

**LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION**

Oscar Johnson
Louisiana State University
119 Foster Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
ojohns7@lsu.edu

Species: Limpkin, *Aramus guarauna*

Location: Walden Road pond, Walden subdivision, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Date: 21 March 2020

Age and sex: Adult, sex unknown

Molt status: None apparent

Number of individuals: One

Other observers: Eamon Corbett, Andre Moncrieff, Matt Brady, Robb Brumfield

Original observer: Unknown. A local homeowner, I think.

Circumstances: Jane Patterson notified a few birders in Baton Rouge that some local homeowners had found a Limpkin on their neighborhood pond, and I chased the bird later that day. The bird was visible when I arrived and for most of the time I was there. I spent most of my time on the side of the road watching and photographing the bird, which was extremely cooperative. Bird was mostly close to the road, but it spent time wandering most of the lake shore. Temps in upper 60s, light NE wind, solid low overcast.

This bird was first reported to me on this date (21 March), but it's unclear to me whether it was found prior to this date. It was last reported to eBird on 30 March by Andre Moncrieff. My eBird list is here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S66066792>

Description: Written shortly after seeing the bird: A large long-legged, long-necked, and long-billed water bird. Mostly dark brown, but covered entirely in small white spots. Spots larger and sparser on back and wing coverts, smaller and denser on head and neck. Bill long and slightly down curved, mostly dark but with some pale yellowish color to base. Legs dark. It spent most of its time walking the lake shore, but I also saw it roosting in a cypress, and in flight on two occasions. Wings were long, broad, and entirely dark. On one occasion it swam between a cypress and the shore line, looking very awkward. It called once, giving three loud rising trumpeting notes, but I was unable to get a recording. Many photos and a short video obtained. It appeared to be feeding on mussels and apple snails, both of which were littering the shore line.

Discussion: A straightforward identification. This was the first record for East Baton Rouge Parish.

Checking some resources it appears that the best way to age Limpkin is by the shape of the white dorsal streaks (narrower in juveniles, broader and more triangular in adults). Between the shape of these streaks and the presence of some darker replaced feathers on the mantle, it appears that this bird is an adult, or at least an older immature. Based on the extensive white streaking on the back it is clearly one of the northern subspecies, and based on distribution probably the Florida *pictus* rather than the east Mexican *dolosus*, but I'm not sure that these two taxa are identifiable in the field.









