



Charter 2016

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President's Note:

Greetings, Master Naturalists!

Tis the season for Christmas Bird Counts!

I've probably written about the Christmas Bird Counts before in *Nature Notes*, but the CBC's are always on my mind this time of year. The annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count started as a way to provide an alternative to the dominant, bird-related Christmas tradition of the 19th century--shooting as many birds as you can find! Since 1900 the CBCs have grown to cover the most birded habitats of the western hemisphere in one of the longest running citizen science projects in the world. There's simply no better data on the distribution and abundance of birds in the Americas and no better way to meet other birders, learn from the best, and explore habitats you don't often get to explore. And, if you still need some volunteer hours for 2019, the six Southwest Louisiana Christmas Bird Counts offer a great way to earn them!

Calendar Quick View

- Dec 12, 2020 "Nature in Focus" at Riverside Park.
- Dec 22 Sabine CBC
- Dec 28 Lake Charles CBC
- Jan 8, 2020 SLAMN General Meeting at Tuten Park
- Jan 11, 2020 SLAMN Field trip
- Jan 17-20, 2020 RV and Boat Show
- Jan 25 SLAMN Candidate Workshop
- Feb 1 SLAMN Candidate Workshop



President's Note:

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As we near the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, I do want to thank everyone for the work put into the 2019 course (including all the wonderful articles by the 2019 students), the great meetings, field trips, and other activities our chapter has done this year. Remember to invite your friends and family you might see during the holidays to join our chapter for 2020! It's going to be a great year!

Thanks,
Irvin Louque



Time to renew your membership. Please complete the [membership renewal form](#) and mail it with your dues to:

**Clay Ardoin
SLAMN Treasurer
227 Fallis Rd.
Lafayette, LA 70507**



Meeting Notes

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Upcoming Meeting Location and Date January 8, 2020 Tuten Park at 6:00 P.M.

President: Irvin Louque**Vice-President:**

Tommy Hillman

Treasurer: Clay Ardoin**Secretary:** Barbara Morris**At-large Board Members:**

Chuck Battaglia,

David Booth,

Theresa Cross,

Robby Maxwell

Reminder: SLAMN yearly membership \$15.00.

Please complete the [membership renewal form](#)

Mail your dues and form to:

Clay Ardoin

SLAMN Treasurer

227 Fallis Rd.

Lafayette, LA 70507



Log-in your volunteer and continuing education hours using *Track It Forward*

Set-up your account and start logging in your SLAMN CE&V hours.

Access *Track It Forward* on the SLAMN website:

<https://www.swlamasternaturalists.org/>

October General Meeting Highlights

Committee Reports

Course: Application for the upcoming class are available online. Facilitators are needed for classes.

Changes to course work: Botany will be offered along with the Longleaf Pine class. They are working on having an overnight workshop at Rockefeller Preserve. Public Outreach has also been added to the last class.

Volunteer: Make sure you have met the necessary requirements to maintain active membership. There are a few opportunities left to earn volunteer and CEU hours.

Promotions: David Booth is spearheading a mini-workshop. On November 9th, citizens will have an opportunity to see what the classes are like.

October 31, Downtown Candy Crawl, in front of Panorama Music House. A table will be set up from 4-7. Volunteers are asked to come for 30 minutes to answer questions about SLAMN.

RV and Boat Show on January 17-20. Volunteers are needed to work at the table. Shifts are usually for three hours. Sign up on Track it Forward.

Garden Show on March 27-28. Volunteers will be needed to work at the table. Sign up on Track it Forward closer to the date.

Publications: Arlene Cain is requesting information for the upcoming publication of Nature Notes.

Rendezvous 2021 Planning Committee: Barbara Morris is still looking into possible locations for the event.

New Business

Annual Election- An uncontested slate was presented and approved.

2020 SLAMN Officers

President	Irvin Louque
Vice President	Barbara Morris
Treasurer	Clay Ardoin
Secretary	Patty Palmer
At-Large Board	Robby Maxwell
	Tommy Hillman
	David Booth
	Theresa Cross

Guest Speaker:

Erik Johnson, PH.D., Director of Bird Conservation, gave a presentation on how Audubon Louisiana is conserving and protecting Louisiana's birds. [Being A Migratory Bird Conservation Hero](#)
Widespread declines in North American Birds are due to #1 Habitat Loss, #2 Reduction in habitat quality, #3 Cats, and #4 Building Collisions.

He asked that we get involved through Political Activism, Volunteering, Creating a Bird friendly habitat in your yard and community, and by becoming a member of conservation organizations.

Next SLAMN General Meeting: January 8, 2020

Chapter tentative meeting dates for 2020: January 8, April 1, July 1, and October 7

Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Chapter meetings are held quarterly on the first Wednesday of the month at Tuten Park at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.



“Focus on Nature” Workshop Series Sponsored by the Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists

Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists are sponsoring a series of “Focus on Nature” workshops open to the public. The “Focus on Nature” workshops are presented to local citizens to give them an overview of the Master Naturalist coursework. The workshops are designed to highlight the interesting, fun and important work accomplished by our Southwest Master Naturalists local chapter. The first of these workshops was held on Saturday November 9th, 2019, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at Tuten Park, Lake Charles.

Southwest Master Naturalists highlighted several very popular areas of nature study. Robby Maxwell presented information on the Louisiana Watersheds. He focused on the aquatic life and habitats that are present in Louisiana. Irvin Louque presented info on Citizen Science. He shared information about how Citizen Observations can be used to assist Scientists in their fields. Barbara Morris gave participants a look at creating a “Backyard Wildlife Habit” by providing food, water, shelter, and a place to raise young.

The first public workshop was well received and attended. The topics and presentation of these nature topics inspired some of the participants to sign up for the new 2020 Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists course.



Local News:

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Creating a Backyard Birding Habitat Presentation



On November 12, 2019, SLAMN members **Barbara Morris**, **Tom Morris**, and **Julie Amy** gave a wonderful presentation for the Washington, Louisiana Garden Club. The topic was “Creating a Backyard Birding Habitat”. The information presented stressed the importance of providing: food, shelter, water, and a place to raise young by planting native plants and leaving wild areas in the yard. Julie presented a short “Bird Identification Quiz”. The members next made a bird feeder. The plan for the bird feeder was provided by **Theresa Cross** and the materials were provided by **Tom Morris**.



Registration for Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists is open. Workshops begin January 25, 2020.

<https://www.swlamasternaturalists.org/apply.html>

Spread the word about the Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists.

Courses start January 25, 2020. Encourage your friends, family, and neighbors to check us out and get involved.



Join a team of people who love the outdoors and are dedicated to understanding and promoting Louisiana's Natural Beauty. Classes start soon. Apply Now



Join Now!

The Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists are taking applications for the 2020 membership certification program.

Sign-up Now at: www.swlamasternaturalists.org/apply



We are a team of volunteers that provide education, outreach and services dedicated to the conservation and management of our natural resources.

Website: <http://www.swlamasternaturalists.org>

Email: info@swlamasternaturalists.org

Follow us on Facebook

Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists



Local News:

[Back](#)**The Lake Charles Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday December 28th.**

Anyone interested can contact **David Booth** 337.526.0837, email: david@boothenvironmental.com. The Lake Charles Christmas Bird Count covers most of Lake Charles, Westlake, Sulphur, and Carlyss south to the Intracoastal Waterway and the Calcasieu Ship Channel. In past counts, observers have recorded as many as 108 species. Highlights included White-tailed Kites south of Lake Charles, Ruddy Ducks in Carlyss, Winter Wren and Wilson's warbler in Tuten Park. **Sign up on**



Sign-up for the following events on 

December 12, 2019 Volunteer opportunity: "Nature in Focus" at Riverside Park.

January 8, 2020 Next General Meeting at Tuten Park

January 11, 2020 Field trip on January 11. Kayaking on the Calcasieu River. Put in will be at Anthony Ferry Boat launch at 9 am.

January 17-20, 2020 RV and Boat Show Lake Charles Civic Center Volunteers needed

May 15-18, 2020 Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center SLAMN Field Trip

The Louisiana Master Naturalists Rendezvous

Mark your calendar for April 17-19, 2020. The Louisiana Master Naturalists Rendezvous 2020 is almost here. The Rendezvous is being held at Camp Hardtner <https://www.camphardtner.org/> near Pollock, LA. Many of our SLAMN members will be attending. Carpooling is a possibility.



Sign up for this event on 

Volunteer Opportunities:

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Volunteer and join one of many Christmas Bird Counts around our state

Sign-up on  TRACK IT FORWARD**December 21, 2019 Saturday, Franklin, LA CBC (St. Mary Parish)**

We welcome birders to join our CBC. Meet at the McDonalds restaurant on Hwy 182 in Franklin, LA at 6:15 to 6:25 am on December 21, 2019.

Mike VanEtten at mlvanetten@yahoo.com or 337.962.4078

December 22, 2019 Sabine CBC

For more information/volunteer contact Irvin Louque

337.491.8770, email irvinlouque@gmail.com

December 28, 2019 Lake Charles CBC

For more information/volunteer contact David Booth

337.526.0837, email: david@boothenvironmental.com

Get involved with the Audubon Christmas Bird Count! Volunteer to help at one of the many CBC's going on around our state. <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

The Christmas Bird Counts are right around the corner. Whether you are a seasoned veteran or a newbie, please consider helping out. This year, holidays fall within the week, so the counts gain weekends during the twenty-two day count period. Check calendar below for dates and maybe one or more will fit your holiday schedule. Compiler contact information and calendar are listed below. Thanks to all of the compilers who volunteer their time to this important process!

Count and Compiler contact information:

Baton Rouge LABR; 4-Jan; Katie Percy & R. Condrey; kpercy@audubon.org or coecnd@lsu.edu (225) 768-0820

Bossier-Caddo (Red River NWR) LABC; 21-Dec; Terri Jacobson; Terri_Jacobson@fws.gov

Catahoula NWR LACA; 30-Dec; Marty Floyd; progne99@aol.com (337) 459-0445

Cheneyville-Lecompte LACL; 29-Dec; Marty Floyd; progne99@aol.com (337) 459-0445

Claiborne LACB; 2-Jan; John Dillon; kisforkryptonite@gmail.com

Creole LACR; 14-Dec; Erik Johnson; ejohnson@audubon.org

Crowley LACW; 27-Dec; Marty Floyd; progne99@aol.com (337) 459-0445

D'Arbonne LADA; 14-Dec; John Dillon; kisforkryptonite@gmail.com

Franklin LAFR; 21-Dec; Mike VanEtten; mlvanetten@yahoo.com

Grand Isle LAGI; 18-Dec; Chris Brantley; chrisbrantley@charter.net

Johnsons Bayou LAJB; 4-Jan; Gary Kelley; garymke@sbcglobal.net (409) 679-1616

Lacassine NWR-Thornwell LALT; 20-Dec; Rob Dobbs; rcdobbs@gmail.com

Lafayette LALA; 30-Dec; Erik Johnson; ejohnson@audubon.org

Lake Charles LALC; 28-Dec; David Booth; david@boothenvironmental.com (337) 526-0837

Natchitoches LANA; 4-Jan; Larry Raymond; lrraymond@aol.com

Natchez*; MSNZ; 29-Dec; Stratton Bull; strattonbull@gmail.com (601) 431-1631

New Iberia LANI; 2-Jan; Erik Johnson; ejohnson@audubon.org

New Orleans LANO; 21-Dec; Glenn Ousset; gousset@bellsouth.net (504) 495-4284

Northshore-Slidell LANS; 29-Dec; Wendy Rihner; wrihner@gmail.com

Palmetto Island LAPI; 18-Dec; Toddy Guidry; guidrys@cox.net

Pine Prairie LAPP; 3-Jan; Marty Floyd; progne99@aol.com (337) 459-0445

Reserve-Bonnet Carre Spillway LARB; 26-Dec; Melvin Weber; mweber@rtconline.com (985) 212-4311

Sabine NWR LASA; 22-Dec; Irvin Louque; irvinlouque@gmail.com (225) 206-0400

Shreveport LASH; 14-Dec; Charlie Lyon; lyon5516@bellsouth.net

St. Tammany Parish LAST; 27-Dec; Chris Brantley; chrisbrantley@charter.net

Sweet Lake-Cameron Prairie NWR LASC; 21-Dec; Rob Dobbs; rcdobbs@gmail.com

Tensas River NWR LATR; 30-Dec; Andrew Morang moranga@bellsouth.net

Thibodaux LATH; 28-Dec; Delaina LeBlanc; delaina@btnep.org

Venice LAVE; 3 Jan (tentative); Dan Purrington; danny@tulane.edu

White Lake LAWL; 17-Dec; Rob Dobbs; rcdobbs@gmail.com

The Fort Polk (LAFP) CBC is restricted access and at present has a date range: 16-19 Dec. Compiler: Abigail Arfman; arfmanar@gmail.com

Volunteer Opportunities:

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Louisiana Christmas Bird Count Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					13	14
Audubon's 120 th Christmas Counts: Louisiana CBCs			Official count period days are shaded: 14 December 2019 – 5 January 2020			Creole (LACR) D'Arbonne NWR (LADA) Shreveport (LASH)
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	White Lake (LAWA)	Palmetto Island (LAPI) Grand Isle (LAGI)			Lacassine NWR Thornwell (LALT)	New Orleans (LANO) Sweet Lake-Cameron Prairie NWR (LASC) Bossier-Caddo (Red River) (LABC) Franklin (LAFR)
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Sabine NWR (LASA)		Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	Reserve- Bonnet Carre (LARB)	St. Tammany (LAST) Crowley (CACW)	Lake Charles (LALC) Thibodaux (LATH)
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Cheneyville-LeCompte (LACL) Natchez * (MSNZ) Northshore-Slidell (LANS)	Lafayette (LALA) Tensas River NWR (LASA) Catahoula NWR (LACA)	Yew Year's Eve	New Year's Day	New Iberia (LANI) Claiborne (LACB)	Pine Prairie (LAPP) Venice (LAVE)	Baton Rouge (LABR) Natchitoches (LANA) Johnson's Bayou (LAJB)

Golden Triangle (East Texas) Christmas Bird Count:

<http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org/>

Dates for the December Christmas Bird Counts

Please note there could still be changes, the following are the tentative dates for the Christmas counts in our area. Full confirmed details are published in the December issue:

<http://www.goldentriangleaudubon.org/newsletters/>

Sea Rim State Park - Tuesday Dec. 17. Contact: John Whittle johnawhittle@aol.com or 409-722-4193

Bolivar Peninsula - Thursday Dec. 19. Contact Steve Mayes in advance at sgmayes@hotmail.com

Turkey Creek - Saturday Dec. 21. Contact John Whittle johnawhittle@aol.com, 409-722-4193

Beech Creek - Saturday Dec. 28. Contact John Whittle johnawhittle@aol.com, 409-722-4193

Orange County - Wednesday Jan. 1, 2020 Contact Gary Kelley at garymke@sbcglobal.net or 409-679-1616



Continuing Education Opportunities:

[Back](#)**Bird banding at Sam Houston Jones State Park****Louisiana Bird Observatory Bird Banding**

Irvin Louque holds bird banding activities at Sam Houston Jones Park on Saturdays. Volunteers are welcome! Learn how to set-up mist nets, age birds, and collect important data for conservation efforts. Please check with Irvin for dates and times. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact Irvin Louque through email or phone (225)206-0400 irvinlouque@gmail.com

**Earn Continuing Education Credit.****Conservation Biology Institute Webinar Series****SCGIS - Wildlife Insights: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Conservation**

Wildlife is an essential component of all ecosystems. Yet most places around the world do not have local information on which species are present or how their populations are changing. Camera traps have become a widely used and an effective way to collect wildlife data. Every year, thousands of cameras are set, capturing millions of images.

SCGIS - A Spatial Planning Tool for Biodiversity Conservation under Climate Change

The Cascadia Partner Forum (CPF) is a network of natural resource practitioners in Washington and British Columbia. A primary goal of the partnership is to provide an regional-scale organizational framework to conserve Cascadia's biodiversity, which is under threat from an expanding human footprint and a changing climate.

SCGIS - Geospatial Conservation at The Nature Conservancy

The mission of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. Operating in 72 countries with more than 600 scientists, we are tackling the most pressing threats to nature and people in freshwater, ocean and coast, and terrestrial environments. GIS and remote sensing have informed TNC's conservation science approaches for decades.





iNaturalist Spotlight and Photos:

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iNaturalist.org’s Journal Official Blog

<https://www.inaturalist.org/blog>

Check out the “Observation of the Week” post.

iNaturalist Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Project

Observation of the Month

by Master Naturalists Adrienne Edwards

Lunar Moth – Actais Luna

Add your observations to the Southwest Louisiana master Naturalists Project

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/southwest-louisiana-master-naturalists>



Join the Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists project.

Add your observations and photos to our group project.

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/southwest-louisiana-master-naturalists>

The screenshot shows the iNaturalist.org website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'Observations', 'Species', 'Projects', 'Places', 'Guides', and 'People'. Below this is a yellow banner that reads 'Welcome to Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists'. Underneath the banner is a large photograph of a group of people walking on a sandy beach. An orange button with the text 'ADD OBSERVATIONS' is overlaid on the bottom right of the photo. At the bottom left of the photo, there is a small iNaturalist logo and the text 'Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists'. In the top right corner of the page, there are links for 'Terms & Rules' and 'Leave this project'.

Green Anoles by Megg Sorensen



2019 Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists

As a kid growing up in the Chicago area, the only lizard I remember seeing in my yard was our neighbor's iguana when it escaped and took a trip down the street. When we'd visit my grandparents in New Port Richey, FL, though, I was fascinated by the plentiful little lizards dashing about.

Green Anoles (Photo credit: Megg Sorensen)



Now I live in rural Elton, and herps of all sort are a daily part of my life. One of the most common sights are green anoles. Though not a true chameleon, green anoles (*Anolis carolinensis*) are sometimes referred to as American chameleons for their ability to change from green to shades of brown based on their surroundings. Green anoles are native to the southeastern United States, but brown anoles (*Anolis sagrei*) are from Cuba. Brown anoles are an invasive species that are found in this part of the world in increasing numbers. One day, I saw an anole that was brown in color with a darker brown strip of markings in the middle of its back. I thought I might be looking at a brown anole, but after posting it on iNaturalist, realized it was another green anole in a brown phase. I went to look up photos of brown anoles so I would know the difference, and in the process I learned something about green anoles that really piqued my interest.

Green anole (Photo credit: Megg Sorensen)



Before brown anoles were introduced in the last 60 years, green anoles were the only anoles in the U.S. Once brown anoles showed up, green anoles suddenly had some competition. Green anoles typically live near or on the base of trees, where they feed on insects. In places that became increasingly crowded with brown anoles, the green anoles had to move up the trees. In 2014, Harvard scientists realized that in a relatively short amount of time, green anoles in Florida evolved to have larger toe pads, enabling them to climb higher and expand their hunting grounds. Their study showed that in just 15 years and 20 generations, green anoles toe pads became larger and their foot scales became stickier. This allows the anoles to hold onto the smaller and more slippery branches found in the tree tops. This is an example of "character displacement," which is an evolutionary change that occurs when two similar species exist in the same environment and interact negatively, forcing one or both species to adapt. However, the speed of this evolution was what stood out to scientists researching these green anoles. Green anoles in urban areas have also been found to have longer legs and stickier toes, which helps them climb glass

Green anole (Photo credit: Megg Sorensen)



There are also instances of green anoles quickly and dramatically evolving to tolerate colder temperatures at the Texas-Mexico border. In just a matter of months, the green anoles muscular and nervous systems were more adapted to cold. As time goes on, I'm sure we'll see many species of animals and plants having to adapt to changing temperatures and other effects of climate change. And as for green anoles, now I know that these little lizards can change a lot more than their hue!

References:

1. Savannah River Ecology Laboratory – University of Georgia: <https://srelherp.uga.edu/lizards/anocar.htm>
2. Reuell, Peter. (2014). The Rapid-Fire Evolution of Green Anoles. *SciTechDaily*: <https://scitechdaily.com/rapid-fire-evolution-green-anoles/>
3. Virata, John. (2014). Green Anoles in Florida Evolved to Better Compete with Invasive Brown Anoles. *Reptiles Magazine*: <http://www.reptilesmagazine.com/Lizards/Information-News/Green-Anoles-in-Florida-Evolved-to-Better-Compete-with-Invasive-Brown-Anole/>
4. Winchell, Kristin. (2016). Lizard gets to grips with city life by evolving stickier feet. *NewScientist*: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2086234-lizard-gets-to-grips-with-city-life-by-evolving-stickier-feet/>
5. Pennisi, Elizabeth. (2017). Cold snap makes lizards evolve in just a few months. *Science*: <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/08/cold-snap-makes-lizards-evolve-just-few-months>



Salamanders by Christina Keathley



2019 Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists



Larval Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*)
feeding on blackworms

I still remember the first time I ever saw a salamander. We had just had one of the earliest winter snowstorms ever recorded in the Chicagoland area. My sister and I had been walking home from school bickering about something when we came across a curious figure frozen to the pavement. It was small, no bigger than the length of my hand, and yellow and black in color. Upon touching it, it seemed dead- frozen into a grotesque position on the blacktop as it had attempted to find safety from our crazy October blizzard.

My sister and I were always those sorts of children that brought home animals and begged our parents to let us keep them, albeit dead things were not typical. Even still, I remember watching my sister chisel it off the ice and stuff it in her pocket. When we had gotten home, we proudly presented our find to our mother, who wretched and pointed to the nearest garbage can. To her dismay, the aforementioned dead animal had started to *reanimate* from the warmth of my sister's hand. Despite not being an animal lover herself, my mother couldn't justify throwing something away that was living and didn't have the heart to throw it out into the snow.

Edgar lived with us until the snows finally melted in late April. Despite crying and begging our mother to let us keep him, we dumped him and his critter keeper contents into the muddy shoreline of the Fox River. I cringe when recalling this memory knowing that poor Edgar was most likely bass food moments after his release.

The thing that grasps me most from this memory is that my opinion of Edgar never changed throughout the time we had him. He was always this sort of alien, foreign thing with buggy eyes and skin that didn't look quite right... and he was always *wet*. As a recent college graduate who has spent much of my free time researching amphibians in finer detail, they still seem to captivate me for the same reasons.

Towards the end of 2018, I was given the task of assisting a state biologist in surveys he was doing in ephemeral ponds. On one of our trips we had come across an egg mass floating daintily against a stalk of grass and collected it for further observation. Little is known about the reproductive habits and locations of our Louisiana species, and we wanted to be sure we could identify who this egg mass belonged to.

The task of rearing these animals from eggs to adults was a daunting one to put it lightly, but it is one worth explaining in detail. I find that few people get to witness such a drastic change in nature, especially when most changes occur slowly over millions of years, and it's not an experience I will be forgetting any time soon.

The eggs themselves seemed to take *forever* to hatch. I checked the tank every day (sometimes multiple times a day) for weeks to no avail. When they finally did hatch, I may have missed had I not lingered at the aquarium for half a second longer than I did. In the water were hundreds of tiny floating creatures. They were barely visible, mostly see-



Recently hatched Mole Salamander Larva (*Ambystoma talpoideum*)

through, and had small protruding gills erupting from the sides of simple, bleak faces. From there every day was an uphill battle. Often times I would look in the tank to watch them consuming their siblings or disappearing completely altogether. At one point we had added macroscopic invertebrates to the tank as food and not realized the baby crawfish that had come with it, which nearly demolished the majority of the population.

Those that had survived were growing at a frustrating pace. I read paper after paper on the metamorphosis of all the species they could potentially be to see that our captive held larvae were lagging behind. It was probably a month into raising them that I realized our methodology was all wrong.



Larval Mole Salamander (*Ambystoma talpoideum*) prior to metamorphosis

We had been keeping water conditions pristine and food available every minute of the day- but salamanders don't work that way. They depend on ponds that become dried up with time and thus become more concentrated with food and debris as water evaporates. Once figuring this out, I came to work one day and dumped most of the water out of the tanks. I then started feeding them irregularly with large quantities to mimic boom-bust lifecycles of aquatic invertebrates.

The change was exponential from that point. Limbs appeared in a matter of days, coloration started to change, and personalities even started to develop. Many larvae had to be separated from each other because they would start fights or nip at fins. Unfortunately, many of them did not make it.

By the time I had an actual adult, there were only two viable larvae left. I remember waking up and looking in the tank one morning (I had relocated them to my house at this point because I was obsessing over how they were doing when I wasn't at work) and seeing one solitary salamander floating carelessly around the tank. I was devastated thinking that I had finally lost my second to last salamander, that he had been eaten in the night and there was nothing left- only to find that he was stuck to the glass halfway up the tank.

From that point on the salamanders were changing at a daily rate. Colors were becoming more vibrant; any aquatic features were disappearing completely. I was happy to report on the last day I owned them that I had two thriving adult tiger salamanders (*Ambystoma tigrinum*).

Those two individuals will go on to educate other naturalist enthusiasts as outreach animals for LDWF. To be honest, when I sat to write this article I struggled with how to approach it. Should I include scientific physiological and morphological features of changing amphibians? Should I discuss taxonomy or evolutionary advantages?

I think a lot of the time we lose the emotional connection we have with our natural experiences. It is rare that we get to observe change in nature, especially over such a short amount of time. Many of us walk past live oaks or sycamores that have been standing for decades without change. None of us will watch a species evolve and diverge into something new and virgin. I don't condone the collection of animals from the wild without scientific reason or purpose, but if you get the chance to watch something change, truly and completely change, it will be something short of a miracle.



Recently metamorphosized Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*)
developing his/her stripes



Six Spotted Fishing Spider by Adrienne Edwards



2019 Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists

Family Pisauridae - Nursery Web Spiders
Genus *Dolomedes* - Fishing Spiders
Species triton - Six-spotted Fishing

Several months ago, our family had a pond dug on our property in Dry Creek, LA. With all the flooding in our area the pond was filled in no time. Each day I walked down to our little water hole to see if there were any new creatures to photograph. I was pleasantly surprised by how quickly it was populated by many different aquatic invertebrates, tadpoles, water snakes, and the like. One of my favorite newcomers was the six spotted fishing spiders.

This semi-aquatic spider has long hardy legs and a head that is noticeably larger than its abdomen. The body portion of a female six spotted fishing spider measures in at around 3/4 of an inch and 1/2 an inch for males. The six-spotted fishing spider is easily identified by its two striking pale stripes that adorn each side of the head and sometime abdomen, as well as the six dark spots on the sternum.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Six spotted fishing spiders can be found near ponds, calm streams, and swampy areas all around Southwest Louisiana and most of North America. They run across the surface of these bodies of water with ease in the same graceful fashion of a water strider; which also makes for a lovely snack for these spiders. Other items on their menu also includes aquatic insects, tadpoles, and tiny fish.

The hunting and hiding method of the six spotted fishing spider is truly amazing. In addition to speedily running on top of the water's surface to ambush their unsuspecting prey, they can also encase themselves in an air bubble and dive under water up to 7 inches. Not only is this useful for hunting their underwater lunch, it's also helpful in staying hidden from predators for several minutes at a time. Predators such as birds, snakes, dragonflies, and wasps give great motivation to hide out in this manner.

The life experience of the female is about a year, while the male promptly meets his demise after the courtship ritual and mating has commenced. After mating, the female makes a spherical egg sac. Before her babies hatch, she builds a nursery web and guards it. When the eggs hatch, they stay under her protection for about a week.

It has been so fascinating to observe, research, and take pictures of these guys. I hope to be able to see many generations of six spotted fishing spiders grow up around our little pond we aptly named "Frog Soup".



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

References:

1. BugGuide.net. (2004). Species *Dolomedes triton* - Six-spotted Fishing Spider. Retrieved from: <https://bugguide.net/node/view/1990/tree>
2. Eaton, E.R. (2011). Spider Sunday: Six-spotted Fishing Spider. Bug Eric Blog. Retrieved from: <https://bugeric.blogspot.com/2011/07/spider-sunday-six-spotted-fishing.html>
3. Neogi, S. (2019). Six-spotted Fishing (*Dolomedes tenebrosus*). *Spider Identifications*. Retrieved from: <https://spideridentifications.com/six-spotted-fishing.html>
4. Missouri Department of Conservation (n.d.) Spotted Fishing Spider: *Dolomedes triton*. Retrieved from: <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/spotted-fishing-spider>



Upcoming Events:

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Southwest Master Naturalists 2020 Calendar

January		February		March		April		May		June	
8	SLAMN General meeting	1	Citizen Science Class	4	Board Meeting	1	SLAMN General Meeting	9	Fungi and Mushrooms	3	Board Meeting
17	RV & Boat Show	15	Longleaf Pine & Botany	21	Coastal Ecology (Rockefeller)	4	Amphibian and Reptile Study Class	15	Field Trip to Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center	13	Riverine Ecology and Fish
25	SLAMN New Candidate Class Overview	26	Paddlefish Spawning at Booker Fowler	22	Bird Study	17	Rendezvous 2020 Camp Hartner	30	Aquatic Invertebrates	27	Land Ethic and Backyard Habitat
				27	Garden Show Burton Coliseum	24	City Nature Challenge				
						25	Cajun Prairie and Pollinators Class				
						25	Earth Day Civic Center				
July		August		September		October		November		December	
1	SLAMN General Meeting			2	Board Meeting	7	SLAMN General Meeting			2	Board Meeting
11	Public Outreach and Graduation Class										

Upcoming Education Programs at Tuten Park 3801 Nelson Road, Lake CharlesSign up for any upcoming programs at: bit.ly/TutenEd or by email or phone: Irvin.louque@cityoflc.us, 337.491.8770.Keep informed about what's happening at Tuten Park, sign up for the Tuten Park monthly newsletter by contacting Irvin Louque at: Irvin.louque@cityoflc.usDecember 21, 2019 Saturday, Franklin, LA CBC contact Mike VanEtten mlvanetten@yahoo.com or 337.962.4078December 22, 2019 Sabine CBC contact Irvin Louque 337.491.8770, email irvinlouque@gmail.comDecember 28, 2019 Lake Charles CBC contact David Booth 337.526.0837, email david@boothenvironmental.comJanuary 18, 2020 Master Garden Symposium West Monroe <https://www.monroe-westmonroe.org/things-to-do-details.cfm?id=6417>January 20, 2020 Special Sparrow Field Trip Contact David Booth 337.526.0837, email: david@boothenvironmental.com

Upcoming Events:

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January 25, 2020 the New Orleans Botanical Garden and the Native Plant Initiative of GNO <https://www.npi-gno.org/events/>
Morning Lecture with Thomas Rainer, co-author of *Planting in a Post-Wild World* - 9am-11am \$25
This lecture will focus on rebuilding biodiversity in New Orleans urban landscapes and gardens.

Sign-up for the following events on  **TRACK IT FORWARD**

December 12, 2019 Volunteer opportunity: Nature in Focus at Riverside Park.

January 8, 2020 Next General Meeting at Tuten Park

January 11, 2020 Field trip on January 11. Kayaking on the Calcasieu River. Put in will be at Anthony Ferry Boat launch at 9 am.

January 17-20, 2020 RV and Boat Show Lake Charles Civic Center Volunteers needed

May 15-18, 2020 Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center SLAMN Field Trip

January 25, 2020 Baton Rouge Hilltop Arboretum's Gardening Symposium

<https://www.lsu.edu/hilltop/programs/adult/symposium.php>

January 24, 25, and 26, 2019 Save the Date: LOS Winter Meeting Shreveport



Louisiana Ornithological Society

Hampton Inn & Suites Shreveport/South 8340 Millicent Way, Shreveport, Louisiana, 71115, USA +1-318-798-1320 <http://losbird.org/>

February 14-17, 2020 Great Backyard Bird Count <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

February 7-9, 2020 LNPS annual meeting Woodworth <https://www.lnps.org/>

March 2020 Southwest Louisiana Garden Conference & EXPO 2020 Burton Coliseum, Lake Charles

April 3-5, 2020 Annual BBBB plus a 50 year anniversary and a 75 year birthday celebration at Allen Acres, Pitkin (details soon)



Save the date for LMNA Rendezvous 2020!

April 17 - 19, 2020 at Camp Hardtner, Pollock, Louisiana. We have ordered great weather for exploring the Kisatchie National Forest!
New this year: The camp staff will be providing our meals for us.

<https://www.camphardtner.org/>



May 14-17, 2020 and **May 21-24** National Bug Guide Gathering, Allen Acres, native@camtel.net
5070 Hwy 399, Pitkin, LA 70656, 337-328-2252 www.allenacresbandb.com

PLANT IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS 2020 at Allen Acres

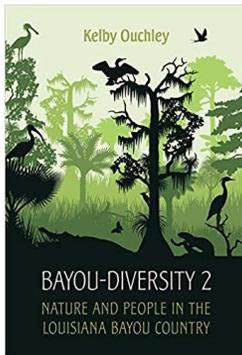
March 24-26, March 31-April 2

April 7-9, April 14-16, April 21-23, April 28-30

May 5-7

Dr. Charles Allen, Allen Acres in Cravens, Louisiana; 5070 Hwy 399; Pitkin, LA 70656
337-328-2252 native@camtel.net

Resources for the Naturalists:

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Bayou-Diversity 2: Nature and People in the Louisiana Bayou Country, October 10, 2018
 By Kelby Ouchley

<https://www.amazon.com/Bayou-Diversity-Nature-People-Louisiana-Country/dp/0807169382>

In this sequel to his previous exploration of Louisiana's bayou country, conservationist Kelby Ouchley continues his journey through the vast ecosystems of the state with a fresh array of historical and cultural narratives, personal anecdotes, and reflections. Informative and entertaining, *Bayou-Diversity 2* revisits familiar flora and fauna like endangered black bears, infamous feral hogs, and the ghostly bald cypress forest. Ouchley's thought-provoking discussion considers the long-term human impact on Louisiana plants and wildlife.



Natures Notebook by USA National Phenology Network

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/natures-notebook/id508465801?ls=1&mt=8>

Description:

Nature's Notebook is a citizen science program for observing and recording plant and animal life cycle events, like flowering and bird migration (also known as phenology). We recommend that you create an account, and register your location, as well as the plants and animals you'll observe online at www.usanpn.org first, and then use this app for going out into the field to record your observations through the seasons. Find out more at www.usanpn.org/participate/observe.

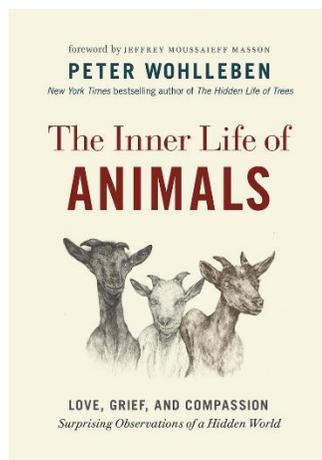


Audubon Christmas Bird Count

<http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

History of the Christmas Bird Count

<http://www.audubon.org/history-christmas-bird-count>



The Inner Life of Animals Love, Grief, and Compassion-Surprising Observations of a Hidden World By Peter Wohlleben

<https://greystonebooks.com/products/the-inner-life-of-animals#!>

Foreword by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, Translated by Jane Billinghurst

Through vivid stories of devoted pigs, two-timing magpies, and scheming roosters, *The Inner Life of Animals* weaves the latest scientific research into how animals interact with the world with Peter Wohlleben's personal experiences in forests and fields. Horses feel shame, deer grieve, and goats discipline their kids. Ravens call their friends by name, rats regret bad choices, and butterflies choose the very best places for their children to grow up. In this, his latest book, Peter Wohlleben follows the hugely successful *The Hidden Life of Trees* with insightful stories into the emotions, feelings, and intelligence of animals around us. Animals are different from us in ways that amaze us—and they are also much closer to us than we ever would have thought.



Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists is to promote awareness, understanding, and respect of Louisiana’s natural resources using unbiased, accurate, scientific information provided by a trained corps of volunteers. These volunteers provide education, outreach, and services dedicated to the conservation and management of our ecosystems

Visit our website:
Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists
<http://www.swlamasternaturalists.org/>



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IT’S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

We welcome contributions of original writing of observations on nature in our area of Southwest Louisiana. We also welcome reports, reviews, poems, sketches, paintings and digital photographs. Please type “Newsletter” in the subject line of the email. When you send a digital photograph, please include in the email the subject, your name, location, date and any interesting story or information about the photograph. Please send your email to the Newsletter Editor: arlenevidaurri.cain@yahoo.com



iNaturalist.org is a place where you can record what you see in nature, meet other nature lovers, and learn about the natural world.



From hikers to hunters, birders to beach-combers, the world is filled with naturalists, and many of us record what we find. What if all those observations could be shared online? You might discover someone who finds beautiful wildflowers at your favorite birding spot, or learn about the birds you see on the way to work. If enough people recorded their observations, it would be like a living record of life on Earth that scientists and land managers could use to monitor changes in biodiversity, and that *anyone* could use to learn more about nature.