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LOS WINTER MEETING

Abita Springs, Louisiana
29 - 30 January 2027

The Louisiana Ornithological Society's 2027 Winter Meeting will be in Abita Springs in St. Tammany Parish and will be co-hosted by our friends in the Audubon Abita Bird Club and Orleans Audubon Society. All evening events will be at the Abita Springs Town Hall. Formal field trips will be Saturday, and various private properties are available for self-guided birding Friday prior to the Friday night meeting.

The hotel for LOS Winter Meeting will be the Holiday Inn in Covington at 45 Louis Prima Drive. LOS has a room block until 28 December, 2026, so please ask for the LOS group rate of $119.00 plus tax per night for a single king room or $129.00 plus tax per night for a double queen, which is available from Thursday the 28th through Sunday the 31st. Registration for the weekend will be $25.00. If you'd like a Saturday dinner it may be reserved for an additional $25.00/person. For other information on local news and events, please visit https://www.townofabitasprings.com/ Hope to see you there!

Winter also means it's Christmas Bird Count season again! This season's list of CBC dates and compilers can be found on pages 9 - 10 of the newsletter, and upcoming LOS field trips can be found on pages 12 -13.

LOS PUBLICATIONS

LOS News

Editor: **John K. Dillon**
183 Dance Rd., Athens, LA 71003;
318-243-2284; merlin183@yahoo.com

Issue submission deadlines:
Spring: 10 February
Fall: 1 August
Winter: 1 November

Journal of Louisiana Ornithology

Editor: **Robert C. Dobbs**
105 Beechwood Dr.,
Lafayette, LA 70503
rcdobbs@gmail.com

LBRC Newsletter

Editor: temporarily open.

LOS WEBSITE

LOS Webmaster: **Paul E. Conover**
zoiseaux@lusfiber.net

LBRC WEBSITE

LBRC Webmaster: **Rob Dobbs**
rcdobbs@gmail.com

LOS FACEBOOK GROUP

Group name: LOS - Louisiana Ornithological Society

Facebook Administrators:
John Dillon, David Booth, and Mark Pethke (emails on previous page)

LOS Committee Chairs

Awards: **James Smithers**
jamessmithers.js@gmail.com
Conservation: **Elise Read**
readelise@gmail.com
Education: **Jane Patterson**
seejanebird@gmail.com
Field Trip Series: **Melissa Weaver**
melissaweaverbird@gmail.com
LBRC: **Rob Dobbs**
rcdobbs@gmail.com
Membership: temporatily open

Hospitality: **Paul and Cathy Schaub**
schaubpaulcarol@yahoo.com

Events for Friday, 29 January 2027:
Abita Springs Town Hall
22161 Level Street

6:00 - 6:30 PM. Registration. Sandwiches and chips. Please no BYOB; alcohol not allowed on the premises. Thanks.
6:30 PM. Welcome Members and Field Trip announcements.
6:45 - 7:30 PM. Program: "The Wintering Ecology of Common Loons" by Meirun Zhang.

Meirun Zhang is a graduate student at Tulane University and is originally from China. No loons there, but there are plenty for her to study along the coast and along the watery by-ways on South Louisiana. Quoting LOS Treasurer Mark Pethke, "Loons are like puffins. Who doesn't love them?" So, please don't miss Meirun's presentation on the ecology of lovable loons in Louisiana!



Events for Saturday, 30 January 2027:

Field trips: Field trip registrations will be made Friday night at the meeting. Please be sure to give your cell phone number and your eBird user name to your trip leader. Remember to top-off your fuel tank before any field trip outing! Access to any Louisiana Wildlife Management area requires a lifetime, Senior or Louisiana Sportsman's license. Yearly license is $20 or a 5-day license is $5. https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/wmas-refuges-and-conservation-areas

LOS leadership also asks all members present for the meeting to submit proper documentation of any Review List species to the Louisiana Bird Records Committee as soon as possible. The LBRC webpage is http://www.losbird.org/lbrc/lbrc.htm.

Saturday field trip plans and details are still being finalized at the time of the newsletter. As soon as all information is complete, LOS will make it available to all members via LABIRD, the LOS website, the LOS Facebook page, and group emails.

Events for Saturday, 30 January 2027:
Abita Springs Town Hall
22161 Level Street

6:00 - 6:30 PM: Welcome and Registration.

6:30 - 7:00 PM. Dinner. $25 per person and available only through pre-registration. Dinner a choice of Blackened Chicken Alfredo or Chicken and Andouille Jambalaya, served with a house salad, wildberry pecan salad, or Pontchatoula strawberry salad, green beans, carrot souffle, and white chocolate bread pudding or blackberry cobbler. Drinks: Iced tea and water. If you desire a special diet meal, you are welcome to bring your own. Alcohol is strictly forbidden. **Deadline for dinner reservation is 15 January.**

7:00 - 8:00 PM. Program: "Fifty Years of Changes to Louisiana's Birds: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of the publication of George Lowery's Louisiana Birds." - David Muth

Any bird checklist produced during a full day afield in Louisiana today will include an assortment of bird species and numbers of birds that would have been inconceivable over fifty years ago in 1974. That year saw the publication of the third and final edition of George H. Lowery's Jr's Louisiana Birds, the last comprehensive guide to Louisiana's birds. It also happens that David Muth has been birding for just over 50 years here in Louisiana, which provides him with a fitting moment to look back. But a lot has changed over those five decades, and using Lowery's 1974 list as a baseline for comparison allows us to make interesting comparisons between then and now. Dr. Lowery, then the Boyd Professor of Ornithology at LSU and the Director of the Museum of Natural Science, accepted 411 species to the "official"state list. The "official" state list today stands at 498 species. But in addition to the total number of detected and accepted species, there have also been dramatic changes in the populations and distribution of species, and on the times of year when they can be expected in our state.



David Muth is retired from the National Park Service and National Wildlife Federation. A native of New Orleans, David has had a lifelong love of the delta, including its landscapes, history, culture, and wildlife. He is an avid birder and has served as past President of the Louisiana Ornithological Society, an officer of Orleans Audubon Society, an advisor to Woodlands Trail and Park, and a regional editor covering Louisiana for North American Birds, a journal covering bird sightings and distribution. At the park service, he oversaw the Barataria Preserve at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. In 2010, he joined the NWF's Mississippi River Delta program. In that role, he served on the advisory team of every Coastal Master Plan to date, guided Deepwater Horizon oil spill funding to projects across the Gulf and conducted countless high-profile media interviews. He received the Paul Percy Viosca Jr. Outstanding Naturalist Award from the Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater New Orleans in 2017. Muth is a member of Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana's Coastal Advisory Council. In 2026 he was awarded the CRCL's Lifetime Achievement Award at its annual Coastal Stewardship Award's Program.

Winter Meeting Lodging Information:

The event hotel will be the Holiday Inn in Covington at 45 Louis Prima Drive, just east of U.S. 190 and north of I-12. Ask for the LOS group rate, $119.00 plus tax per night for a single king room or $129.00 plus tax per night for a double queen, which is available from Thursday the 28th through Sunday the 31st. The cut-off date for the room block is December 28, 2026.

The direct phone number to the hotel is (985) 888-1200. The hotel features a hot breakfast buffet every morning and the Bourbon Street Bar and Grill with happy hour from 4:30 to 7:30. To browse amenities, please go to the hotel's website at: https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/covington/msyvd/hoteldetail

Please help us extend our thanks for all those who worked so hard to plan, organize, and execute this year's LOS Winter Meeting! Thanks to members of the Orleans Audubon Society and their subgroup the Abita Bird Club as well as all of their helpful officers and members. Thanks to our guest speakers, LOS officers, LOS Board Members, and LOS Committee Chairs who played their parts in making this happen.



President's Message



Friends–

It is a great honor to be writing my first letter as your new LOS President. I am excited for the opportunity to get to know more people in the wider Louisiana birding community and to be of service to all of you and to this organization. LOS has a prestigious history, with many great birders serving as president and officers, and I hope I can live up to those standards. I am not new to birding, but I am relatively new to the birding community, and I can say in all honesty that my life has been much more fulfilling since becoming a part of it.

I believe we are seeing a significant shift in the zeitgeist around birding, with the pastime becoming much more popular and mainstream. Younger generations are taking up birding in growing numbers, bringing new energy and perspectives to what was, quite frankly, once considered an older people's pastime. This is an exciting development, particularly at a time when bird populations need all the advocates they can get. It also presents some important questions around inclusivity, accessibility, and who will inherit the future of birding. To me, one of the most amazing things about the larger birding community is that we all come from vastly different backgrounds, life experiences, and areas of expertise, yet unite around our common interest in birds. And we are better off for it!. I really cannot think of a more diverse collection of people working toward a common goal.

I am looking forward to another great seasonal change, as we slowly say goodbye to our lingering migrants and welcome our winter residents. Winter is the season of ducks and one of my absolute favorite times of year to bird. Spring migration may get all the glory, but there is something about the slowness and quiet of winter birding, exemplified by ducks on the water, that I find particularly appealing.

Our winter meeting will soon be upon us, and I am happy to report that it will be closer to my neck of the woods! My understanding is that it has been quite some time since the meeting was held in

the southeastern part of the state. The North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain has so much to offer, from hardwood bottomland to pine savanna to marshland. There will be much more to explore than we probably have time for in just a few short days, so I hope you will take some extra time, if possible, to get in plenty of great birding. Finally, I hope to see many of you at the meeting. Please introduce yourselves if we haven't met yet! For those who are unable to attend, I hope we will have the opportunity to meet in the field. This organization relies on all of its members, and, of course, on the incredible officers and volunteers who help steer the ship. With all of that support, I'm confident we are in good hands!

Looking forward to all of our birding adventures, Your President, Shae.



LOS Mobilizes Against Caturus Energy's Proposed Park-and-Ride Lot NearPeveto Woods
by Mark Pethke

The Louisiana Ornithological Society is nobody's idea of an activist organization. We're not Greenpeace, the Environmental Defense Fund, or even the Sierra Club. But on July 30 of this year Michele Long of the Cameron Parish Tourist Commission reached out to LOS and several other conservation-oriented organizations by email to enlist our aid in battling Caturus Energy's proposal to serve its upcoming construction of a new liquified natural gas plant on the west side of the Calcasieu Ship Channel by building three Park-and-Ride lots in Johnson Bayou and near Peveto Woods. Workers would park in these lots and ride shuttle buses to the construction site. The lot just a quarter mile northwest of Peveto Woods was slated to serve 900 vehicles (Coastal Use Permit application P20260563), nearly half of the proposed 2070 parking spaces deemed necessary for the project. The public had less than a week to make comments to the Department of Conservation and Energy on issuing Coastal Use Permits to allow construction of these facilities.

Since LOS is an affiliate member of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, I forwarded the information to LWF President Rebecca Triche, put the information on the LOS Facebook page, and sent an email to all LOS members requesting assistance. LWF Advocacy Director Rick Owens was enlisted to draft LWF's reply, and within days he posted a comment that comprehensively explained the issues related to traffic, light, water and noise pollution, and unanswered questions related to local water quality and fluid runoff from the lot that would threaten the wildlife in Peveto Woods and nearby areas. DCE subsequently issued a series of questions to Caturus about its permits related to traffic studies, hydrology, and pollution concerns. In the face of this opposition, the permit

process is currently halted, as local officials and Caturus negotiate further details before moving forward with any new or amended permits.

Not much was known about these talks until the opening night of the recent LOS Fall Meeting, which included brief talks from Kim Montie, Executive Director of the Cameron Parish Port, Harbor and Terminal District, and Mike Fewell, President of the Cameron Parish Police Jury. Mr. Fewell announced that the police jury's negotiations with Caturus had reduced the size of the proposed Peveto Woods lot to a capacity of 350 cars. I think he expected applause, as if this were good news, but none came, much to his surprise. We informed Mr. Fewell that 350 cars was 350 too many, that Peveto is a unique ecological asset, and that the problems of traffic, lighting, and pollution runoff are such that NO parking lot needs to be a quarter of a mile away. Mr. Fewell then stated that there was also a proposal to make the area an office park, with trailers serving as offices and minimal parking, maybe fewer than 150 cars.

The last semi-official proposal we have seen still has a 350 vehicle lot near Peveto, although other lots have been provisionally moved to areas west of Johnson Bayou and north of Hackberry. No Coastal Use Permit application has yet been amended or withdrawn to reflect these changes, or the rumored office park. Keeping traffic out of both communities limited to shuttle buses, not hundreds or thousands more vehicles, and keeping LNG workers' personal vehicles away from local libraries, schools, and Peveto Woods is a common-sense public safety and conservation goal we can all embrace. Notably, at a meeting with Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser on October 21, 2026, concerned Cameron Parish officials told him of plans for the lot near Peveto Woods and he agreed to write a letter to Caturus opposing it, immediately recognizing the threat to eco-tourism it represents, but as of the newsletter publishing deadline, the only official permit sought for the property near Peveto Woods remains the one for a 900 vehicle lot. LOS remains vigilant and will inform members of any developments.

LOS Seeks to Expand Opportunities for Birding in Cameron Parish
by Mark Pethke

Opening night of the recent LOS Fall Meeting included a brief welcome from Kim Montie, Executive Director of the Cameron Parish Port, Harbor and Terminal District, who is responsible for economic development in Cameron Parish. Along with the Cameron Parish Tourist Commission, she sought input about how better the Parish might serve birders as a

sustainable form of eco-tourism. Following up on this overture, Charlotte Chehotsky, Manager of the Peveto Woods Sanctuary, Rick Owens of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation and I attended the October 22, 2026, meeting of the Cameron Parish Tourist Commission. Ms. Montie came along with Police Jury Vice-President Sonny McGee and Police Jury Administrator Katie Armentor.

We discussed things we could do to expand the areas available for birding. The parish will assist in approaching local landowners with bird-friendly properties about granting access, supplemented by liability waivers of the kind the Louisiana Ornithological Society and other birding groups have previously used for visiting private properties. We are drawing up a list of properties to seek new or renewed access upon. The Tourist Commission has done an excellent job of informing local leaders about the economic impact of birding, and particularly how many national and international visitors it draws, and the Parish is interested in increasing non-industrial sources of income.

Efforts to access the Sabine Lighthouse property are moving slowly, but in an encouraging direction. The Lt. Governor's office is interested in adding it to the state park system in some form or another, and LWF suggested other ways to move this process along. Proposed access points on the east side would remove the need to enter through Cheniere LNG property with its associated security checks and delays. This will still be a years long process, but substantial progress is occurring toward restoring meaningful access to this critical property near the Sabine Pass.

Editor's Note: If you are interested in helping LOS or BRAS in their current pursuit of protecting Peveto Woods Sanctuary, please contact LOS/BRAS Treasurer Mark Pethke at mdpethke@gmail.com

LOS Research Grant Funding

The deadline for applying for an LOS grant is January 15 of each year. Thanks to those who submitted grant funding applications this year. The LOS board will let you know results sometime soon after the spring meeting. 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. Further Details can be found on the LOS website http://losbird.org/bulletin/grant.htm. Email your grant to Lawrence Datnoff, LOS Secretary, at ldatnoff@gmail.com.

FALL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS







Specilal thanks to LOS Members Charlie Lyon and Melissa Weaver for arranging Kenn Kaufman's visit for Fall 2026! Truly a highlight for everyone!



Time to find out how naughty or nice you've been and see what turns up on Louisiana CBCs this year! Santa's compiler elves have been working hard to set up this year's list of offerings. Compiler names and emails are below. If you think you've been extra good this year and would like to take your sleigh out for snow birds, contact the appropriate elf and ask for an assignment. Just be sure to leave them cookies!!

Over thirty CBCs are below, so no excuses for not participating, or you'll surely get coal in your stocking!!

Baton Rouge	Sat, Jan 2	katiepercy@gmail.com	Katie Percy
Catahoula	Wed, Dec 23	progne99@aol.com	Marty Floyd
Cheneyville-LeCompte	Sun, Dec 27	progne99@aol.com	Marty Floyd
Claiborne	Sun, Jan 3	merlin183@yahoo.com	John Dillon
Creole	Sun, Jan 3	erikjohnson@agcenter.lsu.edu	Erik Johnson
Crescent City	Sun, Jan 3	23joules@gmail.com	Shae Freeman`
Crowley	Wed, Dec 16	progne99@aol.com	Marty Floyd
D'Arbonne	Sat, Dec 19	merlin183@yahoo.com	John Dillon
Franklin	Sat, Dec 19	mlvanetten@yahoo.com	Mike VanEtten
Grand Isle	Tues, Dec 22	chrisbrantley@charter.net	Chris Brantley
Jackson, MS	Sat, Jan 2	stevenswaterbird@bellsouth.net	Mary Stripling
Johnson's Bayou	Mon, Dec 14	garymke@sbcglobal.net	Gary Kelley
Lacassine-Thornwell	Thurs, Dec 17	rcdobbs@gmail.com	Rob Dobbs
Lafayette	Sat, Dec 26	erikjohnson@agcenter.lsu.edu	Erik Johnson

Lake Charles	Mon, Dec 28	jamessmithers.js@gmail.com	James Smithers
Natchez, MS	Sat, Jan 2	bstrader2@yahoo.com	Bob Strader
Natchitoches	Mon, Dec 28	lrraymond@aol.com	Larry Raymond
New Iberia	Sun, Dec 20	susanhesteredmunds@yahoo.com	Susan Edmunds
New Orleans	Sun, Dec 27	23joules@gmail.com	Shae Freeman`
Northshore/Slidell	Sat, Dec 19	wrihner@gmail.com	Wendy Rihner
Palmetto Island	Mon, Jan 4	guidrys@cox.net	Toddy Guidry
Pine Prairie	Sat, Jan 2	progne99@aol.com	Marty Floyd
Red River NWR	Sat, Dec 19	cpersiadesign@gmail.com	Caleb Persia
Reserve/ Bonnet Carre	Sat, Dec 26	chrisbrantley@charter.net	Chris Brantley
Sabine	Sun, Dec 27	nuthatch829@gmail.com	Katie Barnes
Shreveport	Fri, Dec 18	lyon5516@bellsouth.net	Charlie Lyon
St. Tammany Parish	Tues, Dec 29	chrisbrantley@charter.net	Chris Brantley
Sweet Lake-Cam Prairie	Sun, Dec 20	rcdobbs@gmail.com	Rob Dobbs
Thibodaux	Sat, Jan 2	delaina@btnep.org	Delaina LeBlanc
Venice	Wed, Dec 30	johnnygnelsoniv@gmail.com	John Nelson
Vicksburg	Sat, Dec 19	stevenswaterbird@bellsouth.net	Mary Stripling
White Lake	Mon, Dec 14	rcdobbs@gmail.com	Rob Dobbs



SAY HELLO TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS!!

Grace and Caroline Bauer, Sulphur, LA
Daniel Brennan, Whitefish Bay, WI
Olivia Butler and Connor Gable, Sykesville, MD
George Castille, Baton Rouge, LA
Kathy and Brent Conerly, Zachary, LA
Philip Crawford, Bogalusa, LA
Chris Doffitt, Natchitoches, LA
Susanna Garcia and Nell Hahn, Lafayette, LA
Kelsey Green, Lafayette, LA
Amy and Richard Guidry, Port Allen, LA
Charles Hughes, Monroe, LA
Frances Kay, Lake Charles, LA
Sami Owens, Monroe, LA
Tammy and Charlie Wood, Zachary, LA

AND A SPECIAL "HO, HO, HO!" TO OUR NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS!

Andy and Lynn Hollerman of Lafayette, LA
Roselie Overby of Oak Grove, LA
Colette Dean of Baton Rouge, LA



PLEASE make a point to thank outgoing LOS President James Smithers, outgoing VP Paul Schaub,outgoing board member Harriett Pooler, and outgoing Membership Chair Sarah Williams! They've led field trips, organized meetings,discussed, planned, revised, and maybe even arm wrestled a little over their time in these volunteer positions - just to make LOS the best birding group in our state. Please send them a note of thanks and of congratulations on jobs well done. And don't totally let James off the hook yet. He still has to serve as Past-President. When you see them at the next meeting, give them all a pat on their backs. Thanks, guys!!

The LOS Field Trip Series

LOS Members can sign-up for trips by sending an email request to: melissaweaverbird@gmail.com. Trip registrations will be on a first-received email basis; *Melissa will confirm your registration, so if you don't hear back then check the spelling of her email address*. The trip leader will contact you before the trip to review details. If you register and are a no-show then you will not be allowed to register in the future. Please make sure you cancel at least 24 hours *in advance so that your space may be filled by someone on the Wait List*. Also, please do not bring unregistered guests. Access to any Louisiana Wildlife Management Area (WMA) requires a Basic Hunting or Fishing License or a WMA Access Permit. So, please ensure that you have one if your field trip visits a WMA (or want to support LDWF!): https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/wmas-refuges-and-conservation-areas. Watch the LOS Website for additional offerings, changes to listed trips, or pop-up trips. If you would like to lead a LOS field trip, or suggest a destination for a field trip, then email Melissa. Trips often fill up via email within the first 5 or 10 minutes of the opening registration date; to ensure a spot, please sign up quickly and not before the listed date and time. **Contact Melissa Weaver at melissaweaverbird@gmail.com to register.**

November, 2026

64 Club Northeast Parish Bird Blitz with David Booth. Monday - Wednesday, 16-18 November. Join David Booth and a few others as we attempt to visit 15 northeast parishes in three days. This is a true Bird Blitz. If you are working on your 64 Club patch, this is the trip for you. We will leave Pineville, bird our way up to Tensas NWR and spend two nights in a rustic cabin ($10/night). The cabin has all amenities, but sleeping is one large bunkroom, so bring your own bedroll. From the cabin, we will bird the parishes north of Interstate 20 and return to Pineville on the third day. **No Maximum participant number. Deadline for sign-up is November 11. Please contact David at (337) 526-0837 for questions or details.**

December, 2026

Frozen North Surf and Turf Tour with Charles Lyon and Melissa Weaver. Friday - Saturday, 4-5 December. For day one, starting as 1:00pm, we'll drive to local areas to bird for Bewick's Wren, Horned Lark, Vesper Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, and Harris's Sparrow. Meeting location TBA depending on scouting results. For day two, meet at 8:30 at Ford Park (5784 S. Lakeshore Dr.) and bird the park, municipal pier, and the adjacent Shreveport Yacht Club all on foot. At 10:00am, we'll bird Cross Lake by boat. Dress for weather and wear layers especially on boat as the temperature can drop 10-15 degrees on water. For those participants who are interested, we will also take an evening boat ride starting at 3:00pm where up to 6,000 Ring-billed Gulls come in to roost at sunset. Possible species highlights: Western Grebe, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Canvasback, Redhead, Ruddy Duck, Bufflehead, and Forster's Tern. **Maximum participants for Friday, 4 December: 10. Maximum participants for Saturday, 5 December: 6. Signup begins 13 November at 8:00am by emailing Melissa Weaver at** melissaweaverbird@gmail.com

January, 2027

New Birder Field Trip in Caddo Parish with John Dillon. Saturday, 16 January. Meet at 7:30am in the Dollar General parking lot in Plain Dealing, LA, (Caddo Parish) at 203 N. Louisiana St. John

Dillon will escort new or newish birders along the highways of this extreme northwest corner of Louisiana to search lots of excellent habitat for waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and other birds. This trip will focus focus on birding education, particularly learning habitat requirements, behaviors, vocalizations, and plumage field marks of species we find. **Maximum participants: 10 Signup begins 20 December at 8:00am by emailing Melissa Weaver at melissaweaverbird@gmail.com**

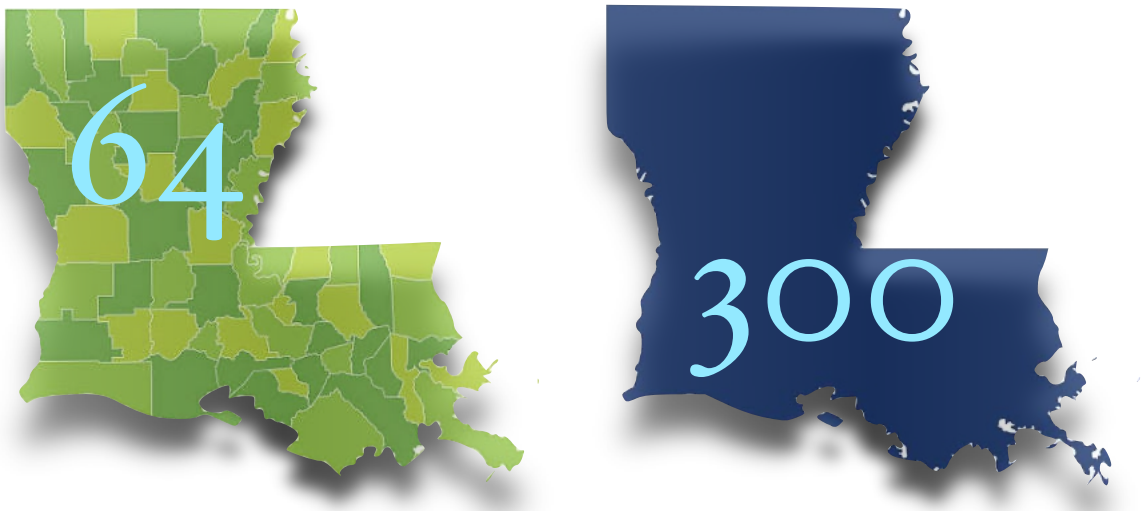
Lafayette area Hummingbirds with Cheryl Huner (as contact). Saturday, 23 January. 7:00 am - 12:30 pm. Participants on this self-guided hummingbird tour will be able to visit seven sites in Lafayette to view resident hummingbirds. Our own Erik Johnson will be banding birds at a couple of these sites. Past wintering species include Buff-bellied, Allen's, Black-chinned, and Anna's Hummingbirds. **No Maximum number of participants. Sign up begins Saturday, January 9, 2027 at 8:00am by emailing Melissa Weaver at melissaweaverbird@gmail.com.** Each participating member must register separately with the only exception being a minor family member younger than 18 years old who is able to register with a parent. LOS Board Member Cheryl Huner will be the participant contact at cheryllaney@cox.net.

64 Club Florida parishes birding with David Booth. Friday, 29 January. As a pre-Winter Meeting trip, join David Booth for a tour of the Florida parishes to add them to your quest for the coveted 64 Club patch. We will meet at the Holiday Inn in Covington at 7 am and spend the day along Highway 10 picking up birds in four or five of the Florida parishes. We will visit parks, sewage ponds, and other birdy spots. Jay Huner calls this area "…the bird desert of Louisiana" because of all the planted piney woods, but we can find enough birds to enjoy and add to your parish lists. **No maximum number of participants. Registration begins 20 November at 8:00am by emailing Melissa Weaver at melissaweaverbird@gmail.com. Deadling to sign up 23 January, 2027.**

LOS Winter Meeting Field Trips, leaders and details TBA. Friday - Saturday, 29-30 January.

February 2027

Winter Woodcock Walk with Suzanne Laird and Quill. Saturday, 6 February. 8:00am.
Join Suzanne Laird and her Brittany Spaniel Quill for a special birding adventure in search of the elusive American Woodcock! With Quill's trained nose and pointing skills, we hope to locate woodcocks in their winter habitat and have an opportunity to photograph them if conditions allow. Their incredible camouflage can make them surprisingly difficult to spot on the ground! The specific location of this North Louisiana field trip will be announced once a suitable overwintering area is identified, likely within a national wildlife refuge or Wildlife Management Area in Northeast Louisiana. A special use permit will be obtained. **Maximum number of participants: 10. Registration begins 16 January at 8:00am by emailing Melissa Weaver at melissaweaverbird@gmail.com. Please note this trip requires specific clothing. Tall rubber boots, brush pants or similar protective clothing are required, as well as bug spray. Woodcocks favor thick vegetation and moist habitats, so be prepared to explore some brushy terrain!**



LOS has two fun bird patches to acknowledge members that have reached the required milestones. One is for the 64 Club for members who have submitted chekclists in all 64 parishes, and the second is the 300 patch for any birder tallying 300 or more species in a single calendar year. In the past few years at the Spring and Fall Meetings, President James Smithers has asked for those individuals that achieved these milestones to come forward to receive their patches. Cheryl Huner, this Spring, along with Andrea Walker and Chantal Correll, this Fall, received the 64 Club Birds in every parish patch. Congratulations!! Who's next?



Meet your new LOS President, Shae Freeman!

Like many of you, I know that anyone who accepts the LOS Presidency could be just a little crazy. So, I decided to do some investigative journalism and report my findings, no matter how damaging or scandalous. After thorough vetting and scrutinizing questions, I'm disappointed to report that our new LOS President is just as normal and boring as the rest of us. But don't take my word for it; you can see for yourself in our little interview.



JD: So, congratulations!

SF: Thank you! I'm excited and kind of nervous! I'm not sure what I've gotten myself into.

JD: That's probably exactly why you got asked!

SF: Probably. I'm an easy victim.

JD: Absolutely. But seriously, thank you for taking this on. I want to tell the membership I'll be doing interviews with other new officers soon, but it made sense to start at the top. So, first up, I think birders always like to know how each other got started in this. What was it for you? What got you into birding?

SF: Well, I guess like many of us, it happened by degrees. I have always been interested in nature, and spent my childhood basically feral and outside. I was born and raised in Minnesota, which is just a very outdoorsy state to grow up in. I was taken camping a lot, and I could identify birds like robins, chickadees, redwing blackbirds, and loons by call- the soundtrack of my childhood. In 5th grade I wrote a report on redwing blackbirds, which was apparently overly long, but I remember how passionate I was about them. Birds were ever present in my life, but I never knew it could be a career, so other things became the focus. Eventually, after decades of camping, traveling, and being outside I decided I really needed to know what all the birds were called. This was around the time I moved to New Orleans in 2000, and started dedicating more and more time to birding. I had an eBird account in 2011 and that's when I would really say 'birding' started for me. It would be another decade before I discovered there were a whole bunch of other people also doing this. But, that's pretty much how my life has gone- just out doing my own thing without realizing there is a whole community around it.

JD: I think lots of birders had that experience; I know I did. Learning the birds on your own and then realizing, "Oh wait, there's like a whole community of people doing this!"

SF: Exactly! That's why I'm so excited for this. It's like a whole new part of birding.

JD: Okay, so another easy one. What's your coolest life bird?

SF: Great Potoo. I was in Costa Rica for an Earth Sculpture in the Rainforest program well before I was a 'birder'. There were many different groups there as well, all students studying different things. One group was an ornithology group so I do have a small bird list from that time. One night this bird showed up on top of a pole in the middle of our camp. It was a Great Potoo- almost everyone came out to look at it. It is seared in my memory.

JD: That's a good one. Jealousy-inducing. I love cryptic birds like that, too. Speaking of, what types of birds do you gravitate to? And do you have favorites? Like a favorite state bird?

SF: This is a moving target. Every genus has its own enchantments! I do love our waders and miss them whenever I leave Louisiana. But if I am being honest, these days I think the group I love most are our residents. These are the birds we get to observe every day, year around and really feel intimately connected to them. You learn their individual characters, and can watch entire families be raised and fledged. I learn so much from our residents, and witness so much crazy behavior- it is never dull in my backyard! Even for a favorite state bird, I think I'd have to defer to a resident (and a specialist and endangered at that) Red-Cockaded Woodpecker.

JD: They are cute. And fussy. Look, earlier you mentioned how you're fairly new to the aspect of birding communities. I'd like to think that means you're bringing a fresh perspecitive to LOS leadership. I think sometimes those of us who have done this for decades sort of get into ruts in lots of ways. So, let me ask you this? What do you think of a birder's responsibilities to the birding community?

SF: I realize that everyone comes to birding from a different place. I think at the very least, a birder's responsibility to the birding community is first and foremost to do no harm. Mutual respect goes a long way. I think everyone should read some form of birding ethics, because your responsibility is not only to the birding community, but the bird community, their environment and their safety. This means being judicious with sharing locations for sensitive species and minimizing human impact on ecosystems. Not everyone wants to be a mentor, and that's okay. But it behooves all of us to engage with new or young birders to ensure continued protections for species and the wild places we love.

JD: Good deal. I fully agree in passing on that sense of responsibility. Now since you're gonna be seen at meetings and field trips so much now, what would you like to say to LOS members about the relationships you want with them?

SF: I aim to be a pretty transparent and approachable person. I would like members to feel like they can reach out to me and have their ideas and concerns heard. I do not take this office to be "power-over," but "power-with." It is truly a position of service along with leadership.

JD: I really appreciate that. And I think that speaks to my concern about more seasoned birders getting into ruts. When you want to serve and not just lead, you have to listen to people.

SF: Absolutely. That is really, really important to me.

JD: Okay, that's great. Now, I know you want to listen to the members, but what are some things you hope they'll do? Some things you would like to see more members doing and why?

SF: I would encourage members to go from passive viewer to advocacy in whatever form they can. Anything we can leverage towards fighting destructive commercial developments, lights out campaigns, weakening pesticide use, bird-safe glass, etc is a benefit to our organizations and our bird populations. Everyone's voice is needed, and whatever scale you can manage is important and necessary.

JD: Good. Yeah, for example, I live in a very rural community. There's no recycling for example, so I think looking at it at the scale of the entire community is much more inclusive than just expecting everyone to do the same thing.

SF: No, we can't do that. That's a quick way, I think, to alienate birders. I think we're supposed to be inviting and involving, not alienating.

JD: Fully agreed. We need field trip leaders, volunteers, and such, but we also just need birders to be good stewards of conservation and let other people see that. Which brings me to this question. LOS has been around for about 80 years. At this point, what do you think LOS can do better?

SF: I would love to see improved connectivity between organizations like the Master Naturalists, Audubon Society chapters, and smaller community-driven initiatives like Louisiana Bayou Society, Louisiana Wild Society, etc. I am not sure how just yet, but all it takes is one good idea to get the ball rolling. We are going to face a lot of challenges here on the coast especially, and I think mutual aid and cross-pollination with other organizations is the way forward.

JD: I like that sentiment. I think if LOS is serious about conservation, other people in the state need to know who we are. And we need to know those other people who are also like-minded. I think we have a good relationship with some groups like LWF and a few others, but there are tons of other groups in this larger community, from hunters to garden clubs. I'd like to think we all want to protect our outdoors.

SF: I would certainly hope so. And it seems like it's needed now more than ever.

JD: Well, thanks for taking the time to do this. And thanks for your willingness to serve, and good luck on a wonderful and productive tenure.

SF: Thank you so much! Hope to see you at winter meeting! And everyone else, too!

THE LOS LOWERY and PRESIDENT'S AWARDS ARE OPEN FOR NOMINATION DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: JANUARY 15, 2027

The LOS Board of Directors established two awards, the George H. Lowery Award and the President's Award, to recognize individuals who have significantly contributed to Louisiana birding and enhanced or conserved Louisiana wildlife habitat. All LOS members are encouraged to nominate candidates who meet the criteria as described below. To make a nomination, please send the name of the nominee and a brief written description of the nominee's accomplishments to any LOS Board Member.

THE LOS GEORGE H. LOWERY AWARD

The George H. Lowery Award was established in 1981 by the LOS membership to honor the late Dr. George H. Lowery, Jr, former LSU Professor and Museum Curator. Dr. Lowery was an outstanding ornithologist of international reputation who founded the LSU Museum of Natural Sciences and pioneered a unique technique to study nocturnal bird migration by large-scale observation through telescopes of flocks of birds as they flew in front of the face of the moon at night. Nominees for the Lowery Award can include person(s) who have made a significant contribution to Louisiana birding and/or habitat or who have had a major positive influence on ornithology in Louisiana. Nominations in writing (two page maximum) will describe the significant accomplishment(s) of the nominee and why they merit the award.

THE LOS PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The President's Award was instituted in 2001 by the LOS membership to recognize persons, families, companies, and organizations who support birding in Louisiana, who enhance or take special measures to conserve wildlife habitat in Louisiana, or who promote birding in Louisiana through their writing, lectures, or other venues. Nominations in writing (one page maximum) will describe the significant accomplishment(s) of the nominee and why they merit the award. No more than three awards will be presented annually.

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Number registering for meeting @ $25.00 per person = $_____
Number registering for meeting @ $5.00 per student = $_____
Number registering for Sat. dinner @ $25.00 per person = $_____

_____ Blackened Chicken Alfredo

_____ Chicken and Andouille Jambalaya
(See p. 3 for menu info)

Meeting total = $_____
Additional donation = $_____
Dues enclosed = $_____
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