

LOS

www.losbird.org

NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE



Louisiana Ornithological Society

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**Submission Deadline
Fall LOS News
September 1, 2012**

Journal of Louisiana Ornithology
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2012 LOS SPRING MEETING

Friday and Saturday, April 27-28

Cameron

It's April so it must be Cameron. Please join us along with all of the migrants for our spring meeting. What excitement!

REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR DINNER-APRIL 19th

Friday Evening: First Baptist Church in Cameron, 110 School St. off Marshall Street (the main street)

6:30 P.M.-7 P.M. Registration: Light snacks will be provided by the Cameron Parish Tourist Commission.

7:00 P.M. Meeting and Evening Program: Working Wetlands - A Bonanza for Birds and Birders but Still A Concern for Crawfish Farmers

Jay V. Huner, Michael J. Musumeche and Clinton Jeske

Rice farming has a long history in Louisiana and Texas. The thousands of acres have always attracted many waterbirds. The integration of crawfish farming, and, to a lesser extent, fish farming, to this shallow water/moist soil environment provided a bonanza of large invertebrate and small vertebrate prey for carnivorous birds not to mention year round habitat. This habitat is especially critical when noting the dramatic loss of nearby coastal wetlands over the past half century. Still, when a farmer sees thousands of wading birds, geese, coots, and ducks in his crawfish pond, he wonders about the impact on his crop.

Saturday Morning

7:00 A.M. Field Trip Meet in the parking lot of the Cameron Motel. Ed Wallace and Linda Stewart-Knight will lead a field trip to the Cameron Parish hot spots. **Bring lunch, water, bug spray and walkie talkies if you have them.**

Saturday Evening: First Baptist Church in Cameron, 110 School St. off Marshall Street (the main street)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I cannot believe it's in the '80s. I, like you, am watching new birds creep into my landscape, Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Parula, an adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. I know some of my winter favorites will be leaving. I'm watching my White-throated Sparrows scratching on the lawn, a magnificent Rufous Hummingbird "nectaring" at the feeder. Many of you, I hope, are out and about recording new birds. Soon it will be time to gather at Cameron for the spring LOS meeting, April 27-28th. We'll be seeing some of our old favorites as they cross the gulf, and perhaps some rarities. I understand a Glaucous Gull has already been spotted at Holly Beach. I can only imagine what's in store for us. Ed Wallace will lead the group Saturday, please join us in a quest for at least 100 birds (he has not failed yet). On the trek for birds during the winter meeting, Ed found a Blue Grosbeak lingering behind the court house!

The winter meeting in Lake Charles was something to talk about. We were hosted by Marilyn McDonald and the Gulf Coast Bird Club, Peter Lund, Elton Louviere and the Calcasieu Parish Tourist Commission. Eric Baka, the Safe Harbor Coordinator for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, reviewed the habitat necessary for such a species to survive and increase in numbers. He emphasized the success in the cooperative efforts of landowners and LA Wildlife and Fisheries. The birders hit the road at dawn, led by Ed Wallace (#100 or bust), Gene Barnett and Bill Gover. The birds were really cooperative with everyone getting their satisfaction seeing hundreds of Sandhill Cranes. Saturday evening, after ample nourishment, Carrie Salyers, of the LA Wildlife and Fisheries, discussed the reintroduction of the Whooping Cranes, the successes and frustrations of the last year, and the expected arrival of more young cranes. She introduced us to an original male who, I understand as of this writing, has selected a "lady" from the new arrivals. Now we're all in "expectation."

I encourage everyone to check your calendar, make your reservations, and join us for the Spring LOS meeting, April 27-28th, in Cameron.

Linda Stewart Knight, LOS President

LOOKING BACK,



A YEAR IN REVIEW...

*From: Louisiana Department
of Wildlife and Fisheries*

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2012

Friends of the Louisiana Whooping Cranes

It's been almost a year since LDWF along with partner organizations returned whooping cranes to the state for the first time since 1950. There have been ups and downs but a tremendous amount has been learned. A year and a half after LDWF first began planning this project, 10 juvenile whooping cranes were transported to a release pen built in the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WLWCA) on February 16th 2011. The cranes were in great shape after their flight from the Patuxent Wildlife Re-search Center (PWRC) in Laurel, MD and after a brief exam they were placed in a smaller top-netted pen within the larger 1.5 acre open release pen. They had no trouble adapting and were seen catching and eating crawfish the very next morning. Several days after they arrived each bird was handled so their permanent bands and transmitters could be attached. Each bird received a solar powered GPS satellite transmitter on one leg, a unique combination of smaller color bands on the other leg and a metal USFWS band. While it sounds like a lot, the unique color combinations allow us to identify each individual and the transmitter collects GPS locations three times every day allowing us to know where the birds are and assess the habitat they are using at those different times of the day.

After a month the birds were getting antsy and we were ready to release them into the open pen and let them fly free for the first time in their lives. While ultimately successful the actual re-lease day didn't go quite as we expected. Several birds were reluctant to walk through the narrow doorway into the open pen so the door was left open allowing them to come out when they were ready which took several days for a few of them. Additionally L1-10, the oldest bird in the group came out and flew but disappeared and didn't reappear until 4 days later, causing quite a bit of worry. We still don't know quite what happened to her, where she went or why but she looked great

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LOOKING BACK, continued from page 2

when she came back and never left again. And finally L5-10, one of the birds reluctant to walk through the doorway on the first day, apparently had enough of the pen and the other birds because once she came out of the top-netted pen she flew outside and never came back to the pen. She moved north in the marsh and after just a short while there she moved to crawfish fields in Acadia Parish.

The initial plan was to encourage the birds to roost in the pen at night to keep them safe from predators while they still learned the ways of the marsh. This worked for the first few nights but after that the birds had other ideas. We continued trying to encourage them to roost in the pen but night after night they would fly out at sunset and roost at a location of their choosing.

Initially this had us worried but each day all 9 (remember L5 had already separated from the group) of them would return. Food was provided in the pen through early May after which time it was removed to encourage the birds to disperse away from the pen. And disperse they did, visiting 7 different parishes (not including Acadia where L5 was already settled and Vermilion where they were released from) and SE Texas on their first weekend away from the pen. After that ad-venture they all returned to the pen site one last time before breaking up into smaller groups and moving to other areas. Three birds, L2, 4, and 7 remained in the marsh but moved to the west side where more water was present. Four birds, L1, 3, 8, and 10 moved to a rice field in Evangeline Parish and remained there for almost two months. This left L6 and L9, independent females who moved to separate locations on their own. Mortality is expected and shortly after the birds moved away from the release pen we experienced our first mortalities. In late May data from L9's transmitter indicated a likely mortality but the area was inaccessible due to flooding until early summer at which time the area was investigated and her transmitter as well as a small amount of remains were found confirming our suspicions. Around that same time L6's transmitter stopped functioning, even though the data had looked normal until it stopped working. We searched the areas she had last been on the ground and from the air but never found anything. She is considered missing but presumed dead since there has been no data or sightings of her since that time. Additionally

in mid-June a local land-owner north of White Lake contacted us to report that L7 was injured. She was captured and placed in the top-netted pen so she could be evaluated and treated. Unfortunately she was quite sick and after two weeks of treatment and two trips to the LSU vet school there was not much improvement and she had developed a respiratory infection so the decision was made to humanely euthanize her. During the summer the remaining 7 birds were mostly settled in their locations and our focus shifted to collecting data on the habitats the birds were choosing to use. Later in the summer and into the fall as the agricultural areas that 5 of the birds were using changed, with rice maturing and being harvested, water being drawn down and other fields being re-flooded the birds began moving around making it more challenging to keep track of them. Sadly in early October, L8 and L10 were shot and killed by two juveniles in Jefferson Davis Parish. L1 who had been with them disappeared at the same time and has not been seen since then, reducing the number of surviving birds to likely only 4. While a disappointing setback for the project, we continued moving forward by offering more education and outreach in an attempt to try and prevent this from happening again in the future.

In the remaining months of 2011, our focus shifted to the arrival of the second cohort of birds. We had to coordinate the actual shipment with folks at PWRC as well as the pilots, get the pen ready for the new arrivals, get all of the bands and transmitters ready as well as what felt like a million other little details. We were scheduled to receive 16 new birds, 7 males and 9 females on December 1, 2011.

Sadly the excitement over the arrival of our 16 new birds was marred by the discovery that L2-10 was dead, likely killed by a predator. As we unloaded our 16 new residents of Louisiana, we were saddened to realize that our first cohort of ten was now down to three.

On December 1st, 2011, the new birds arrived on two USFWS aircraft equipped with floats for water landings (thank you to our continued project partner). They were unloaded from the planes and transported to the top netted pen once all had passed their initial health check. A week after they arrived the birds received their permanent identification in

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SPRING MEETING, continued from page 1

6:30 P.M.-7 P.M. Registration

7 P.M. Meal –Brisket, rice, green beans, rolls, dessert, and tea prepared by the Cameron Catering Ladies

7:30 P.M. Meeting and Evening Program: Bird Paradise: The Louisiana Coast
Can We Save It? Our State Master Plan and What it Could Mean for Birds

David Muth, Louisiana State Director, Mississippi River Delta Restoration Coalition, National Wildlife Federation

Louisiana is poised to become a world leader in planning for and responding to sea level rise. We are doing so with no time to spare, because we've already lost 1,900 square miles of critical habitat for birds. Without swift action, we'll lose another 1,700 to rising seas over the next 50 years. Nowhere on the planet is the situation more dire, for people, or for birds and wildlife. But, incredibly, the most sophisticated scientific and engineering analysis ever undertaken tells us that by using the land building power and resources of the Mississippi River, coupled with proven techniques of hydrological management, shoreline protection, along with barrier island and marsh restoration, we can change the trajectory from annual loss to annual gain within a few decades, even against accelerating rates of sea level rise. The river that built coastal Louisiana can rebuild it, if we only

give it a chance to do so, with incalculable benefit to birds, in the most avian rich landscape in North America.

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 are open in Cameron and Creole. Other accommodations can be found in Sulphur or Lake Charles.

Registration Form on page 6

LOOKING BACK, continued from page 3

the form of a unique combination of color bands and transmitters. As with the first cohort of birds, several weeks later they were released into the open pen free to fly for the first time.

Birds from both cohorts will continue to be monitored and habitat evaluations will be done on the areas that they frequent. Blog updates for both cohorts will continue to be posted so you can follow the success of the birds on the department's website at: <http://wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes>

[Thanks to Carrie Salyers, LWL&F for suggesting we supply a c copy of this information for our members – Editor]

NEW MEMBERS

Claire Brown, Lafayette

Kristen Covino, Hattiesburg, MS

Claude D. and Sandra E. Falls, Cleveland TN

Beaux Jones, Baton Rouge

Bill Michalak, Baton Rouge

Nancy O'Malley, Baton Rouge

Pamela Smart, Bossier City

Make a note . . .

UPCOMING MEETINGS*

Fall Meeting	Cameron	October 26-28, 2012
Winter Meeting	Shreveport	January 25-26, 2013
Spring Meeting	Cameron	April 26-27, 2013

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

DEADLINE: Submission deadline date for Fall LOS News is September 1, 2012

EDITORIAL**LOS NEWS CONTENT**

Communication has changed since the inception of LOS. Our meetings and our newsletter were our primary means of communication at first. Now LOS NEWS is prepared, printed and mailed with the aid of a professional printing company. The copy I submit is prepared with computer programs that did not exist earlier. We publish the *Journal of Louisiana Ornithology* for more scientific communication.

We also communicate electronically. Many, if not most, of you regularly visit www.losbird.log for up-to date information about our plans and activities. Postings can occur at any time and communication is timelier and striking visual and auditory material can be included.

The primary purpose for LOS NEWS now is to inform the entire membership of upcoming meetings. Although we publicize our activities electronically elsewhere, we do not believe that all of our members use these alternative means and we will continue with LOS NEWS until we are sure it is no longer needed.

We no longer receive many submissions from our memberships because there are more timely and convenient alternatives for them to publicize their views.

As the current editor, I would like to receive more material that would interest our members, especially those who do not follow our activities electronically. There are no formal guidelines to authors for LOS NEWS and I am quite flexible.

If any of you have other suggestions that might be helpful, please submit them. Contact information for me is available on the first page.

Bob Hamilton

Green-tailed Towhee

The Green-tailed Towhee is not an expected winter resident in Louisiana. The mild winter and drought elsewhere were apparently responsible for its presence. Not only was it present, but it was found at many places many times so that many bird watchers who traveled to



places where they had been reported by others were able to find them. It was one reason that the winter was so special for many of our members and other bird watchers.

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

We now have available customized Louisiana Ornithological Society merchandise with personal choice of • LOS logo/logos • size and placement of the logo/logos • color • size • personalization

To order, 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*

LOS ON FACEBOOK

Labirders: This is just to let you know that those of you who are LOS members and are also on Facebook may be interested in “liking” LOS’s new Facebook page. Just type in “Louisiana Ornithological Society” in the FB search box, and you’ll find it.

Good birding,

*Christine Kooi
Baton Rouge*



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Lafayette, LA 70508

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

- PRE-REGISTRATION FORM -
LOS 2012 SPRING MEETING – CAMERON/CREOLE, LA
FRIDAY – SATURDAY, APRIL 27 - 28, 2012

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

Number registering for Saturday's dinner _____ at \$12.00/person = \$ _____

2012 Membership Dues enclosed = \$ _____

BANQUET REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 2012! = \$ _____ **Total enclosed**

Please 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