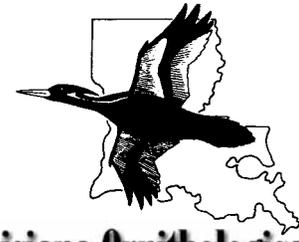


LOS

NEWS



www.losbird.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE

Louisiana Ornithological Society

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Submission Deadline
Winter LOS News
December 1, 2011

Journal of Louisiana Ornithology
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2011 LOS FALL MEETING

Friday and Saturday, October 28-29

Cameron

Friday, October 28, 2011

Evening: First Baptist Church in Cameron on Marshall Street

6 p.m. - 7 p.m. **Registration:** Light snacks will be provided by the Cameron Parish Tourist Commission.

7 p.m. - 8 p.m. **Meeting and Evening Program.** "Introduction of Alex Hahn - winner of Jane Patterson's "Kids Who Bird" scholarship."

What Bird? Where? Linda Stewart-Knight and a group of birder/naturalists headed to Kenya for a 2 wk whirlwind tour in early June. Lead by a very skilled Steven Easley, they bumped along the roads, (much reminiscent of some of our Louisiana pot-holes and rutted routes) across the Masai Mara (the northern tip of the Serengeti). They boated through the hippo infested waters of Lake Naivasha successfully finding the African Fish-eagle and Giant Kingfisher, stayed in tent camps with full showers and flush toilets, stared at hosts of strange sounding and looking birds such as long-claws, cisticolas, bustards, hoopoes, fiscals, bee-eaters, sunbirds. The famous shallows of Lake Nakuru did not disappoint. They had the pink glow of thousands of flamingos. The contrast of the arid plains of the Samburu Game Reserve with the river beds full of life giving water attracting both game and birds. The photos of this adventure will be from Carol Foil's collection, so you know you will be seeing these animals and birds as though you are there. There are even photos of one of the rarest mammals in that country, which they were fortunate enough to observe resting in the shade.

Saturday, October 29, 2011

7:00 a.m. **Field Trip:** Meet in the parking lot of the Cameron Motel. Ed Wallace will lead a field trip to the Cameron Parish hot spots.

Evening: First Baptist Church in Cameron on Marshall Street

6:00 - 6:30 p.m. **Registration**

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. **Dinner- chicken/sausage gumbo by the 4-H Club**

7:30 p.m. **Meeting and Evening Program.** **Louisiana's grassland birds: History and future prospects** presented by **Phil Stouffer**. Most Louisiana birders are familiar with our state's sometimes-elusive grassland specialists, like Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Bachman's Sparrow. But what if we take a broader view of grasslands, and a longer view in time? What birds have we lost? Our coastal prairies were once home to Prairie Chickens and Whooping Cranes. The whoopers may be on the way back, but what species might be slipping away, maybe through sea level rise, fire suppression, or urbanization?

Continued on page 3

Hummingbirds are Strange

Several weeks ago, in early September, I saw something I have never seen in my many years of watching birds. It seemed to be the peak of hummingbird migration, at least in my yard. Most activity was focused around a bottlebrush bush in my back yard. I call it a bush but it seems more like a tree to me. It is about 15 ft. tall and almost as wide. Throughout the year, it usually has some of its characteristic compound flower clusters blooming and is a favorite food of hummingbirds. On that day I estimate there were about a hundred or so flower clusters. I don't know how many hummingbirds were present, but I could count about twenty at a time at the bottlebrush when I made these observations about 9 am. I stood about 10 --ft. away and tried to count and observe the hummingbirds. They seemed to ignore me but would not sit still; I often observed one of them chasing another. These chases seemed very violent as the birds seem to fly full speed at each other. Often there were at least 5 chases going on simultaneously. I was very surprised when I saw that one hummingbird caught another during a chase. They both were male Ruby-throated hummingbirds. One caught the foot of the other. They continued to fly as the "victim" seemed to be trying to pull away and escape with the other one hanging on. Somehow they seemed to avoid their wings hitting each other. After about 15 seconds, the one that caught the other landed on a path and continued to hold on while they were on the ground. It did not attempt to fly at this time and the other one continued its attempt to escape to no avail. After about 5 to 10 seconds, the one on the ground took to the air again with the other's foot still in its mouth. After about 5 seconds it released it and they both flew away. I could not keep track of either of them and I do not know if there were any additional interactions between them. That morning was the peek of activity at the bottle brush, but at this writing, I still observe a lot of activity there.

I am not sure of the significance of this observation other than that it illustrates the energy these birds invest in defending what may be an ephemeral food source.

As unusual as the above observation was, it is not the most interesting that I have of hummingbirds in Louisiana.

This occurred about 20 years ago at Rockefeller Refuge in Cameron Parish, during spring migration. Unfortunately, I cannot find my original notes. It was cold with the temperature in the low 30s during the hummingbird migration season. The sun was out, but there was nothing special about the day.

While looking for migrants, I spotted a male Ruby-throated hummingbird perched on a bare branch about 5 ft high. I identified

it, but was baffled by its lack of movement. Normally when I see a hummingbird perched, it moves its head from side to side, almost like it was a tennis match. This bird was motionless. I decided to see how close I could approach the bird and proceeded to do so. It did not move. When I got near, I decided to extend my hand to scare it. It did not scare. I then picked it up; it still did not move. Usually, it is very easy to feel the heart of live birds and this bird apparently had no heart beat; I expected it to be over 100 beats/minute. The bird must be dead, and I decided to take it to the museum at LSU. I put it in my shirt pocket and continued my activities. In 15 minutes or so, I felt something strange in my pocket; I had forgotten the bird. I reached in and pulled out the bird. For some reason I did not expect this, and the bird escaped. It flew away and immediately started feeding at some nearby flowers.

Hummingbirds are very small and cannot store a lot of energy. At one time, there was a belief that they could not store enough energy to fly across the Gulf, but now we know they can. Some have been demonstrated to lower metabolism extremely and hibernate through the night. I presume that is what this bird was doing after a trans-gulf flight. It was perched in a spot to receive the morning sun that might help to revive it. I cannot prove this, but it seems to be the most logical explanation for this observation.

At any rate, I must be one of a small group of people who have felt a hummingbird moving in my pocket. I have encountered the Lazarus hummingbird.

Bob Hamilton
Editor

Editor's comment

*The article above was included to efficiently utilize space in the Newsletter. I hope some of you found it interesting, but I would rather have articles from the readers. The articles do not have to be very scientific, we have **Journal of Louisiana Ornithology** for that. Many notes on rare birds and seasonal and geographical occurrence are published in **LABIRD**. There are also articles on our website www.losbird.org, including this Newsletter*

Some of our members do not use the internet much. This Newsletter goes to them. I believe this newsletter could be a means to increase interaction between the life-time serious birders and many of our members who enjoy birds and would like to learn more. I would appreciate contributions from all of you to make our organization more inclusive.

Make a note...

UPCOMING MEETINGS*

Winter Meeting:

Lake Charles LA

January 27-28, 2012

Spring Meeting:

Cameron LA

April 27-29, 2012

Fall Meeting:

Cameron LA

October 26-28, 2012

*More information will be posted on the LOS website as it becomes available. www.losbird.org

DEADLINE

Submission deadline date for Winter LOS News is December 1, 2011

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Conversely, what birds might have benefited from the changes in Louisiana's grassland landscapes over the past several centuries? We'll take a look at grasslands and their birds forward and backward, and from top to bottom of Louisiana.

Phil Stouffer is a professor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources at LSU, and a researcher for the LSU AgCenter. He has been in Louisiana since 1993, but remains nostalgic for Pennsylvania, where he grew up, and New Jersey, where he went to graduate school at Rutgers. Anyone who has been to Hawk Mountain or Cape May probably knows why.

Cameron Accommodations: The phone number for the Cameron Motel is 337-775-5442. The Cameron Motel also has sites available for RV campers. Several eating places (in trailers) are open in Cameron. Other accommodations can be found in Sulphur or Lake Charles.

3rd Annual Yellow Rails and Rice Festival

A birding festival like no other... the 3rd Annual YRARF is a partnership between birders, rice farmers, conservation



organizations, and local communities - the ultimate goal to highlight the importance of, and help preserve Louisiana's "bird-friendly Working Wetlands." By participating, not only will you (hopefully) have fun seeing Yellow Rails and lots of other birds, you will also help support this cause - the YRARF combines ecotourism with agritourism. If you are heading for the Fall LOS Meeting, join us on your way there, or as a day trip farther afield. Last year we saw unprecedented numbers of Yellow Rails, including as many as **125** per day and a grand total of **566** combined on eight dates Oct 31 - Nov 20 - we are keeping our fingers crossed weather and rail numbers will be as good this year.

Mark your calendars and join the fun: Thursday-Sunday, October 26-30, 2011 (no planned activities on Sunday however, that day is held in reserve as a weather make up date). New this year - photo workshops with C. C. Lockwood and Dennis Demcheck. For festival information, registration details, and a schedule of events: <http://tinyurl.com/3sorgh8f>

If you have questions, then please contact Donna Dittmann at: yellowrailsandrice@gmail.com

All fees, donations, and any other proceeds collected for the festival by non-profit Avian Events Support Team go towards supporting festival-related expenses and promoting agritourism.

New Members

Ted Pierce, Berkeley, CA
Diana Richards, Lake Lure NC
Robert Richards, Metairie LA
J. Larry Smith, Hattiesburg, MS

LOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

*Dues are payable January 1st of each year;
Please check your mailing label for expiration date.*

Renewal New Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

DUES STRUCTURE:

___ Regular: \$20.00/yr

___ Family: \$25.00/yr

___ Junior (under 14): \$7.50/yr

___ Student: \$10.00/yr

___ Senior (over 65): \$15.00/yr

___ 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 foreign
subscriptions

**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

LOS Logo-Imprinted Merchandise Now Available!

As members of the Louisiana Ornithological Society, we now have the ability to order customized Louisiana Ornithological Society Merchandise with our personal choice of

- LOS logo/logos • size and placement of the logo/logos
- color of item • size • personalization

We can order and pay on-line easily for this excellent quality, L.O.S. Customized Merchandise.

At the end of each quarter, based upon the sales dollars generated from our L.O.S. membership, the web-based company will send our organization a 20% Rebate Check. Louisiana Ornithological Society Fundraising made simple!

I will have samples of merchandise at the LOS fall meeting.

To order customized Louisiana Ornithological Society merchandise go to our LOS web site - losbird.org and click on "LOS shop online" and then "LOS Imprint store."

Judith O'Neale, LOS Treasurer
jloneale@aol.com

Louisiana Ornithological Society

www.losbird.org



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Lafayette, LA 70508

Return Service Requested

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Dues are payable in January of each year; Please check your mailing label.

- PRE-REGISTRATION FORM -
LOS 2011 FALL MEETING – CAMERON/CREOLE, LA
FRIDAY – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28-29, 2011

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Number registering for meeting _____ at \$10.00/person = \$ _____

Number registering for Saturday's dinner _____ at \$6.00/person = \$ _____

= \$ _____ 2011 Membership Dues

= \$ _____ **Total enclosed**

Complete form and send with check payable to LOS to:
 Judith O'Neale, 504 Whitebark Drive, Lafayette LA 70508
jloneale@aol.com • www.losbird.org