LOS Winter Field Trips
All trips Saturday, January 30

Once again, LOS is making the best of a bad situation due to COVID. Because our 2021 Winter meeting is virtual, we’re hosting statewide field trips instead of regional ones to accommodate as many people as possible. Here’s all you need to know:

Who can go? Trips are open only to LOS members in good standing.

How do I sign up? First, please note that you no one can sign up until AFTER the Thursday, Jan 28, 2021, virtual meeting (starts at 6:30pm). To sign up, please email Donna Dittmann at donnaldittmann@gmail.com. You can also sign up your spouse or a friend. She’ll need the name, email address, and cell phone number of all participants. As soon as any trip is filled, Donna will post that information on all regular venues.

Clothing? Obviously, dress for that day’s temperatures and weather, but also please wear muted colors (no large amounts of white, day-glo anything, red, orange, etc.). Please also bring along extra footwear such as hiking boots or waterproof boots.

Gear? Binoculars are a must, of course. If you like, please bring your digital camera. Scopes are a plus, but they are not required. (Scopes are not be needed on the Cross Lake trip or the rail banding trip)

COVID details? LOS wants all leaders and participants to be responsible and considerate of others, especially during the pandemic. Please wear masks inside ANY building. Please do not carpool at any time unless you are always with that person (spouse, etc.). Please stay at least 6 feet apart at all times, even when outside. Please bring along your own disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer; scopes may need to be wiped down if people are sharing views through the same scope. If you are feeling ill, PLEASE stay home. We’ll be having field trips all year, so there’s no need to risk your health or anyone else’s.

Capacity? The capacity numbers for each trip are listed below; the number listed does NOT include the trip leader.

What if something changes? If any trip details should change due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, you will be contacted either by your trip leader or possibly by Donna.

eBird? All leaders will keep eBird lists and will be happy to share them with you if you will supply them with your eBird user name.

NORTH LA TRIPS:

#1: Birding Cross Lake with Charlie Lyon and LBRC Member Larry Raymond: Enjoy four chances to bird Cross Lake with morning and afternoon trips! No one knows Cross Lake birding better than Charlie Lyon. Charlie and Larry will each have a boat and will make morning and afternoon trips to accommodate as many people as possible. Look for highlights like Lesser Black-backed Gull and hopefully be the first to spot “Waldo,” the returning Western Grebe. Meet at the Shreveport Yacht Club at 8:00am for the morning trip or at 2:00pm for the afternoon trip. Charlie’s boat and Larry’s boat each accommodate 4 people (8 people total for morning and another 8 for the afternoon). Note: if weather is uncooperative, you will be contacted by the leaders prior to the date, and the trip will instead focus on local highlight species like Harris’s Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, and Sprague’s Pipit.
#2: LSU Hill Farm with LOS President John Dillon: Bird the private-access LSU Hill Farm in Claiborne Parish with a focus on sparrow ID, pishing techniques, and habitat requirements for open country and thicket birds. The LSU Hill Farm is 1488 acres of rolling pastures and ponds, surrounded by forest and second growth. John has documented 18 species of sparrow there. Some walking will be required, possibly through grassy fields. Meet at John’s house at 183 Dance Road in Athens, LA (30 minutes NE of Ruston) at 7:00am. Bird til around noon. If all are interested, the meeting time can be changed to 6:30am in order to observe American Woodcock.

#3: Poverty Point Reservoir State Park with Gerry Click: Ducks and other waterfowl should be in good numbers on this protected reservoir during this last weekend of duck season. Hone your ID skills with long-time birder Gerry Click around the reservoir of this wonderful new state park established in 2005. Scopes strongly encouraged for this trip. Meet at the south entrance of the state park (just north of Delhi) at 7:00am. Accommodates 10 people.

#4: Black Bayou NWR with Gerry Click: For an afternoon trip, meet long-time birder Gerry Click in the parking lot of the Black Bayou NWR Visitor’s Center in Monroe at 2:00pm and bird til dusk. Walking is required to get around most of the refuge. Waterfowl, raptors, songbirds, and more can be expected, and hopefully owls at dusk. Accommodates 12 people.

SOUTH LA TRIPS:

#5: Cameron Parish Rail Banding with Audubon Director of Bird Conservation, Dr. Erik Johnson: If you’re up for an adventure, this is the trip for you! Join Dr. Erik Johnson, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Louisiana as he and his team search for, find, and band rails. Highlight species are the sought after Yellow Rails and Black Rails, widely considered to be the two most elusive bird species in North America, along with Virginia and Clapper Rails, Sora, and possibly hunting Barn Owls. You should be in overall good physical condition for this trip, as it will require walking through a salt marsh while pulling a drag line and carrying gear - at night. Be sure to discuss proper attire and gear with Erik before going! Because of banding on private property, the location of this trip will not be published; Erik will supply everyone with meeting location and time information prior to the trip. However, you can expect to meet just before sunset in Cameron Parish, along Hwy 27/82 and anywhere between a couple miles west of Calcasieu Pass and Broussard Beach. Accommodates 6 people.

#6: Lacassine NWR and environs with LOS Vice-President David Booth: Bird the always productive Lacassine NWR for waterfowl, raptors, and much more with David Booth. Sandhill Cranes will also be a target for this trip. The eBird bar chart for Lacassine property shows 150 species for January, so there's plenty of diversity, and walking should be limited. Meet at Burton Colosseum in Lake Charles at 7am. Bird all day. Accommodates 12 people.

#7: Spanish Lake with LOS Board Member and Audubon Louisiana’s Katie Barnes: Spanish Lake is a beautiful 1200 acre lake that lies mostly in Iberia Parish with some of the lake in St. Martin Parish. In addition to the scenery, you can expect target birds such as waterfowl, wading birds, and winter songbirds, and you'll learn a lot about identification from Katie as you bird this half-day trip. Participants will drive around the loop with occasional stops to scan the lake using scopes and bird the woods bordering the lake. There will be times when the group will venture for about a 1 mile on foot for better viewing opportunities, so sturdy footwear is recommended. Meet at 7:00am at Spanish Lake Road (south end of the lake) in Iberia Parish, and bring $2 to be paid at the booth to the left as you enter. Accommodates 6 people.
#8: LSU/Capitol Lakes Area and Rarities with Matt Brady: This winter has already produced some great rarities around the downtown Baton Rouge area, like Vaux's Swift, White-winged Scoter, and a first-Parish record Black-throated Gray Warbler, along with other tough-to-get birds like Greater Scaup and Western Tanager. Let LSU's own Matt Brady show you the best birds in downtown BR, and learn lots of expert advice and ID tips from a great birder. Meet at the parking area along Capitol Access Rd., just north of the State Capitol building at 7:00am. Accommodates 8 people.

#9: Beginning Birder Trip in Tangipahoa Parish with Baton Rouge Audubon's Jane Patterson: Jane has long taught birders to beginners. Join her for an instructive morning field trip at various locations that are perfect for anyone new to birding. You'll start by walking the Joyce WMA boardwalk and 1/2 mile gravel road, then bird the Ponchatoula Wastewater Treatment Plant (restricted access) for waterfowl, and possibly make a quick trip to the Pass Manchac area. And if for some reason the birding's slow that day, your lunch at Middendorf's afterward is still guaranteed to please! Meet at 7:00am in the parking lot of CJ Antiques in downtown Ponchatoula; that's 160 SE Railroad Avenue. Accommodates 8 people.

#10: Grand Isle and Port Fourchon with LBRC member Casey Wright: Bird the ponds of Port Fourchon just outside Grand Isle, then bird hot spots of the island like Elmer's Island Refuge, Exxon Fields, Landry-Leblanc Tract, and Grilleta Tract. Expect Gulf birds like gulls and terns, of course, but you also should pick up cool finds like Reddish Egret, various shorebirds, raptors, and a better than average chance of rarities. Bird most of the day, with Jo'Bob's for lunch. Meet at 8am at Moran's Marina in Port Fourchon and the corner of Hwys 1 and 3090 as you are coming off the toll bridge. Accommodates 10 people.