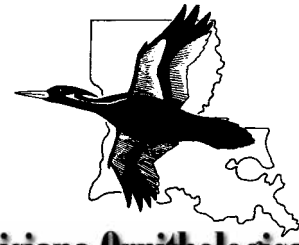


LOS NEWS



www.losbird.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE

Louisiana Ornithological Society

LOS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President - Marty Floyd
2044 Bayou Road
Cheneyville, LA 71325
337-459-0445
progne99@aol.com

Vice President - Donna Dittmann
435 Pecan Drive
St. Gabriel, LA 70776
225-642-5763
donnaldittmann@gmail.com

Secretary - Joelle J. Finley
6654 Argonne Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70124
504-715-2647
joellefinley@bellsouth.net

Treasurer - Judith O'Neale
504 Whitebark Drive
Lafayette LA 70508-6362
337-981-1011
jloneale@aol.com

Past President - Ed Wallace
340 Audubon Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70125
504-343-1433
mottledduck@hotmail.com

Board Member - Joseph Vallee
1006 W. St. Mary
Abbeyville, LA 70510
337-893-9703
josephgv2@yahoo.com

Board Member - Christine Kooi
1965 Cherokee Avenue
Baton Rouge LA 70806
225-381-3108
cjko01@hotmail.com

Board Member - Larry Raymond
6675 North Park Circle
Shreveport, LA 71107-9539
318-929-3117
lrraymond@aol.com

LOS News Editor - Donna L. Dittmann
LSU Museum of Natural Science
119 Foster Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
225-578-2009 work
225-642-5763 home
donnaldittmann@gmail.com

Submission Deadline
Winter LOS News
November 1, 2016

Journal of Louisiana Ornithology
Editor - Jennifer O. Coulson
64340 Fogg Lane
Pearl River, LA 70452
Jacoulson@aol.com

2016 LOS FALL MEETING

Please pre-register by October 14th

ONLINE Registration link: <http://losbird.org/meetings.htm>

Friday and Saturday, October 28-29, 2016

Cameron

First Baptist Church in Cameron

110 School Street off of Hwy. 27/82/Marshall Street

Please join LOS in Cameron for this year's Fall Meeting. Our invited speakers will highlight how scientists monitor birds and should be interesting and informative. We are changing our Saturday banquet by adding evening menu options. Don't delay - register today!

Friday Evening:

6 PM - 7 PM Registration.

Check in, visit the LOS tables, chat with friends. Light snacks will be provided by the Cameron Parish Tourist Commission.

7 PM - 8 PM Meeting and Program.

Monitoring Piping Plovers at the Caminada Headland Beach and Dune Restoration Projects (BA-45/BA-143) by Delaina LeBlanc

Delaina serves the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) as the Migratory Birds Coordinator. Delaina has worked with the program since 2007 conducting coastal bird research that serves in the protection of habitat for migratory and resident birds. Her duties include coordination of bird surveys, management of data, and promotion of bird conservation and outreach. Delaina is also an artist whose work features subject matter that calls attention to coastal land loss and bird conservation issues. She earned her MFA from Florida State University.

Since August 2012, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) has been

conducting surveys for the endangered Piping Plover and other shorebird species before, during, and after construction on the Caminada Headland beach. Delaina will introduce you to individually banded birds and share how these sightings provide insight into how operations of an active coastal restoration project influence the distribution of these birds along the beach.



Photo by Donna L. Dittmann

This photo shows one of the project's banded Piping Plovers. Meet R58 - a yellow alphanumeric flag on the left upper leg and two color bands on each lower leg identify this individual.



Photo by Donna L. Dittmann

This photo shows restoration activities on a Caminada Headland beach. The presence of heavy equipment and extreme manipulation of the beach and bay habitats can impact Piping Plovers.

LOS 2016 Meeting, Continued on page 2

LOS 2016 Meeting, Continued from page 1**Saturday:**

7:00 AM – 4:30 PM All Day Field Trips. Meet in the parking lot of the Cameron Motel. Ed Wallace, Marty Floyd, Donna Dittmann, and Steve Cardiff and possibly other volunteer leaders will lead field trips to the Cameron Parish hot spots. **Bring lunch, drinks, bug spray, and walkie talkies (if you have them); some trips may take a lunch break at a local eatery.**

6:00 - 6:30 PM Registration.

Check in, visit the LOS tables, chat with friends.

6:30 - 7:30 PM Dinner.

New this year, we are offering a choice of dinner entree, including a vegetarian option. All served with bread, dessert, and tea. Catered by Tressie Smith.

1. Chicken and sausage gumbo
2. Fried catfish with potato salad
3. Vegetarian Pasta Alfredo

Please help make this new meal option work!

It is imperative that you register in advance.

Pre-register NOW!

7:30 – 9:00 PM Meeting, Elections, and Program**Election of officers:**

President: Steven W. Cardiff
 Vice-president: Delaina LeBlanc
 Treasurer: Judith O'Neale
 Secretary: Joelle Finley
 North LA Board Member: Larry Raymond

Discovering unknown migrations of birds of the Western Hemisphere

by Autumn-Lynn Harrison, Ph.D.

Autumn-Lynn Harrison is a Research Ecologist with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Program Manager of the Migratory Connectivity Project. She holds a Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, a M.S. in Tropical Marine Ecology and Fisheries Science from James Cook University in Queensland, Australia, and undergraduate degrees in Wildlife Science and Environmental Science from Virginia Tech. Autumn-Lynn is a marine ecologist by training with a decade of experience studying the migration of large marine vertebrates, including seabirds and seals. She has lived and worked in Australia, Kenya, South Africa, and the U.S. Prior to joining the Migratory Bird Center in 2014, Autumn-Lynn worked for the Society for Conservation Biology for 11 years, and as a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Institute for Parks at Clemson University. At Clemson, she studied Bahamian seabird migration and developed a "big-data" digital humanities project with historical archives of the U.S. National Park Service. She is also a trained park naturalist and graphic designer and has developed and led training workshops in interpretation and graphic design for the Tanzania National Parks Authority and the David H. Smith Conservation Research Fellows.



<http://www.migratoryconnectivityproject.org>

Migration is one of the most engaging phenomena of the animal world. Understanding and tracking animal movements are crucial components for conserving habitats that are essential to species survival. Unfortunately, our knowledge about why, how, when, and where most of earth's bird species migrate during their lifecycle is, at best, rudimentary. Join Autumn-Lynn Harrison as she takes us on a journey to discover the unknown migrations of the birds of the Western Hemisphere.



Erik I. Johnson's photograph shows a Prothonotary Warbler fitted with a geolocator, one of the methods for tracking the movements of migrants. (See page 5.)

Cameron Accommodations:

The phone number for the Cameron Motel is 337-775-5442. The Cameron Motel also has sites available for RV campers. Several lunch places are open in Creole, Cameron, and Johnsons Bayou and fuel is available. Bring your own breakfast food. Closest additional accommodations are in Sulphur, Lake Charles, or Port Arthur, TX. East Jetty Park in Cameron also has camper spaces with hook-ups.

Please pre-register by October 14th!

Meal registration must be received no later than October 14th.

Please help make this new meal option work by not delaying your pre-registration!

- Joelle Finley, LOS Secretary



Louisiana Ornithological Society

LOS SALES

If you can't wait until the next LOS Meeting for an LOS Decal, LOS Cloth Patch, or copies of the LOS Official Louisiana State Checklist, visit the LOS ONLINE STORE.

<http://losbird.org/lossales.htm>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although participation levels were lower than usual (60 registered) we still had an excellent meeting. The official species total for Saturday in Cameron Parish was 200 species, of which 26 species were warblers. And, two more species were added on Sunday. Excellent meeting totals! Cameron provides so much in diversity of habitat and support from the locals.

Two fantastic speakers gave presentations. On Friday night our own Dr. Erik I. Johnson of Audubon Louisiana gave a talk entitled *Prothonotary Warbler, a Swamp Canary in the Coal Mine*, in which he discussed current research being done to gain information about migration of this declining species. Saturday night we were privileged to hear Paul Baicich (Great Birding Projects: <http://www.greatbirdingprojects.com/aboutus.html>), go over *Wild Bird Feeding in America*, a book he recently coauthored. He provided us with an informative talk about how bird feeding has progressed over the years.

My term as president will be ending in October and I wish to thank everyone for their assistance in making these past two years very enjoyable. I hope that this support will continue with our new president who will start in October.

Looking forward to the next meeting scheduled for Cameron on October 28-29, 2016. Hopefully, fall migration will provide some excellent detections similar to what was seen this spring.

- Marty Floyd, LOS President

UPCOMING CHANGES: LOS EDITORS

Other news from the Spring Meeting includes changes in LOS Editors. The Board would like to thank Dr. Jennifer O. Coulson for her tenure as *Journal of Louisiana Ornithology*, Editor. Jennifer will be retiring after the next issue. More information about the JLO will be forthcoming.

The Board would like to thank Kimberly Lanka for her tenure as *LOS News* Editor. She took the *LOS News*' reigns Fall 2012; the Spring 2016 issue was her last issue. Donna Dittmann takes over as the interim editor. If you have any items that may be of interest to LOS members, then please send to Donna (donnaldittmann@gmail.com). Please also let Donna know if you have any ideas for *LOS News* content. If you would like to submit an article for consideration or artwork, then please consider the deadlines below:

Spring: content/manuscript must be received no later than February 1

Fall: content/manuscript must be received no later than August 1

Winter: content/manuscript must be received no later than November 1

Erik Johnson, Donata Henry, Sammy King and Tom Sherry Receive LOS Awards

President Marty Floyd and Carol Lynn Lowery Loker presented the 2016 George H. Lowery, Jr. Award to Dr. Thomas W. Sherry for his long-term study of the populations, ecology, and conservation of Neotropical-Nearctic migrating birds with special emphasis on factors such as food resources and predators that limit populations. A professor at Tulane University, Dr. Sherry has directed the research of several graduate students who continue their work on Louisiana birds and habitats. He has published over 90 research papers in refereed journals and is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union.

Marty Floyd presented the President's Awards to Dr. Donata Henry, Dr. Erik I. Johnson and Dr. Sammy L. King.

Dr. Henry was recognized for her strong contributions to Louisiana nesting bird research and conservation. Donata established the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival (MAPS) station in the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area where she involves local residents and students in banding migrant and resident birds to study bird populations and conservation. A Senior Professor of the Practice at Tulane University, Donata not only conducts research, but also encourages students to learn about birds and bird conservation through the classes she teaches. In 2015, Donata was selected as an Honors Professor of the Year at Tulane.

Dr. Johnson was recognized for his strong contributions to Louisiana bird conservation and habitat restoration. In 2012, Erik was appointed Director of Bird Conservation for the Louisiana Office of the National Audubon Society. In response to the 2010 BP Oil Release, Erik developed Audubon's Coastal Bird Survey, a citizen science program across the Central Gulf Coast that he continues to lead. He also has established a comprehensive beach-nesting bird stewardship program in Louisiana through partnerships with local governments and organizations. Erik's volunteer work as Louisiana's Christmas Bird Count Regional Editor, Louisiana Bird Records Committee Member, Baton Rouge Audubon Society Vice-President, Coordinator of Winter Hummingbird Records, and Co-Director of the Louisiana Bird Observatory is a true reflection of his passion for birds.

Dr. Sammy L. King was recognized for his in-depth research in wetland processes and wildlife that today is influential in the conservation, restoration, and management of these wetland systems. As the Leader of the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at LSU, Sammy has directed research on a wide range of wetland and waterbird issues including studies on the King Rail and other secretive marsh birds, forested wetland concerns of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, and the reintroduction of the Whooping Crane to Louisiana's marshes. In addition to his wetlands research, Sammy teaches two graduate-level courses in "Floodplain Ecology" and "Restoration and Management of Wetlands" at LSU.

- Joelle J. Finley, LOS Secretary

LOS SPRING MEETING FIELD TRIP RESULTS

The Western Group

Ed Wallace and I led a group of six other people in the western part of the parish. We headed west across the ferry birding groups of gulls and terns along the way. The first official stop was the Apache wooded chenier where we (LOS, NRCS, LDWF and Apache) had done plantings last year. Access is restricted. We observed 24 species, including eight warbler species with Black-and-white and Tennessee Warblers in large numbers. Other 'good' birds included a Scissor-tailed flycatcher, two Crested Caracaras, and at least one Golden-winged Warbler. Link to eBird list is here: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29197905>

The next stop was the Peveto Woods Sanctuary where we found 55 species, including 11 warbler species with Black-and-white, Black-throated Green, and Tennessee warblers being the largest in numbers. Other warblers seen included Blackburnian, Blue-winged, Cerulean, and Golden-winged. From there we traveled to the Sabine River Bridge then back to Lighthouse Road where 57 species were observed. The numbers of Eastern Kingbirds, Common Nighthawks, and orioles were impressive.

Because the smaller ferry was in operation, we were delayed getting back across the Calcasieu River. After finally boarding the ferry after it completed three trips we had only a limited time to visit the East Jetty Park and observation tower – but still were able to find 46 species. Highlights there included Reddish Egret, American Oystercatcher, and Wilson's Plover. Other eBird trip lists:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159861>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159801>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159740>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159903>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159861>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159801>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159740>

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29159903>

- Marty Floyd, LOS President

The Eastern Group

LOS VP Donna Dittmann and I led a trip for about 23 participants. We began at Cameron (Cameron Motel parking lot) at 7 AM while we organized field trip departure – and started looking for birds. We caravanned south on Davis Road to the Cameron sewer ponds, and then headed to East Jetty Park. Highlights included: a Clapper Rail family with ten small downy chicks; a distant Swainson's Hawk perched in the treetops of East Jetty Woods; and a Baird's Sandpiper at East Jetty Park. We saw migrants dropping in to acacias while at East Jetty Park, so after adding a few Neotropical migrant species there we eagerly headed east to Willow Island where we were met by a nice assortment of migrants, including singing Cerulean and Golden-winged warblers, and topped off by a Great Kiskadee, heard only by most of the participants, as it moved eastward along the chenier. For lunch, some picnicked at Willow Island and others continued west to T-boy's in Creole. The afternoon was spent at the Oak Grove Sanctuary. With the last diehard participants, we headed back westwards and checked "behind courthouse" and concluded around 6 PM. It was a gorgeous day, clear and rather dry, high to only 82 F with winds NE 5-10 gradually shifting more easterly. Our field trip tallied 153 species.

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S29217171>

- Steve Cardiff, Chair, LOS LBRC

LOS Grant Deadline

The deadline for applying for an LOS grant is January 15, 2017. All proposals must be based on Louisiana Birds and the study should be a situation unique to Louisiana. Priority is given to studies addressing current problems and issues in Louisiana ornithology or bird conservation in Louisiana habitats. The researcher must be a member of the Louisiana Ornithological Society. Further Details can be found on the LOS website <http://losbird.org/bulletin/grant.htm>.

Please email your submissions to joellefinley@bellsouth.net.

POLLING ALL MEMBERS

LOS News online and LOS Meetings:
input needed

We would like to poll the membership about LOS Meetings and the LOS News. Please take a few minutes to help us out with our Survey Monkey questionnaire and provide your input for meetings and *LOS News*. It is totally anonymous unless you provide hints as to your identity. Please visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CKWR6RC>.

Thank you!

In Memoriam

LOS is sad to report the recent passing of several members:

Shannon Antoine July 2016 Lacombe, LA

David Dauphin July 2015 Mission TX

Joseph P. Kleiman, April 13, 2016 Baton Rouge
(LBRC Member)

Joanne Kleiman, June 1, 2016 Baton Rouge

INTRODUCING TOM, GRACE AND LOS

Baton Rouge Audubon Society and Louisiana Bird Observatory:
Prothonotary Warbler Geolocator Study

Erik Johnson, Director of Bird Conservation for Louisiana Audubon, gave a very informative talk on Friday night of the LOS Spring Meeting. He explained how the geolocator study revealed the first-ever mapped migration route of a Prothonotary Warbler. The goal in 2016 is to band and place geolocators on 20 warblers during the spring and summer. With the help of many donors, Erik was able to purchase 22 geolocators. LOS was able to sponsor three birds for 2016. Two geolocators were purchased from donations received in memory of Dr. Marshall (Tom) Eyster. Tom and Grace were early members and officers of LOS influential in LOS history and two of the tagged warblers will be named "Tom" and "Grace" in their honor. The third LOS-sponsored warbler will be named "LOS." We hope our birds will be relocated and look forward to seeing their migration data. Wishing good nesting and travels for all Prothonotary Warblers. We also wish to congratulate Erik for receiving the LOS President's awards this year. He is doing amazing work with and for Louisiana birds. Thank you to all who sponsored geolocators on birds this year.

- *Judith O'Neale*, LOS Treasurer

PROTHONOTARY UPDATE: BREEDING SEASON 2016

Audubon Louisiana deployed 22 geolocators on Prothonotary Warblers this past summer, thanks in part to support from LOS and its members! These small devices store estimates of locations where a bird is on every given day of the year (see image on page 2), but we need to retrieve these units the following spring to recover the information. We have a fairly intimate knowledge of the breeding histories of many of the birds at our study sites, and we were able to strategically target the deployment on many birds that were two to four years old and had high breeding success, thus would have the best chance of returning next spring.

In addition to deploying geolocators, we followed 81 nesting attempts at boxes we placed at four sites: Palmetto Island State Park, Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, and Lake Martin. We also color-banded 87 new birds this season and relocated 24 that had returned from previous years. Because Prothonotary Warblers typically return to the same breeding site year after year, we can use this information to estimate annual survivorship probabilities. And by also collecting feather and toenail samples from birds we capture, we can connect how wintering events affect breeding success. The brightness of crown feathers grown on wintering grounds provide information about winter habitat quality related to diet, and stable isotopes in toe nails provide information about winter habitat moisture levels.

Similar information being collected by partners in Arkansas, Ohio, Virginia, and South Carolina will give us an entirely new perspective on what Prothonotary Warblers need, and what we can do to help recover their populations. We are already learning that many Prothonotary Warblers from all over the breeding range appear to be converging on central Colombia during the winter, perhaps for the first time identifying a priority conservation region for this species on the non-breeding grounds.

We are grateful to the support of several volunteers, especially John Hartgerink, Jed Pitre, and Charlie Pfeifer, who helped check on nest boxes at Bluebonnet Swamp and Jean Lafitte NP, as well as two undergraduate LSU interns, Ryan Hudgins and Madeline Macfarland, who collectively provided over 700 hours of their time to monitor boxes and locate birds. We also thank everyone who sponsored our Prothonotary Warbler geolocator deployment this year!

And now we wait until next spring, where we hope to recover as many geolocators as possible to learn more about what Louisiana's Prothonotary Warblers do on the wintering grounds.

- *Erik I. Johnson*, Audubon Louisiana

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	*Please add \$2.00 for foreign subscriptions
___ Family:	\$25.00/yr	
___ Junior (under 14):	\$7.50/yr	**Installments may be arranged for Life memberships
___ 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**	

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

LOS MEMBER ESSAY

Twitching and Big Lists in Louisiana

The term “twitching” comes to North America from Great Britain and refers to birders chasing previously located rare birds. Therefore, the term is broader than simply chasing a bird for your life list. A long trip may be required to add birds to his/her life list but most of the birds at the destination will be expected residents or migrants.

Most intent Louisiana birders will take long intra-state trips to “twitch” rare birds. Rare is defined here as birds seen very infrequently in and/or not previously recorded in the state. The Louisiana Rare Bird Committee’s (LBRC) Review List is their official list of rare species and adjudicates reports of these species. The LBRC was established by the Louisiana Ornithology Society (LOS) and can be accessed through its website www.losbird.org.

So far in 2016, three especially rare birds have been recorded. In January, avid birder Dr. Charlie Lyon found an immature Mew Gull at Cross Lake, a state first record. Charlie went way out of his way to take birders by boat to “twitch” the gull. In March, an elderly widow found a Lesser Goldfinch in her Alexandria yard. She did not want to be overwhelmed by birders wishing to “twitch” this 5th state record. So, visitation was limited to a few birders to document this record. In July, a Mexican Violetear was found at a residence in the Minden area and those homeowners similarly also opted to not widely open their home for this 3rd state record.

Each year there are several LBRC Review List birds reported, usually via the LABIRD state bird listserv, Facebook pages, or eBird (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology’s massive bird record keeping system). Bird sightings posted on these online resources have really assisted avid birders to expand their Louisiana state life, parish, and year lists. Most reports involve birds that are accessible and can be ‘twitched.’ Big lists require being able to twitch rare birds.

So, what is a really good Louisiana state year list? 300+ species is a good goal and easily achieved by avid birders. To date, only five birders are known to have ever exceeded 345 species in one year. The current leader is Charlie Lyon and with his list (posted at eBird) reports 356 species in 2015. To date, I’ve been able to muster 346.

The state bird list totals 482 species (with addition of aforementioned Mew Gull) but this total includes species not likely encountered: extinct Passenger Pigeon and Carolina Parakeet, and possibly also extinct Eskimo Curlew, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, and Bachman’s Warbler (although many still hold out hope). Greater Prairie-Chicken and Whooping Crane are extirpated from Louisiana, although there is an ongoing effort to re-introduce the crane at this time. There are 152 species on the LBRC Review List.

A lifetime state list of over 400 species is quite an achievement because the Louisiana state list includes quite a few species that have been seen fewer than 5 times. And, a number of seabirds rarely appear near or on shore. I know of only 15 or so individuals that have reached that total and the highest list I’ve heard about, exceeds over 430.

Who keeps records? There’s no official state list total official and no state repository for personal lists. In 2002 the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology and the Audubon Society launched a citizen science program referred to as eBird (www.ebird.org). Anyone can establish an account and submit current and/or historical birding records. With such an account, the individual has a permanent record of all of his/her bird sightings. The eBird system is truly international. In the USA, it can generate lists from checklists submitted for county (parish, of course, in Louisiana), state, region, and country. State experts screen submissions to catch errors, including sometimes misidentifications and to prompt observers to submit additional documentation for unusual reports (including 3 X 5 cards and long forms). Summaries allow users to see who has the highest eBird list totals.

The American Birding Association (ABA) (www.aba.org) maintains a “Listing Central” option for members. This permits them to put their totals for various political subdivisions including county (parish), state, country, etc. However, you only enter a number and this is not based on species recorded on your checklist, which eBird does. There is no referee for ABA lists. They are all on the “honor system”.

Does every avid birder submit lists that can be accessed by others? No. Some simply don’t know about options like eBird and ABA’s Listing Central. Others choose to not submit their reports, records or list totals. So, the numbers one finds at these two locations are not necessarily complete. In fact, there are no comprehensive repositories of this information.

BIRDING SHOULD BE FUN - whether you go twitching to compete against yourself or others do consider submitting of eBird lists, 3 X 5 cards, and LBRC long forms to contribute to compilation of data on Louisiana bird distribution. Louisiana bird records are archived at the LSU Museum of Natural History through the Louisiana Bird Resource Office (www.lsu.edu/science/birdoffice/). These are recorded in the form of Important Bird Records aka 3x5 cards, which now also can be submitted electronically. The LOS’s LBRC collects and reviews reports of Review List species submitted on “Long Forms”. Unfortunately, submitting a Long Form submission DOES NOT automatically result in submission of a 3x5 card (or vice versa). One must submit separate forms to make sure that a report is properly registered.

LOS Member Essay, Continued on page 7

LOUISIANA BIRDING NEWS



Louisiana
Ornithological
Society

The Great Floods of 2016

The volume of water that moved through the human landscape was simply inconceivable – urban, rural, and agricultural areas – flood damage was widespread across south Louisiana following a nearly stationary inland tropical depression beginning Friday August 12, which dumped rain for 39+ hours and with over 30 inches of rain in some areas. Six rivers hit record levels (by feet, not inches) - 4 trillion gallons of water and nowhere to go but spread outwards, causing massive backwater flooding across the Louisiana landscape. LOS expresses its sympathy to all those impacted. We know that hope, strength, and goodwill among our citizens will shine through in these times of sadness, distress, and suffering. Our agricultural communities and wildlife habitats were also impacted by this event. Please consider making a donation to charitable organizations or lending a helping hand to help speed the recovery of our State, its citizens, and wildlife.

Louisiana's Whooping Cranes

This summer Louisiana was able to celebrate the first successful nesting of Whooping Cranes in Louisiana since 1939. Taking place in Jefferson Davis Parish, this success was due to the hard work of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries reintroduction project. Our state's first chick LW1-16 is now as big as the parents. Great work LDWF personnel! We look forward to the day when Whooping Cranes are again a familiar site in our SW working wetlands area.

Follow our cranes at:

<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes>

Follow the birds and the project at Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/lawhoopingcranes/?fref=ts>

Sadly, four more of our cranes were recently shot, two in Acadia Parish this past May and two in Texas in December 2015. An article about the Texas incident (the offender was apprehended) and how personal attitudes directly impact species recovery efforts can be found in this informative article in *Texas Monthly*:

<http://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/whooping-cranes-texas/>

The State of North American Birds 2016

The report investigated 1154 native species in the USA, Canada, and Mexico by habitat: oceans, coasts, boreal, temperate, and tropical forests, grasslands, and wetlands. One third of all North American Bird species need urgent conservation actions. Not surprising, pelagic and tropical forest species are most imperiled with 57% of the species considered of high concern. There were steep declines for coastal, aridland, and grassland species, with shorebirds topping the list with declines of nearly 70% of continental species. <http://www.stateofthebirds.org/2016/>

Farther afield

Birds Are Back At Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Although the Malheur NWR occupation now seems long ago, we did want to highlight the GOHOME campaign, which encouraged people to pledge financial support to the refuge each day during the takeover. LOS donated \$200 to this effort. Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge raised more than \$135,000 to support the refuge. Before the occupation, Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge had about 200 members and now it has thousands. An article from the spring: "Birds Are Back At Malheur National Wildlife Refuge" <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-birds-are-back-malheur-national-wildlife-refuge> is worth a read. As birders, we need to support our public lands and be mindful of potential misuse. Closer to home, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation recently passed a Resolution 5B, 2016 that includes support for maintaining public lands and their proper management and oppose transfer of federal lands to state or private interests.

In our backyard

Dramatic changes potentially coming to Cameron

With construction of the LNG terminal(s) looming, LOS's meetings in the town of Cameron may be impacted for the next few years. Fingers crossed that construction will not be geared up by the time of the Fall 2016 meeting so that the only hotel in town will not be permanently full with construction workers (register ASAP, just in case). By next spring however, Cameron may be a very different place once construction begins, not only its impact on availability of lodging but also access to some of the town's traditional birding sites. We will investigate an alternate location for the Spring 2017 meeting as well as subsequent meetings during the building process. We encourage members to attend this Fall Meeting because it could be potentially our last meeting in Cameron until construction is completed. The Cameron landscape will be forever changed with construction of the LNG facility.

- Donna L. Dittmann, LOS News Editor

LOS Member Essay, Continued from page 6

If you have the time, resources and inclination it's fun to twitch birds in Louisiana. In the process you are likely to learn a great deal about the state's geography and bird distribution. Those who are already twitchers know this to be true. But, please remember to respect private property and be a responsible birder.

Helpful links:

eBird: <http://ebird.org>

ABA list central: <http://listing.aba.org/front/>

LBRC: <http://www.losbird.org/lbrc/lbrc.htm>

Louisiana Bird Resource: <http://www.lsu.edu/science/birdoffice/>

LABIRD: <http://birding.aba.org/maillist/LA>

- Jay V. Huner, Louisiana Ecrevisse, Boyce, LA

Mark Your Calendars January 27-29, 2017: LOS Winter Meeting

The LOS 2017 Winter Meeting will be held in Baton Rouge and will be hosted by the LSU Museum of Natural Science. The Friday evening program will consist of a reception at LSUMNS and behind the scenes tour of the LSUMNS research collections. Banquet and Saturday evening meeting will be held at The Club on campus. Dr. J. V. Remsen, Curator of Section of Ornithology, will be the Saturday evening speaker. Further details will appear in the upcoming newsletter and at the LOS website.

Winter Hummingbirds

It is that season already and winter hummingbirds are arriving in Louisiana gardens. Don't forget to report

LNG comes to Cameron

Venture Global LNG and the Cameron Jetty Pier

A cooperative endeavor agreement signed by the Cameron Parish Police Jury and Venture Global LNG in May defines the future status of Davis Road and the Jetty Pier Park in Cameron, a favorite birding location for many. Under the agreement, Davis Road will be abandoned south of the present DeHyCo shore base so a ship berth can be established along the Calcasieu Ship Channel. The ship berth will eliminate the existing boat launch. No new road access to the Jetty Pier Park will be created. Instead, a new boat launch, RV park and marina will be built by Venture Global at the north end of Davis Road. A water shuttle will be set up to provide access to the Jetty Pier. Details of operation are still to be worked out. It is unclear whether access to East Jetty Woods will still be allowed, for security reasons. Traffic along Davis Road will become heavy when construction starts on the LNG facility, so even though the oxidation pond area will still be open, stopping along the road will not be safe for a few years.

On the plus side, Venture Global will build a new restaurant near the marina, and there are rumors of a new hotel in the future. Mainstay Suites has started construction on a 62-unit three-story hotel in Hackberry, to open in early 2017. The owner has expressed interest in a Cameron location.

Venture Global has reduced the footprint of its proposed facility, largely due to the cost of wetlands mitigation. This should move the construction area back somewhat from the Jetty Pier park and beach.

A bond validation suit will be heard in 38th Judicial Court (Cameron) on Sept. 7 to confirm the terms of the CEA. The FERC is still working toward a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. When it is released, probably this fall, there will be a public hearing for comments on the project. More information may be available by the time of the LOS Fall Meeting in Cameron.

- Cyndi Sellers, Cameron Pilot

your observations to Erik I. Johnson: ejohnson@audubon.org.

The LOS Winter Meeting will include a field trip to area gardens to look for these gems.

For more information: <http://www.braudubon.org/feedhummer.php>.

There is also a Facebook page dedicated to winter hummingbirds: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/winterhummingbirds/>



LOS COMMITTEE UPDATES

Louisiana Bird Records Committee

The LBRC's 2016 Annual Meeting (originally scheduled for 12 March but was postponed due to heavy rains and local flooding) took place on 11 June 2016 at the LSU Museum of Natural Science. Business included resolving fourth circulation records and Member elections. Curt Sorrells retired from the LBRC and Daniel F. Lane was elected as his replacement. In addition to myself (Chair) and Dan, current Members include: Paul E. Conover, John K. Dillon, Donna L. Dittmann (Secretary), Robert C. Dobbs, Erik I. Johnson, Nancy L. Newfield, and Phillip A. Wallace. Complete information about this Meeting is published in the LBRC's *Annual Report 2016*. The newsletter also includes the *Nineteenth Report of the Louisiana Bird Records Committee*, which resolves 198 records and accepts three new species to the State List: Sooty Shearwater, Mew Gull, and Pyrrhuloxia, which brings the official Louisiana State List to 482 species. For complete information see: <http://www.losbird.org/lbrc/lbrc.htm>. The LBRC has also launched a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1054650801280355/>. Send a request to join.

- Steven W. Cardiff, LBRC Chair

Follow LOS on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Louisiana-Ornithological-Society-222302401166552/?fref=ts>

Willet be split?

Recent LSUMNS project could add another species to the State List

Two subspecies of Willet are currently recognized, *Tringa semipalmata semipalmata* ("Eastern" Willet) and *T. s. inornata* ("Western" Willet). Easterns breed in salt and brackish marshes on the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf coasts, and Westerns breed in wetlands in the interior of Western North America. Both species are migratory, with Westerns wintering along the east coast from South Carolina to Mexico and the Caribbean, and along the Pacific Coast from California to Chile. It is generally assumed that Eastern Willets vacate their breeding range to winter farther south along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts from Mexico to Brazil (migration tracks of two Atlantic Easterns can be viewed at: <http://biodiversityworksmv.org/our-projects/tracking-willet-migration/>). Most Willets are generally believed to first breed when two years or older; many non-breeding sub-adults remain on or near their wintering grounds.

The idea that there are two species of Willets has been floating around among birders for many years following the 1998 study by H. D. Douglas III (<https://sora.unm.edu/sites/default/files/journals/auk/v115n02/p0514-p0518.pdf>), who described song differences between subspecies and that the subspecies did not respond to each other's song. In anticipation of an eventual split, many birders have been paying attention to differences in appearance, vocalizations, and natural history between these two subspecies, e.g., see article in *Birding* by Michael O'Brien: <https://www.aba.org/birding/v38n3p40.pdf>. However, it is important to realize that identification of some individuals *is not straightforward* and it is important to not fall into a hypothesis driven only by positive feedback that will be self-fulfilling: *'it is because it is'* based on perceived/assumed temporal or behavioral attributes. You can designate Willets to subspecies in your eBird lists, but realize that identification beyond "Willet" may be challenged until ID characters and patterns of occurrence can be refined.

Now, LSUMNS researchers (see Oswald et. al. 2016: <http://www.aoucospubs.org/doi/abs/10.1642/AUK-15-232.1>) have taken a closer look at the genetics of Willet subspecies. This study picked samples from breeding and non-breeding areas to test relative genetic differences between the subspecies. In this preliminary study, samples from breeding populations were limited to only a few sites (including just one interior, zero Caribbean localities). Nevertheless, results show that the subspecies have very different DNA profiles, with 100% discrimination of individuals to subspecies. No signs of hybridization were detected, which is probably not surprising considering their allopatric breeding distributions, but this had to be considered because individuals of both subspecies can occur together in some areas during the breeding season. The publication recommends that two species be recognized. Whether or not the AOU eventually accepts this recommendation remains to be seen, but an expanded, more comprehensive study is certainly warranted.

If the AOU splits Willet, then a "new" species would be added to the State List! What does this mean for Louisiana observers in the meantime? It's time to look more closely at Willets, if you haven't already been doing so. The best time of year to test usefulness of currently proposed identification characters is during the spring and, especially, summer, when both subspecies are present along our coast. At this time, Easterns will be involved with breeding activities: adults will be in breeding plumage, singing, and tending nests or young. Non-breeding and summering Westerns will be in non-breeding or partial breeding plumage. It is not uncommon in some areas to have Easterns and Westerns foraging or roosting side-by-side on Gulf mudflats or beaches adjacent to salt marsh. Some individuals will stand out as being structurally obvious, others not so much. Review the article by O'Brien (reference above). Migrant Willets inland will most likely be Westerns, as will be birds present in LA during the winter. However, this does not mean that *all individuals* present at this time are Western Willets – but that is a good place to start.

Let's test our skills during LOS Meeting field trips. Until then,
- Donna L. Dittmann and Steven W. Cardiff,
 LSUMNS



Photo by Donna L. Dittmann

Eastern (left) and Western Willets at Port Fourchon on 5 April 2011.

WELCOME NEW LOS MEMBERS

Richard Crowell, Alexandria, LA
 Patrick Hollis, Winnsboro, LA
 Mark Pethke, Baton Rouge, LA
 Elise Read, Baton Rouge, LA



Judith O'Neale
Louisiana Ornithological Society
504 Whitebark Drive
Lafayette, LA 70508

*Dues are payable in January of each year;
 please check your date on mailing label.*

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**PRE-Register for FALL Meeting
 by FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14th
 to ensure that our new meal option plan works.
 See registration form below.**

- PRE-REGISTRATION FORM -
LOS 2016 FALL MEETING – OCTOBER 28-29
CAMERON, LA
 REGISTRATION DEADLINE: OCTOBER 14, 2016

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

Number registering for Saturday's dinner _____ at \$15.00/person = \$ _____

Please indicate entrée choice:

- _____ Option 1 – Chicken & Sausage gumbo
- _____ Option 2 – Fried Catfish
- _____ Option 3 – Vegetarian Pasta Alfredo

\$ _____

Total meeting

Membership Dues enclosed + \$ _____

Donation enclosed + \$ _____

\$ _____

Total enclosed

Please complete form and mail with check or money order payable to LOS to:

Judith O'Neale
504 Whitebark Drive, Lafayette LA 70508
jloneale@aol.com

or register online at: <http://losbird.org/meetings.htm>