of partners, expanded to cover the Texas coast and conduct the first comprehensive statewide breeding census for both of these beach-nesting species.

In late winter of 2005, National Audubon Society, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries initiated National Audubon's Coastal Bird Conservation Program in Louisiana. Our collaborative goal was to conduct Louisiana's first comprehensive breeding census of beach nesting birds and identify all beach-nesting bird habitat within the state. The focal species included Snowy Plovers, Wilson's Plovers, American Oystercatchers and Least Terns. Previous to this survey, no breeding census data existed for these species in coastal Louisiana.

A meeting of all interested partners (federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions) took place in Baton Rouge in March to discuss and implement the season's plans. Existing aerial maps were studied for known and potential nesting habitat and the entire Louisiana coast was then aerially surveyed and photographed to better refine all potential survey sites. Beach-nesting bird surveys began in early April of 2005, with the CBCP providing field training and resource texts

to introduce census methodology and instruct census participants on identification of breeding plover habitat and the location of breeding plover pairs. From mid-April, through late June, teams of biologists and CBCP research assistants covered all possible beach-nesting bird habitats in coastal Louisiana, with the goal of counting every breeding pair of beach-nesters. The survey covered over 300 miles of Louisiana coastline. Every breeding pair located was recorded by GPS for later use in creating a breeding site map. Data was also recorded on habitat use, and nesting chronology for all surveyed species. Audubon CBCP and partners located 2 pairs of Snowy Plovers and 759 pairs of Wilson's Plovers, 57 pairs of American Oystercatchers and 1031 pairs of Least Terns.

This census effort yielded the first baseline data on breeding distribution, abundance, and habitat use for Snowy and Wilson's Plovers and other beach-nesting species of Louisiana, providing invaluable information for future population assessments and conservation and management plans for these species on the Gulf Coast.

The census would not have been possible without the cooperative efforts and generous support of various federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, and private landowners.

The results of this first beach-nesting bird census of the Louisiana coast will be combined with the CBCP's census numbers for the Texas and Mississippi coasts, to give an accurate picture of breeding

distribution and abundance for these species along the western Gulf of Mexico coast in the U.S. Future surveys are also planned starting again in the late winter of 2006, for the remaining Gulf coast, particularly Florida and the Tamaulipas region of Mexico.

The full paper on our Louisiana 2005 survey work is being prepared and will be published as Breeding distribution, abundance and habitat use of beach nesting birds in coastal Louisiana in Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program's technical journal #33.

For more information please contact:

Margo Zdravkovic National Audubon Society
Coastal Bird Conservation Program Field Director
Phone: 508-942-8347 Email: MargoGZ@cs.com



Snowy Plover Female Chick



Wilson's Plover Nest

Photo by M. Zdravkovic/Audubon CBCP

Photo by M. Zdravkovic/Audubon CBCP

Hummingbirds on the Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count, 2001-2005

by Laurence C. Binford and Dennis K. Demcheck

In winters 2000-01 through 2004-05, the authors conducted a hummingbird survey in conjunction with the annual Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count. Here we discuss various trends suggested by our data, and in particular analyze the 2004-05 count, which produced many fewer hummingbirds than normal.

Methods

Prior to each count we phoned over 100 yard owners in the count circle, asking them if they had any hummingbirds coming to their feeders. Binford then spent some 10-15 days prior to the count visiting all yards that reported unidentified or non-Rufous hummingbirds, plus some that reported only Rufous, recording data on identity, sex, and age of as many birds as possible and informing the owners of the results. Demcheck mailed a separate hummingbird report form to all owners, asking for the number of observers and the identity, sex, and age (when possible) of each hummingbird seen on the count. On count day, one or two special hummingbird parties, one including Demcheck, visited selected yards that (a) hosted too many birds for one person to census accurately, (b) supported rare or difficult-to-identify birds, or (c) had hummingbirds but no owner at home on count day. The number of parties, number of yards visited, and number of individual hummingbirds seen by our parties varied as follows: 2001, 2 parties, 19 yards, 48 birds; 2002, 2, 22, 61; 2003, 2, 16, 64; 2004, 1, 7, 35; 2005, 1, 9, 34. In addition, Binford arranged for other hummingbird experts to cover their own and selected yards. The number of yards reporting (including our parties) ranged from 56 to 82. Yard owners often did not report if they saw no hummingbirds, but always reported when they did, so more yards reported during years with more birds. After the count, Binford field-checked all reported rarities that he or our parties did not see and then transferred data for each yard to summary sheets, reviewing the data and removing or modifying records from inexperienced observers (e.g. "female Rufous" often was reduced to female/immature male Rufous/Allen's). This system, while not perfect, reduced species' misidentifications to a minimum and provided some useful sex and age data.

We used data from all yards for some analyses. For other analyses, we used only data from yards that reported every year, which numbered 30 (three of these represented combinations with an adjacent yard, because birds were shared); these 30 are here

termed "five-year yards."

In the following discussion, birds identified as undifferentiated Rufous/Allen's are usually combined with those identified as Rufous. This is justified because of the extreme rarity of Allen's and relatively high abundance of Rufous. Among those individuals identified to species over the five-year period, 210 (98.1%) were Rufous and only 4 (1.9%) were Allen's (all examined in the hand or photographed). If these same percentages were applied to all Rufous/Allen's (195), a maximum of only 3.7 Allen's might have been missed, i.e. identified as Rufous/Allen's, and some of these probably would have been identifiable adult male Allen's. Ignoring this possible error is preferable to deleting all Rufous/Allen's. Except in regard to annual totals, the 46 unidentified hummingbirds were ignored.

In the following discussion, we use "R/A" for individuals identified only as Rufous or Allen's, and "R+R/A" for Rufous plus Rufous/Allen's. All years refer to January, including the 2000-01 count, which was actually conducted in December.



Photo by Dennis Demcheck

The Buff-bellied Hummingbird, formerly rare in Baton Rouge, is now commonly seen on Christmas Bird Counts.

Annual abundance

Comparisons among the years 2001-2005, using data from all yards, revealed a number of facts.

(1) Annual totals for all species varied from 96 to 151 (mean 129) (Fig. 1), with 2005 the poorest year (see beyond). This variation reflected the abundance of the most common species, the Rufous Hummingbird (R+R/A in Fig. 1; see below), and showed no relationship to the other seven species combined. Abundance within individual yards is positively correlated with the number of feeders (Binford data), which varied in five-year yards as follows: 130 in 2001, 168 in 2002, 166 in 2003, 188 in 2004, and 183 in 2005. However, feeder number can affect annual winter *totals*

only if *all* yards become *saturated* with birds, so that competition (presumably) causes excess birds to leave Baton Rouge. We find no evidence for saturation in Baton Rouge as a whole, although one or two yards might have reached this point in some years; there have always been many yards that could have supported more birds. Vegetative cover and the number of nectar producing plants also seem to be correlated with hummingbird abundance in individual yards, but these varied little over the five-year period. Therefore, we believe that annual totals accurately reflect winter population trends.

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Comparisons among years might suggest a two-year cycle between better (2002, 2004) and poorer (2001, 2003, 2005) years (Fig. 1). However, the sample size of five years is very small, and any variation is more likely the result of annual (but not cyclic) differences in environmental factors, especially temperature and rainfall, that affect food availability and breeding success during summer.

(2) Nine hummingbird species were recorded during the five years: Broad-tailed, Buff-bellied, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, Anna's, Calliope, Broad-tailed, Rufous, and Allen's.

(3) Annual species totals were, chronologically, 6, 8, 8, 7, and 5 (mean 6.8). This variation probably has no biological significance except to indicate that the four rarest species—Broad-billed (2002; 2 individuals), Anna's (2003; 1), Broad-tailed (all but 2005; 6), and Allen's (2002, 2003, 2004; 4)—are annually irregular, and the five species in 2005 lacked Broad-tailed (see below). Annual variations in the presence and abundance of these four rarities are too slight to detect any patterns.

(4) Annual totals for the Buff-bellied Hummingbird were, chronologically, 3, 2, 4, 10, and 12 (Fig. 3). Thus this species increased in each of the last three years, reaching an all-time high of 12 in 2005 and mirroring the "population explosion" in south Texas in both winter and summer. Observers should watch for breeding in Louisiana.

(5) Considerable, irregular annual variation in abundance characterized the Ruby-throated (range 3 to 18) and Black-chinned (8 to 18) Hummingbirds (Fig. 3). The latter averaged more individuals (means 12.8 vs 10.0) and outnumbered the former in three of the five years.

(6) The Calliope Hummingbird (Fig. 3) remained rather stable, varying from 5 to 7 individuals (mean 5.8), even though it seems to have increased from previous years (but see below).

(7) Data for the Rufous Hummingbird (here combining Rufous and Rufous/Allen's) suggest the following.

(a) Among the 599 hummingbirds identified during the five-year period, R+R/A for about two-thirds (67.6%) and all other species about one-third (32.4%) (Fig. 1). However, relative percentages varied considerably between years, as shown by range: 53.8-73.8% and 26.2-46.2%, respectively.

(b) The above percentages track the annual totals for all species combined, demonstrating that the variation in totals is largely the result of Rufous abundance (Fig. 1).

(c) Immatures far outnumbered adults during the five-year period (228 to 90, or 2.53:1, respectively) and in each year except 2005 (Fig. 2) (see below).

(d) Adults increased slowly but surely, as follows: 10, 16, 14, 21, 29 (Fig. 2). Because aging of females is somewhat tentative unless birds are examined in the hand (some were), we analyzed the readily aged adult male separately. Indeed, adult males more than doubled over the five years, as follows: 6, 6, 8, 12, 14 (Fig. 2). This upward trend might well be temporary.

(e) Given this five-year upward trend in adults, it follows that annual variation in total R+R/A is largely the result of the number of immatures living into their first winter (Fig. 2). Because, in our opinion, post-fledging juvenile mortality is unlikely to vary to the degree demonstrated by Baton Rouge data, we suggest that winter abundance provides a measure of breeding success (see below).

The 2005 count

The year 2005 was unusual in having the fewest total hummingbirds (using all yards)—96, or 41.3 (30.1%) below the mean of 137.3 (range 125-151) for the previous four years, 33 (25.6%) below the five-year mean of 129, and 29 (23.2%) below the

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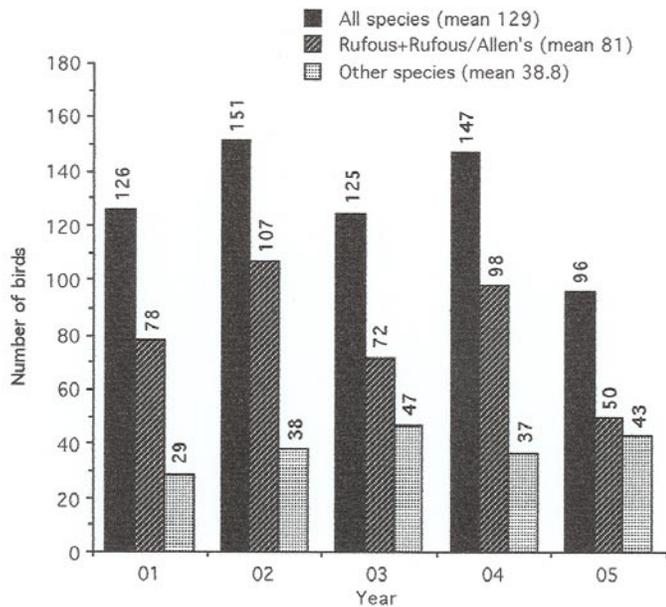


Figure 1. Annual abundance in all yards for all species (n=9; including unidentified), Rufous+Rufous/Allen's only, and all species besides Rufous+Rufous/Allen's (n=8, including identified Allen's). Unidentified individuals numbered, chronologically, 19, 6, 6, 12, and 3.

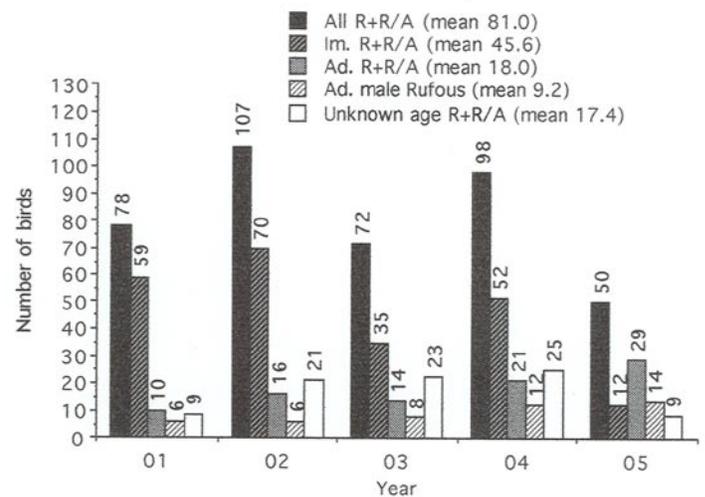


Figure 2. Age composition in Rufous+Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds in all yards on the Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count, 2001-2005.

previous low of 125 in 2003 (Fig. 1). This is clearly attributable to the paucity of Rufous Hummingbirds (R+R/A). As shown in Fig. 2, the total for R+R/A was the lowest of any year—50 individuals. Compared to the previous four years, this is 38.8 birds (43.7%) below the mean of 88.8 and well below the range of 72-107. That most other species were not involved in this phenomenon is indicated by their combined total for 2005—43, which is the second highest in the five-year period (Fig. 1). However, Broad-tailed and Calliope Hummingbirds might also have been low (see below).

Age data for the Rufous Hummingbird (Fig. 2) demonstrate that the 2005 low was the result of the scarcity of immatures, which numbered only 12, compared to the previous four-year mean of 54 and range of 35-70, a decline of 77.8%. Even if all nine unaged birds were immatures, the resultant total of 21 is well below previous numbers. By contrast, adults reached a five-year high of 29, compared to the previous four-year mean of 15.25 and range of 10-21, an increase of 90.2%.

Thus it would seem that the Rufous Hummingbird experienced a poor breeding season in summer 2004. This might have been true for the Broad-tailed and Calliope Hummingbirds as well. For the first time in the last five years, no Broad-tails were recorded on the count, and only two were found in the entire state, both after the count (one in Baton Rouge, ironically in Dennis Demcheck's yard!). In the previous four years, 23 Calliopes were seen, of which 7 (30.4%) were adults, 9 (39.1%) immatures, and 7 (30.4%) of unknown age, suggesting (sample size small) that immatures usually outnumber adults (as with all other species). In 2005, however, only 1 of 6 (16.7%) was an immature.

Louisiana banding data from Nancy Newfield (Hummingbird Hotline, Hummingbird Research Group, January 2005, No. 76:1) also indicate a drastic decline in wintering immature Rufous in 2005, down 74.2% from both 2002-03 and 2003-04. These figures are similar to our 76.9% and 65.7% declines from the same winters, respectively (Fig. 2). Contrary to our study, Newfield's data showed no increase in adults. F. Bassett (Internet, fide P. Dickson), banding in several southeastern states, also noted low numbers of Rufous,

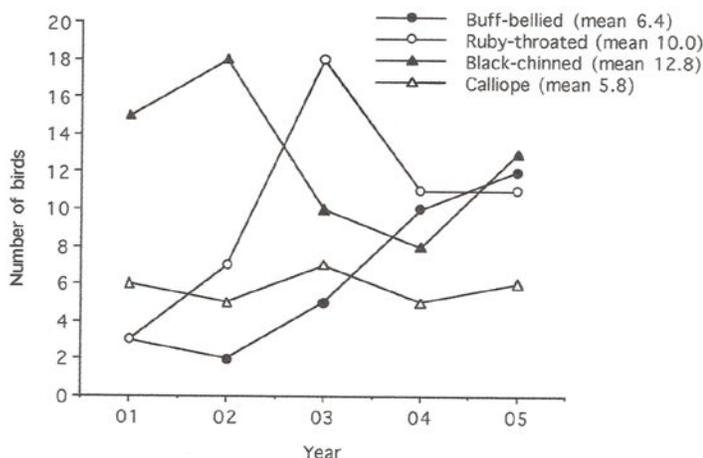


Figure 3. Annual abundance of Buff-bellied, Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, and Calliope Hummingbirds on the Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count, 2001-2005.

especially immatures, and found no Calliopes (compared to his average of 5 over the previous four years).

So what actually happened on the breeding grounds? The data are sketchy, but strongly suggest probable causes. T. and F. Engelman (written data; fide P. Dickson), banding in north-central Colorado, noted that the 2004 production of young Broad-tailed Hummingbirds declined 26% from 2003, which they attributed in part to a reduced number of returnees from 2003 (perhaps due to winter or migration mortality) but mostly to the unseasonably cold, wet, windy conditions affecting nesting success; 22% of the young 2004 birds showed stress bars on the rectrices, compared to none in summer 2003, indicating periods of reduced growth due to inadequate food during poor weather. As for Rufous Hummingbirds, which are fall transients in this part of Colorado, these banders noted a 41% decline in total fall numbers between 2003 and 2004 and recorded almost no immatures. This percentage compares well with our 49.0% winter decline from 98 to 50 birds (Fig. 2). Contrarily, Rufous Hummingbirds along the northwest coast in Oregon (M. Patterson op. cit., p. 3), British Columbia (fide P. Dickson), and Idaho (S. J. Peterson, op. cit., p. 3) experienced an increase in immature Rufous. Thus it would seem that inclement weather during the breeding season of 2004 caused low productivity in Broad-tailed Hummingbirds raised in at least Colorado and Rufous born farther north in the Rocky Mountains, resulting in reduced numbers of these two species and perhaps Calliope Hummingbirds in Louisiana in winter 2005. Non-breeding season mortality to the south prior to summer 2004 might also have been involved, at least for Broad-tailed. Our Christmas count data and Newfield's random banding data suggest that the two methods produce similar results, and both are useful in determining annual variations in winter population size and therefore summer breeding success.

Other data from 2005 demonstrate the following:

(a) The Buff-bellied Hummingbird reached an all-time high of 12 (see above).

(b) Totals for Ruby-throated (11), Black-chinned (13), and Calliope (6, but see above) were very close to their five-year averages (Fig. 3).

(c) None of the four rarest species was seen, but even when combined, these have never exceeded four on any of the previous four counts, so their absence (except perhaps for Broad-tailed) was probably coincidental.

(d) Only 9 of the 30 five-year yards had above average abundance in 2005, some only marginally. As shown by banding and observation, at least six of these had an unusually high percentage of adults, many of which were returns from previous years. Thus, in six of the nine yards, philopatry partially masked the effects of the reduced population.

We are indebted to Paul Dickson and his correspondents for providing data from north of Louisiana and to Donna Dittmann for reviewing a draft of this paper.

Laurence C. Binford, Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Dennis K. Demcheck, 8934 Alma Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70809

-BIRD CLUB- PROFILE

Fourth in a Series

THE BIRD STUDY GROUP SHREVEPORT

by Nancy Menasco

In 2006 Shreveport's Bird Study Group (BSG) will celebrate its twentieth anniversary as a birding club but its roots extend over fifty years into the past to February 4th, 1954, when the Shreveport Society for Nature Study (SSNS) was incorporated. Over a period of years, the SSNS sponsored a series of nature-oriented films. As nature programs became commonplace on television, the SSNS was on the verge of disbanding when on September 16, 1986, a group of interested parties led by Paul Dickson met at the Louisiana State University in Shreveport Museum of Life Sciences. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the formation of a Bird Study Group, which would continue the Shreveport Society for Nature Study's mission of "advancing knowledge in the natural sciences." After several more meetings, the SSNS Bird Study Group was born.

Today the Bird Study Group has grown to over 130 members, thirteen of whom are charter members from 1986, Dot Cady, Paul Dickson, Carol Foster, Bill and Jane Hall, Mac Hardy, Shirley Huss, Horace Jeter, Pat Lonnecker, Betty Mason, Larry Raymond, and Robert and Bobbe Womack. Horace Jeter also holds the distinction of being the only present BSG member who was one of the founding members of the Shreveport Society for Nature Study in 1954. The BSG membership is an active and enthusiastic bunch, participating in counts, surveys, challenges, and whatever else comes our way. BSG members are compilers of four northwestern Louisiana Christmas Bird Counts; Shreveport, Bossier-Caddo-Bienville, Natchitoches, and Claiborne. The Shreveport Christmas Bird Count, originated by Horace Jeter on December 24, 1950, is the oldest, continuously run CBC in the state of Louisiana.

The BSG serves an eight-parish area in northwestern Louisiana, including the parishes of Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, and Webster. The area's habitat is varied but the common thread for most of the region, as it is for the rest of Louisiana, is water. The Red River, where the endangered interior Least Tern may still be found nesting on a few sandbars, flows through four of our parishes. Among the more usual shorebirds migrating along the Red, the yellowlegs, the dowitchers, the Pectoral Sandpipers, and the Stilt Sandpipers, is an occasional Ruddy Turnstone, godwit, or Piping Plover. You never know what you might see on the river; witness, a BSG boat trip in late August of 2004, when an alternate-plumaged adult Sabine's Gull (extremely rare for Louisiana) flew over the delighted participants. The establishment of the Red River National Wildlife Refuge, the newest NWR in Louisiana with units in Bossier, DeSoto, Red River, and Natchitoches Parishes, holds the promise for long-term protection of habitat for birds and other wildlife along the Red River.

Other lakes, rivers, and bayous in our area provide more excellent birding opportunities. In Caddo Parish, Cross Lake is

noted for its wintering gulls and waterfowl and has been visited over the years by such rarities as Ringed Kingfisher, Tropical Parula, Red-throated Loon, and assorted jaegers and scoters. Caddo Lake, where legends of its larger-than-life former inhabitants dwell among the baldcypress swamps, spans the Louisiana-Texas border. Named for the Caddo Indians, it is the site of the Caddo Lake Winter Warm-up Count, a joint effort of the Northeast Texas Field Ornithologists and the Bird Study Group.

Claiborne Parish is well-known at least in the northern part of the state as "the Greater Roadrunner capital of Louisiana." Lake Claiborne, one of the deepest lakes in the state, has nesting Bald Eagles and is the winter residence of at least one pair of Common Loons. Other major bodies of water include Lake Bistineau, bounded by Bossier, Bienville, and Webster Parishes, and Cypress Lake in Bossier Parish, another Bald Eagle nesting site. The Sabine River flows through the Toledo Bend Reservoir to form DeSoto Parish's border with Texas and Bayou Pierre extends from Caddo Parish through DeSoto and Red River Parishes until it joins the Red River in Natchitoches Parish. The Bayou Bodcau watershed, encompassing over 30,000 acres in Bossier and Webster Parishes, forms one of the most important migratory bird corridors in the region. The diversity of bird life reflects the diversity of habitats, ranging from swamps to prairie remnants to old pine stands, as Bayou Bodcau hosts resident White-breasted Nuthatch, a nesting species unique to the northern part of Louisiana, and Wild Turkey, and most if not all of the warbler species nesting in northwestern Louisiana, including Prairie Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Prothonotary Warbler.

The Bird Study Group maintains a database of over 165,000 bird records from the BSG area in conjunction with the LSU in Shreveport (LSUS) Museum of Life Sciences and publishes the birding guide, "Birding Hot Spots of Northwestern Louisiana," now in its second edition, which describes sixteen of the best publicly accessible birding locations in our area. Our website has recent sightings, downloadable field checklists, including monthly and site-specific, and a seasonal occurrence chart. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except July and August, in the LSUS Museum of Life Sciences beginning at 7 p.m.

We invite you to visit us. Join us on one of our field trips, engage one of our volunteer guides, or order a copy of our Hot Spots publication for a self-guided tour. For more information about the BSG, visit our website at www.birdstudygroup.org or call the LSUS Museum of Life Sciences at 318-797-5338.



www.birdlouisiana.com
Festivals and Birding Club Field Trips

LOS Awards

DR. GEORGE H. LOWERY AWARD

The Louisiana Ornithological Society recognized and honored **Dr. Sidney Gauthreaux** for his positive influence on Louisiana birding and on bird and habitat conservation. His long-term studies of bird migration using weather surveillance radar created the science of 'radar ornithology' and has provided an important technique in deciphering the fascinating migration of neotropical birds. His continuing research along the Louisiana Gulf Coast has increased awareness of the decline in numbers and flights of neotropical migrants crossing the Gulf of Mexico. Many government agencies and conservation organizations use these studies and his innovative use of radar to study migration and to promote habitat conservation in Louisiana and throughout the Americas.

LOS PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The Louisiana Ornithological Society recognized and honored **Sara L. Simmonds** for her steadfast support in conserving and improving bird habitat in Louisiana. Through her many professional contacts, her untiring personal efforts and her generous financial support, several outstanding Louisiana birding habitats, including cheniere habitats in Cameron Parish, have been saved and improved. Additionally, her leadership in Louisiana's initial effort to reintroduce the Whooping Crane to our State holds great promise for this majestic bird and for our citizens.

LOS PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The Louisiana Ornithological Society recognized and honored **Kay Radlauer** for successfully promoting birding and bird habitat preservation in Louisiana. Areas in which she has significantly aided bird habitat preservation efforts include her presidency of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Foundation, coordinating workshops for the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, helping link the Great Gulf Coast Birding Trail with the "America's Wetland" campaign, increasing local community involvement in bird habitat through the Grand Isle Migratory Bird Festival and developing the BirdLouisiana.com website promoting birding and bird habitat conservation in Louisiana.

LOS PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The Louisiana Ornithological Society recognized and honored **The Butch Crain Family** for their generosity and support in preserving one of the premiere birding areas in Cameron Parish and Louisiana and making it available to the birding community. The Lighthouse Road area in western Cameron Parish, LA has superb bird habitat that for many years was inaccessible to the birding community. Recently the family constructed a road along the edge of this superb habitat - both preserving the habitat and making it accessible to the Louisiana Ornithological Society at its semiannual meetings and the broader birding community during special events.

— Karen Fay, President, LOS

LOS New Members March-August 2005

Evelyn and Byron Almquist, Metairie LA
Justin Bosler, Lancaster PA
Clayton W. Gilley, Kinder LA
Henry Harbert, Medford OR
Janice Hebert, Lafayette LA
Christine Kooi, Baton Rouge LA
Mike & Christy Liffmann, Baton Rouge LA
William D. McGehee, Natchez, MS
Linda Norrell, Heflin LA
Scott Ramsey, Morgan City
Wendy Rihner, New Orleans
James Reitter, Lafayette LA
Jason Saul, Metairie LA
E. "Ski" Witkovski, Lafayette LA

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Sara Simmonds, Alexandria LA

2006 LOS Membership Renewal Time

Membership renewals are due **January 2006** for the coming year. Please check your label. If it says Dec 2004 - you owe for both 2005 and 2006 (this will be your last newsletter if you do not renew this month). If it says Dec 2005, your 2006 membership is due.

Thank you for renewing your LOS membership.

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___ Senior Family:\$20.00/yr

___ Library\$15.00/yr*

___ Contributing:\$50.00/yr

___ Sustaining:\$100.00/yr

___ Life:\$300.00**

___ Family Life:\$500**

* Please add \$2.00 for
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** Installments may be arranged
for Life memberships

Make check payable to: **LOS**

Send to: Judith L. O'Neale, LOS Treasurer
504 Whitebark Drive, Lafayette, LA 70508-6362

Where To Eat



Dining Hot Spots of Northwestern Louisiana

Third in a Series

By Nancy Menasco

Where are those local dining hot spots that you've got to be a local yourself to know about? Here's a smattering, near to various birding hot spots, some city, some rural, mainly in Caddo Parish, but one in Bossier Parish and one in Webster. Most of the birding spots mentioned are described in the Bird Study Group publication, "Birding Hot Spots of Northwestern Louisiana." Go to www.birdstudygroup.org for ordering information.

Northern Caddo Parish, Black Bayou Lake, Tyson Park and Nance Park: Southern cooking is the specialty at the **Old Adger Store** just off US 71 at 12781 Main Street (LA 3049) in the village of Gilliam. Established circa 1916 and frequented by the local farm crowd, you'll need to get there early to partake of the daily lunch buffet before it's all gone. If you miss the buffet, Adger's also serves catfish, hamburgers, and the like. Hours are M-W, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Adger's is closed on Sunday. Gilliam is located about three miles west of the Red River and about 13 miles south of the Arkansas border. East of Gilliam is a veritable birding gold mine but much of it is private land, so it's probably best birded with a guide unless you're familiar with the area. Call the LSUS Museum of Life Sciences at 318-797-5338 for one of our volunteer guides to help you search the racetrack area, the cotton fields, and the sod farm for migrating Swainson's Hawks, Bobolinks, and shorebirds; wintering Sprague's Pipits, breeding Bell's Vireos and Grasshopper Sparrows, or resident Horned Larks and Lark Sparrows.

Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park and Cross Lake area: **Longwood General Store**, at the intersection of LA 169 and Blanchard-Furrh Road, serves food all day, breakfast, hamburgers, BLT, steaks, and similar fare; extremely casual. The western terminus of S. Lakeshore Drive (yep, that's the appropriately named drive bordering the southern shore of Cross Lake) is LA 169.

Southeastern Shreveport, C. Bickham Dickson Park, aka Red River Education and Research Park area; southwestern Bossier City, Headquarters Unit of the Red River National Wildlife Refuge (due to be open to the public in the summer of 2006). For those unfamiliar with the area, the Red River forms the boundary line between Shreveport and Bossier City and, for that matter, between Caddo and Bossier Parishes. A number of Hot Spots are reached by following the river south via LA 1/Youree Drive in Caddo Parish or by crossing the Jimmie Davis/70th Street Bridge and taking US 71 in Bossier Parish; these restaurants in southeastern Shreveport are convenient for either choice: All of these restaurants are open continuously throughout the day from lunchtime on seven days a week, except where noted.

Savoie's – 2400 East 70th Street, Cajun seafood, excellent poboy, and yummy bread pudding. Get an order of homemade onion rings and ask for some of the house dressing to dip them in.

Strawn's Too – 1643 East 70th Street, University Place Shopping Center. Strawn's has been a Shreveport institution since 1944, serving hamburgers, plate lunches, and icebox pies that have been featured in Southern Living. While you're there, walk around the corner of the shopping center to the Wild Bird Center, owned and operated by Dennis and Janice Forshee. Strawn's is open for breakfast and closes at 8:00 p.m.

Imperial Cathay – 6359 Youree Drive, excellent food at reasonable prices. Shreveport has long been noted for its Chinese restaurants and this is a favorite.

Monjuni's – 7601 Youree Drive, Portico Center, Italian food at reasonable prices. If you've room for dessert, try one of the giant cupcakes; the Milky Way cake is my favorite, but carrot, fudge, and Italian cream cake are other choices.

Country Tavern Barbecue – 823 Brook Hollow Drive, brisket sandwiches a specialty, closed on Sundays. Try one Southern Style (dressed with coleslaw). From the LA 1 (Youree Drive) intersection, go west on E. Bert Kouns Loop (LA 526/3132) about a mile and turn north on Brook Hollow just past the last of the auto dealerships and before the railroad tracks.

Southeastern Caddo Parish, Red River, Lock & Dam No. 5, Bishop Point Recreation Area, Yearwood Road area, also on the way to the Bayou Pierre unit of the Red River National Wildlife Refuge and Lock & Dam No. 4 in Red River Parish: On LA 1, about 18 miles south of its intersection with E. Bert Kouns Loop, is **Martin's Store**. **Martin's**, immediately south of the turnoff to the dam and Bishop Point, has been in operation over 50 years. You can get hamburgers, sandwiches, drinks, and a few snacks here. They provide lunch for the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Training facility located along the road to the dam and they don't keep the grill going very late in the afternoon.

Southwestern Bossier Parish, Red River and Loggy Bayou WMA area: **Clark's Marina** is located at 500 J.T. White Road off US 71 in southern Bossier Parish, not quite 14 miles from the intersection of US 71 (Barksdale Blvd.) and the Jimmie Davis Highway. It is on the Red River at Mile Marker 203.75 and serves food all day, including breakfast, hamburgers, chicken strips, etc. Clark's caters to fishermen and is open very early, but closing time depends on how busy they are in the evening. You can launch your boat, rent cabins, and buy fishing supplies, maps of the Red River for Lock and Dam No. 5 and No. 4, and even a few groceries at Clark's.

Bayou Bodcau area: **Bayou Inn Restaurant**, 172 Dorcheat Street in Dixie Inn in Webster Parish, serves catfish, seafood, and steaks. From I-20 take the Dixie Inn exit and go north on US 371 about 0.25 miles to its intersection with US 80. Turn right (east) on US 80, go 0.1 mile and turn left on Dorcheat Street. You'll see the restaurant. There are alternate routes from both the Bossier Parish side and the Webster Parish side (Wenks Landing, for example) of the Bodcau WMA that do not require returning to I-20 and also have some good birding along the way; check your map.



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Number attending buffet _____ at \$15.00/person = \$ _____

Number Red River Boat Trip _____ at \$20.00/person = \$ _____

Total = \$ _____

Please use email or phone to pre-register so we can estimate numbers.
Email is preferred.
 Email: LOS_BSG@birdstudygroup.org Phone: Nancy Menasco at 318-868-3255

Please do not mail your registration since mail delivery may be erratic at this time. Please pay at the door.