

# Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists

## Nature Notes



Charter 2016

Vol 2 ISSUE 1 February 2017

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### President's Note:

#### Master Naturalists and Naturalists in Training!

2017 brings with it a new class of master naturalists-in-training! I really enjoyed meeting and speaking with the new course participants.

The New Year also brings into attention the annual cycles of nature. With the recent warmer weather, I've heard birds singing and some plants are already breaking their dormancy as of mid-January. The study of annual cycles is termed phenology and can be a really interesting focus for the naturalist. We already notice the seasonal cycles, whether we look forward to spring bird migration or dread the coming bloom of pines, oaks, and other allergy inducing trees. Phenology can be very rewarding to keep records of and many naturalists and gardeners do. You can keep track of phenology in your nature journal or through the Nature's Notebook citizen science program of the USA National Phenology Network.

Our own chapter annual cycle is also getting underway in February. We've got workshops scheduled approximately every 2 weeks from now through June, an outreach event at the SWLA Garden Fest March 24-25, and the LMNA Rendezvous at Chicot State Park March 31-April 2. All of these events will offer great opportunities for friendship, learning, and outreach.

See you at our workshops and events this spring!

Irvin Louque

#### Calendar Quick View

- Feb 4: SLAMN Workshop**
- Feb 11: Bird Banding**
- Feb 18: SLAMN Workshop**
- Mar 4: SLAMN Workshop**
- Mar 18: SLAMN Workshop**
- Mar 31: LMNA Rendezvous**
- Apr 8: SLAMN Workshop**



## Meeting Notes

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**Upcoming Meeting Location and Date**  
**Sam Houston Jones State Park, April 22, Time to be arranged**  
**All members are invited to attend.**

**President:** Irvin Louque**Vice-President:** Tommy Hillman**Treasurer:** Robby Maxwell**Secretary:** Julie Amy**At-large Board Members:**

Chuck Battaglia,

David Booth,

Theresa Cross,

Brian Sean Early,

Lori McGee

**January Meeting Highlights**

- Deborah Frank will serve as LMNA representative along with Robbie Maxwell and Irvin Louque for our chapter. She replaces Brian Sean Early.
- Chapter funds will be used to purchase student grade butterfly nets for our pollinator class.
- Chapter funds will be used to print handouts for the 2017 class session.
- Irvin has 500 pamphlets for members to distribute at various functions and organizations.
- Tommy Hillman will pick the top 3 choices for our chapter T-shirt. The t-shirts will be produced for chapter members, guest speakers, and to sell at public events.
- It was decided that we will set-up a booth at the annual Garden and Expo Show help on March 24 and 25 at Burton Colosseum. We will set-up a booth next to the Gulf Coast Bird Club booth. Theresa Cross volunteered to make a display board for the table. Chet St. Romain volunteered to chair the organization of the booth and volunteers.
- Reminder: Documentation of volunteer hours for members are due. Members provide 20 volunteer hours per year 20/year, from January to January. The purpose of volunteer hours is to allow the chapter's nonprofessional members to teach the public. Robbie asks for everyone to send him your hours as you accumulate them. Also, send Robbie the link or description of your Continuing Education course hours. Be sure to keep track of your hours volunteer and continuing education hours.
- Next meeting: April 22 at Sam Houston Jones State Park, at the Amphibian and Reptile workshop. The time will be announced at a later date.

*Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Chapter meetings are normally held quarterly on the first Wednesday of the month at Tuten Park at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted. Chapter tentative meeting dates for 2017 are April 22, July 5, and October 4*

Reminder: SLAMN \$15.00 yearly membership is due. Mail your dues to:

**Robby Maxwell SLAMN Treasurer**  
**20333 Bourque Rd.**  
**Iowa, LA 70647**

If you have not received the **Rendezvous** registration form and information please email Irvin Louque [irvinlouque@gmail.com](mailto:irvinlouque@gmail.com) and request the information.

To reserve your spot at **Rendezvous**, send the registration form with a check or money order made payable to LMNA for \$ 70.00 or \$ 60.00 (as appropriate) to:

**Maryann Hoskins, Rendezvous Chairperson, 303 Audubon Trace,**  
**Jefferson, LA 70121, Phone (504) 908-2296 (c) [chip1201@hotmail.com](mailto:chip1201@hotmail.com)**

You can pay your registration for **Rendezvous** through PayPal. The LMNGNO chapter has a PayPal button on its website. <http://www.louisianamasternaturalistgno.org/>. Use the button on the LMNGNO website regardless of which Chapter you are a member. If you pay for registration via PayPal, you still must send your completed **Rendezvous** Registration Form to Maryann Hoskins via email or US mail.

Local News:

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**Welcome to our new Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists candidates! The first SLAMN workshop took place Saturday, January 21 at 8:00 a.m. at Tuten Park.**

**The next workshop will be February 4 at Tuten Park.** Across the Louisiana Master Naturalist Association, citizen science is going to be the theme this year. At our next workshop (February 4), we'll cover a few citizen science basics, including the scientific method, iNaturalist, eBird, and Nature's Notebook. We will begin at 8 am at Tuten Park. All members will be welcome to attend this workshop to review these citizen science programs and to participate.



## Local News:

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## Lake Charles Christmas Bird Count Summary

On December 30, 2016, 15 birders tallied 108 species during the 7<sup>th</sup> Lake Charles Christmas Bird Count. The participants were split into 5 teams to cover the 15 mile diameter circle. The Lake Charles team led the count with 63 species seen, followed by the Intracoastal Park team (61 species), Gulf HWY/Deatonville (59 species), Carlyss/South Sulphur (57 species), and Westlake/North Sulphur (49 species). Some of the great observations from the count include 4 White-tailed Kites, huge flocks of blackbirds (estimated 100,000 birds), 1,500 Tree Swallows, 1 Great Horned Owl, 1 Crested Caracara, 1 Peregrine Falcon, and flock of 20 Ruddy Ducks. Six certified SWLA Master Naturalists participated in the count—David Booth, Arlene Cain, Deborah Frank, Irvin Louque, Bette Talbot, and Linda Wygoda. Patty Palmer, a member of the 2017 Class, participated in the count as well.

The Lake Charles CBC is one of many Christmas Bird Count circles in Southwest Louisiana. The 2017 Lake Charles CBC will likely take place on Saturday December 30, 2017. For more information or if you'd like to participate in the 2017 count, contact Irvin Louque at [irvinlouque@gmail.com](mailto:irvinlouque@gmail.com)



White-tailed Kites



Cat Bird



Osprey



### January 28, 2017 Bird Banding at Sam Houston Jones State Park

Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists and Gulf Coast Bird Club member **Irvin Louque** set-up bird banding activities at Sam Houston Jones State Park on Saturday January 28. The group caught 6 birds total. They caught 2 Northern Cardinals (1 recapture female, 1 new female), 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets (1 recaptured female, 1 new male), 1 new Blue Jay, and 1 new female Orange-crowned Warbler. Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists present were Tommy Hillman, Julie Amy, David Booth, Linda, and Arlene Cain. Others present included Dr. Eddie Lyons, Wildlife Management professor at McNeese State University, and Phillip Vasseur, Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Biologist who works primarily with the Whooping Crane project. Participants included students enrolled in Dr. Lyons's ornithology class and Gulf Coast Bird Club members. The next banding is scheduled for February 11.

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## January 28 Bird Banding



## 2016 Sabine Christmas Bird Count Highlights by Jeanie Pousson

First of all, thank you so much! What a day! On Dec 18, 29 dedicated birders spotted 154 species and 21,724 individual birds, on a cold, windy day in Cameron Parish. Last year, the total was 160 species and 31,006 individuals. Due to the high wind, with gusts of 38 mph, many of the usual perching birds, including the usual sparrow species, weren't seen. We reported no crows, and some counts had 20-50% lower species count. The wind was so loud that one of our highly skilled counters reported that he could not hear the birds, one of his first lines of ID. These howling winds through the marsh reeds was indeed an eerie sound. Some of the rarities spotted by **Mac Myers**, included a group of 65 **Black Scoters** (total on record since 1942 was 23), scaups, a **Long-tailed Duck**, and a **Common Goldeneye**. **Paul Conover** spotted a **Bell's Vireo**. A **Nashville Warbler** was spotted behind the W. Hackberry Recreation Center by **Erik Johnson, Deanna and Gordon Griggs**. A **Vermillion Flycatcher** was spotted in East Cameron. **Walker Wilson and Heather Wilson** spotted a **Common Merganser** (last CBC sighting was in 2001, and no previous recorded sightings in South Louisiana west of Baton Rouge ever!) and two **Least Bitterns** (not a winter resident). A **Bald Eagle** was seen by **Jay Huner, Charlotte Chehotsky, and Linda Wygoda (SLAMN)**. **Irvin Louque (SLAMN), Dan Guillory (SLAMN), and Chet St. Romain (SLAMN)** had a close-up flyover by **Sandhill Cranes**.

## Local News:

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Five Gulf Coast Bird Club members: **Chet St. Romain, Patty Palmer, Janice Guillot, Dick Guillot, and Kashi Yadalam** had never participated in a Christmas Bird Count before and several lifers were spotted by them. **Judsdon Lassiter** also joined us for the first time this year, although he has previously helped with CBCs in the Baton Rouge area.

The counters were grateful for **Marty and Maxine Guillory's** hot chocolate, hot meal and warm welcome at the end of the count, not to mention Marty's great fig cake! I am so grateful for such a wonderful local team and dedicated people who come from all over the state to help us out. The counters were appreciative of the generous snacks and goodies donated by GCBC members. And none of this would work so well if not for **First Baptist Church of Cameron** who offered free bedroll accommodations for three nights for four Cameron counts that were held back to back.

King Rail photo by Erik Johnson



Sandhill Cranes photo by Irvin Louque



## Continuing Education Opportunities:

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## Continuing Education and Volunteer



Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists **Irvin Louque** holds bird banding activities at Sam Houston Jones Park on Saturdays in collaboration with the **Louisiana Bird Observatory**. Volunteers are welcome!

**Bird Banding at Sam Houston Jones State Park on Saturday February 11<sup>th</sup>**

We'll meet at 6:30 AM at the Red Trail parking lot at Sam Houston Jones State Park. The banding station is located at the first parking lot on the right and additional parking and restrooms is located on the left of the road. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact Irvin Louque through email or phone (225)206-0400 [irvinlouque@gmail.com](mailto:irvinlouque@gmail.com)



## Volunteer Opportunities:

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Continuing Education and Volunteer Opportunity  
Check out the Volunteer Instructor Program.

Aquatic VIP

<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/document/aquatic-vip-flyer>

<https://ldwf.wufoo.com/forms/aquatic-vip/>



**VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM**

Help encourage others to get **HOOKED on FISHING!**

**FREE Workshop**

Offered at various locations across Louisiana  
Sign up online for the one nearest you!  
Not in your area? We'll come to you for groups of 10 or more.

Want to become an Aquatic Education Instructor? Who can become an Aquatic Education Instructor? Activities and topics taught at training course

- Field techniques training (water to fish)
- Lesson about habitat management and how to teach others to fish
- Lesson plan and materials provided
- Receive CDIF certification
- Instructors & Rewards
- Teachers
- After school club advisors
- Scout leaders
- Youth group leaders
- Summer camp staff
- Parks & recreation staff
- Church groups
- Local community groups
- Homeowners
- Anyone!
- Fishing
- Knot tying
- Casting
- Bait and tackle
- Fish identification & anatomy
- Fish management
- How to use fish
- Fish tagging
- Proper fish handling
- Species specific
- Safety, ethics & regulations

Apply online at <https://ldwf.wufoo.com/forms/aquatic-vip/>

Contact Alayna McGarry at 504-286-4050 or [amcgarry@wlf.la.gov](mailto:amcgarry@wlf.la.gov) for more information on Aquatic VIP and other workshop locations!



**Save the Date!**

**LOUISIANA MASTER NATURALIST ASSOCIATION**

**LMNA ANNUAL MEET UP 2017**  
(FOR CERTIFIED & ENROLLED MASTER NATURALISTS)  
**FRIDAY 3/31 - SUNDAY 4/2**  
**CHICOT STATE PARK**

Want to help us plan? Join a Planning Team!

- Speaker Team:** Recruit speakers, coordinate speaker schedule
- Food Team:** Plan, organize and execute meal time
- Activity Team:** Plan workshops, hikes, & other activities
- Volunteer Team:** Recruit and manage volunteers
- Tech and Prep Team:** Procure AV equipment, quality presentations
- Sponsor and Tabling Team:** Seek donations & tabling organizations
- Registration Team:** Point of contact for registration, works reg. table

Email [lamasternaturalist@gmail.com](mailto:lamasternaturalist@gmail.com) for more information!

**Volunteer for the Louisiana Master Naturalists  
Meet UP**

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

Please let us know if you are interested in  
joining a planning team by emailing:

[lamasternaturalist@gmail.com](mailto:lamasternaturalist@gmail.com).

You can get volunteer hours!

**Volunteers are needed!**

**Creating a Monarch WayStation Garden**

Camp Salmen Nature Park 2017 Spring project:

Saturday, March 18: Preparation of garden beds

Saturday, April 22: Plant Monarch WayStation flower beds

Saturday, May 13: Garden Completion EVENT AND  
Butterfly Release!

Camp Salmen 35122 Parish Pkwy. Slidell, LA 985-288-5901

To volunteer or get more information contact Linda Auld

at [nolabuglady@gmail.com](mailto:nolabuglady@gmail.com)

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



**Calling all Louisiana Master Naturalists and Louisiana  
Master Gardeners! Volunteers are needed!**

*JOIN THE FUN at Camp Salmen!*

2017 Project to enhance the nature experience!

Help document the birds, butterflies, plants and reptiles  
creating a nature checklist of existing diversity to  
formulate a "Scavenger Hunt Discovery Map" for folks  
to enjoy during their field trips.

**All planned field trip dates are on Saturdays: March 18,  
April 22, May 13, June 10, & Sept 23.**

You are invited to spend some time at Camp Salmen  
whether in a group or by yourself. We need volunteers.

To volunteer or for more information contact Linda  
Auld, "BugLady", at: [nolabuglady@gmail.com](mailto:nolabuglady@gmail.com).

Camp Salmen 35122 Parish Parkway Slidell, LA Call: 1-  
985-898-3011

## Volunteer Opportunities:

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### U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services Southwest Louisiana NWR Complex

<https://www.fws.gov/swlarefugecomplex/volunteers.html>

Volunteers and student interns provide much needed assistance with refuge projects. They are often able to complete work that the refuge would be unable to do. The hours, work assignments, et cetera are tailored to meet the needs of both the refuge and the volunteer or intern.

Refuge housing may be available to qualified interns and volunteers. Volunteer projects include conducting biological surveys, providing clerical assistance in the office, general maintenance of facilities and equipment, photography and art work, habitat restoration activities, and environmental education just to name a few.

Please contact the SW LA refuge complex headquarters for additional information regarding openings and how to apply.

SW LA NWR Complex Headquarters

Attn: Volunteer Coordinator

1428 Hwy. 27

Bell City, LA 70630

337-598-2216

**Diane Borden-Billiot**



### Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana upcoming events and volunteer opportunities:

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

<http://www.crcl.org/get-involved/volunteer.html>

Volunteer for 10,000 Trees for Louisiana in Lake Maurepas

Sign up at: <http://www.crcl.org/get-involved/volunteer.html>

Feb 3, 2017 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Feb 4, 2017 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

## Upcoming Events:

[Back](#)**Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalist certification workshop Citizen Science Workshop (February 4, 2017)**

Coordinators: Theresa Cross and Irvin Louque

Location: Tuten Park

Bring boots, lunch, camera or smartphone

Needed: Anyone from the 2016 class interested in helping new members learn iNaturalist.

8:00 AM: Introduction

9:15 AM: Example Citizen Science Projects

10:45 AM: iNaturalist Presentation

11:30 AM: Lunch

12:00 PM: iNaturalist Small Groups Activity

1:30 PM: Additional Citizen Science Projects

2:00 PM: Finding Scientifically Accurate Information Online

2:30 PM: Adjourn

**Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalist certification workshop Longleaf Pine Workshop (February 18, 2017)**

Coordinator: Charles Battaglia

Guest Speaker: Chris Doffit, LDWF field botanist

Meet at Tuten. Field activities at David Daigle's property north of Reeves, LA. Finish at Tuten Park.

8:00 AM: Meet at Tuten Park and Begin First presentation

9:30AM: Head to Daigles property

10:00 AM: Daigles Site visit

12:00 PM: Lunch and leisure

12:30 PM: Head Back to Tuten

1:00 PM: Final presentation

2:00 PM: Adjourn

**Save the Date!**



**LMNA ANNUAL MEET UP 2017**  
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**FRIDAY 3/31- SUNDAY 4/2**  
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- **Tech and Prep Team:** Procures AV equipment, assists presenters
- **Sponsor and Tabling Team:** Seek donations & tabling organizations
- **Registration Team:** Point of contact for registration, works reg. table

Email [lamasternaturalist@gmail.com](mailto:lamasternaturalist@gmail.com) for more information!

**The Louisiana Master Naturalists Association will hosts an annual Rendezvous where members meet to learn, volunteer, and get to know their fellow Louisiana Master Naturalists. LMNA:**

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

**The 2017 Annual LMNA Rendezvous will be at Chicot State Park (Mar 31–Apr 2).**



[www.crcl.org](http://www.crcl.org)

**March 2, 2017, Cameron**  
Cameron Parish School Board Conference Center  
510 Marshall Street, Cameron, LA 70631

**February 9, 2017 Abbeville, Vermillion Parish Library 405 E. St.**  
Victor Street, Abbeville, LA 70510

**February 15, 2017 Lafitte, Lafitte Multipurpose Center 4917 City**  
Park Drive, Lafitte, LA 70067

**March 16, 2017 Lacombe, Big Branch Marsh Wildlife Refuge 61389**  
LA-434, Lacombe, LA 70445

CRCL will host four unique events throughout Coastal Louisiana that will provide a high level overview of Louisiana's coastal land loss crisis and the various local, state, and federal efforts to address the impacts. Together, we will take a closer look at restoration and flood protection projects specific to the area where each event is being held. Each one of these unique events will be entertaining and informative with a little bit of a twist. Not only will you learn about coast restoration from the experts, you will also get the chance to actually go see where local restoration projects are occurring. Go to [crcl.org](http://www.crcl.org) for more details and how to register for these free, fun, exciting, and most importantly, informative events.

## Upcoming Events:

[Back](#)**February 3-5, 2017 Louisiana Native Plant Society**<http://www.lnps.org/>

2017 LNPS Annual Meeting February 3-5, 2017  
Wesley Center, 2350 Methodist Parkway, Woodworth, Louisiana  
71485

REGISTER by JANUARY 27, 2017 at [www.thewesleycenter.com](http://www.thewesleycenter.com)

**February 16-18, 2017 Eagle Expo**<https://www.cajuncoast.com/event/eagle-expo>**EAGLE EXPO****Morgan City, LA 70380****February 16-18, 2017**

The Atchafalaya Basin, the largest overflow swamp in the country, is home to an abundance of wildlife, including rare and endangered species such as the American bald eagle. Our annual Eagle Expo includes boat tours into various waterways to view eagle's nests, raptor show, and presentations on the American bald eagle, wildlife, flora, fauna and the culture of the area by wildlife professionals and photographers, and much more. Admission and registration required.

**February 23-28, 2017**<http://www.whoopingcranefestival.org/>**Whooping Crane Festival****Port Aransas Texas**

**Get your binoculars and checklists ready!** The Coastal Bend is the only spot in the United States where the endangered whooping crane can be viewed at close range, and the Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce celebrates this astonishing natural wonder with an annual festival honoring these grand birds.

**March 24 & 25, 2017**<http://gardenfest.org/>**Southwest Louisiana Garden Conference & Expo:****2017 Southwest Louisiana Garden Conference & Expo**

The Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists will have a booth at the Southwest Louisiana Garden Conference and Expo at Burton Coliseum. The event will be held Friday March 24 thru Saturday March 25 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM each day. Our goal is to provide information and resources about the Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists organization.



# 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.

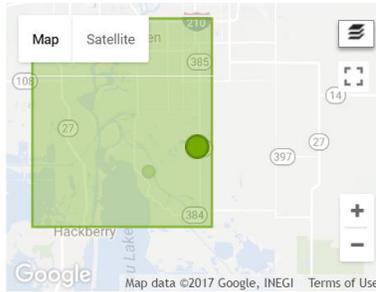
### iNaturalist Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Project Observation of the Month by Irvin Louque

Tropical sage (*Salvia coccinea*) · Observed by ilouque · January 7, 2017

☆ Add to favorites   Identify   + Add to project   Share



Photo © Irvin Louque, some rights reserved



Places: US-LA, US, North America, NA  
[Details](#)

ilouque's ID: **Tropical sage** (*Salvia coccinea*)  
Agree?

Identotron

View 3 from January 07, 2017 »

#### Description

*crystallofolia*

Tags: *crystallofolia*  
Added: Sat, 07 Jan 2017 10:20:29 -0600  
[Add/edit more fields](#)

#### Data Quality Assessment

Quality grade: Casual [Details](#)

Observation © Irvin Louque

**Join the Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists project.  
Add your observations and photos to our group project.**

**iNaturalist.org**   Observations ▾   Species ▾   Projects ▾   Places   Guides   People   0   0

Welcome to Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists

« Projects

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**Maxwell MicroPrairie Restoration Part II:  
The Waiting Game and Playing With Fire  
By Robby Maxwell**

*“We never live; we are always in the expectation of living.”*  
-Voltaire

I've evolved into the weird neighbor walking around the yard looking at toe-high plants. The plot is green, but it's very weedy like everyone said it would be. Invasives like Poa grass (*Poa annua*) and hairy bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) dominate, but should complete their life cycles soon, and hopefully be pushed out in the coming years. There are some native early-succession volunteers coming up, too. I am finding some gems in the mix, though. The warm winter has kick started some seeds, and the brief cold snaps don't seem to have affected anything. Various coneflowers are popping up along with other mystery seedlings that are obviously of the “one of these things is not like the other” crowd. The plugs are throwing up some sprouts that should be interesting, the crawfish are active as ever, hoverflies (*Syrphidae*) are buzzing, and the irises are putting on some weight. The day that I see the first bloom from a seed we threw out creeps closer, and until then, I wait.



On another note, I've been grabbing up project-specific field guides to help with some of the record keeping we plan on doing. My most recent acquisitions include the Peterson Guide [Eastern Butterflies](#) (Opler and Malikul), [Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers](#) (Ladd and Oberle), [Dragonflies and Damselflies of Louisiana](#) (Strickland and Strickland), and the tome I couldn't be more impressed with, [The Bees in Your Backyard](#) (Wilson and Carril). In conjunction with other guides and resources at my disposal, maybe I can figure out what one or two of the creatures out there are. Waiting...

Volunteer bluets blooming.



*Echinacea* seedling. Probably purple coneflower, *E. purpurea*





We did get to play with fire at Dr. Malcolm Vidrine’s Cajun Prairie Gardens in Eunice. “Playing” might give the wrong impression, as it was very organized, thought out, and safety conscious. Still, it feels like playing for anyone with even a hint of firebug in their soul. He’s been a steward to his gardens for a couple of decades and has burned them annually. The burn is a natural part of a prairie’s life cycle, and is really one of the main features that makes a prairie a prairie. It burns away old growth to make way for the new, lays carbon back down on the ground, clears out woody plants and invaders, and is even necessary for germination of some seeds. Fire is good! We’re looking forward to burning at our plot in a year. Again, with the waiting...

The exciting times in the MicroPrairie should be just around the next bend!

Further Reading:

Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society  
<http://www.cajunprairie.org/>



Malcolm Vidrine’s Cajun Prairie Gardens Blog  
<https://cajunprairiegardens.com/>



Marc Pastorek’s Prairie Blog  
<https://marcpastorek.com/>



Vidrine, Malcolm F. The Cajun Prairie: a Natural History. Malcolm F. Vidrine, 2010.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Cajun-Prairie-Natural-History/dp/0615368131>



## An Ice Flower Walk in the Park by Irvin Louque



On January 6, a strong cold front moved through Louisiana, bringing the coldest temperatures we've seen since at least 2015. Shortly before the front, I came across an article from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center about frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*) (Schwartzman 2017). Frostweed is one of a handful of plant species that exhibit the process of crystallofolia.

Crystallofolia, or ice flowers, is the process in which water is drawn up through the roots and through the stem of a perennial plant forming ribbons of ice during the first few hard freezes of the year (Harms, crystallofolia). The

process through which this occurs is known as ice segregation, where above-freezing and below-freezing temperatures are juxtaposed (Carter, ice segregation). Only a few species of native plants in North America are known to produce ice flowers regularly among wild-growing populations. Among these are stone mint (*Cunila origanoides*), longbranch frostweed (*Helianthemum canadense*), frostweed (*V. virginica*), and sweetscent (*Pluchea odorata*).

Hard freezes are rare in south Louisiana, so I decided that the morning of January 7 was the perfect opportunity to see crystallofolia for myself. After I described this phenomenon to Samantha, my fiancée, she decided to join me. I knew of a small patch of sweetscent within about a minute of the Tuten Park parking lot, so it would be easy to see the ice flowers and get back to the car if it turned out to be too cold for us.

We made it out to the park at about 7:10 AM, and it was 25°F. I'm only familiar with sweetscent when it is flowering. In January, it was obviously dormant and looked like every other brown, dormant plant in the area to me. We looked over a few similarly sized plants and found no ice flowers. Then, we saw some white. As we moved closer, we could see a little patch of three sweetscents, each with an ice flower at its base. We crouched down in amazement, and I photographed them. Each ice flower was about 5 cm wide and about 3 cm tall. They were a lot thicker than many of the ice flower photographs I had seen online, but most of those are photographs of either stone mint or frostweed.

Then we walked away to look at my planter box near the back gate of the park. It contains a mixture of native and non-native high-value pollinator plants. To my surprise, the tropical sage (*Salvia coccinea*) had also formed an ice flower. This was all along the lower foot or so of the stems of the largest plants. It had formed as if the water



in the stem quickly cooled and a slow-motion explosion of ice occurred. This sighting was completely unexpected to me as I hadn't read anything about this species of sage producing ice flowers. Later, I found a resource describing a crystallofolia-like process in cultivated tropical sage (Harms, *Salvia coccinea*). We continued our trek to the back of Tuten Park and observed no other ice flowers. Actually, the temperature seemed to rise as we entered the woods and seemed much warmer around the shoreline of the pond, a good example of a microclimate.

There are several very good internet resources about crystallofolia and ice flowers, each from a different perspective. First, I'd encourage everyone to read the ice flower article that was featured in *American Scientist* (Carter 2013). Dr. Bob Harms put together an outstanding website about crystallofolia from a botanical perspective and from his observations in central Texas. Dr. Harms passed away in October 2016 and was a linguistics expert who transitioned to botany as Professor Emeritus. Dr. Jim Carter has a great website about many facets of ice, including ice segregation and ice flowers as well. I corresponded with Dr. Carter when compiling this article and his input was a big help in understanding the crystallofolia process. There is more information about ice flowers than I could include in this article since I also wanted to provide a narrative of my own ice flower observations. Visit Dr. Harms and Dr. Carter's websites as they provide a wealth of information about this and other plant and ice segregation products.

#### Citations:

Carter, James R. 2013. Flowers and Ribbons of Ice. *American Scientist*. 101: 360.

<http://www.americanscientist.org/issues/feature/2013/5/flowers-and-ribbons-of-ice/1>

Carter, James R. Ice Segregation. Personal Webpage. <http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrcarter/ice/segregation/>

Harms, Bob. Crystallofolia ('Frost Flowers'), with stems of frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*) & marsh fleabane (*Pluchea odorata*). Personal Webpage. <http://w3.biosci.utexas.edu/prc/VEVI3/crystallofolia.html>

Harms, Bob. 2008. *Salvia coccinea* (Scarlet Sage), as a candidate for crystallofolia. Personal Webpage. <http://w3.biosci.utexas.edu/prc/VEVI3/SACO5.html>

Schwartzman, Steven. 2017. The frost below. *Wildflower News*. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. <https://news.wildflower.org/the-frost-below/>

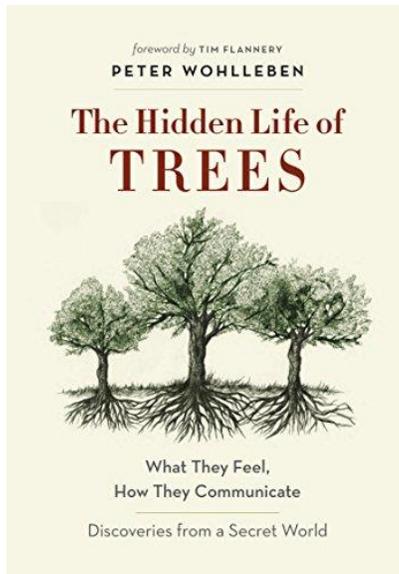
A colorful graphic with the text "Happy Mardi Gras!" in a bubbly, stylized font. "Happy" is in pink, "Mardi" is in green, and "Gras!" is in yellow. The text is set against a white background with a slight shadow effect.

## Naturalists Notes:

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## The Naturalist's Bookshelf: The Hidden Life of Trees

### Review by Linda Wygoda



I'm always looking for natural history books that provide a little more background and information than field marks and a name. I want to know more about the organism, their habits and interactions, and their relationships to the rest of the environment. So that's what I was hoping for when I picked up the *Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate, Discoveries from a Secret World*, by the German forester and author Peter Wohlleben. This book gives a fascinating account of the interactions between trees in the ancient forests of Europe, specifically Germany. As a forest manager, Wohlleben has spent years studying ancient oaks, beeches, and spruce.

*The Hidden Life of Trees*, describes in an insightful and fascinating way underground social networks composed of a bustling community of mycorrhizal mutualistic fungal species. This network has been studied in other forests utilizing mass spectrometers and scintillation counters, supporting the idea that trees were able to exchange carbon, even between different species. An article in *Nature* in 1997<sup>(1)</sup> described this phenomenon as the "wood wide web". Since then, botanists have mapped, monitored, and traced these interactions and pathways to reveal the structure and processes used in this vast network. These studies reveal that trees recognize and communicate with each other, affecting their gene regulation, defense strategies, and growth patterns.

Every chapter of the book provides an insightful moment into a mechanism of tree life. In a lively and engaging way, Wohlleben discusses: photosynthesis, transpiration, succession, seed dispersal, competition, microclimate, plant development, nutrition, and climate change. The profound uniqueness of trees due to their massive size and extreme longevity, in comparison to most other organisms, makes them especially interesting. His book is not infused with scientific jargon or terminology but rather is written in a very anthropomorphic way as he describes trees as aging gracefully, helping each other, communicating, taking risks, and following rules. While not offering definitive proof for all of his assertions, Wohlleben does support his ideas with facts and logic. Initially this anthropomorphism made me a little uncomfortable. But after reading the book, I think it is a way to impart the vitality, power, and dynamism of trees, especially to non-scientists. I think so often we view them as inanimate objects like rocks, and by writing about them in this way, Wohlleben imparts a mystery and animation to trees. He definitely communicates his love of the forest, and his belief in the importance of ancient forests in particular. I also have to admit that one of my favorite creatures from the *Lord of the Rings* was Treebeard and the "Ents". I definitely recommend this book to those of you wishing to put a different perspective on your next walk in the woods.

1. S.W. Simard, D.A. Perry, M.D. Jones, D.D. Myrold, D.M. Durall, and R. Molina, "Net Transfer of Carbon between Tree Species with Shared Ectomycorrhizal Fungi." *Nature* 388 (1997): 579-82.

### The Hidden Life of Trees

<https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-Life-Trees-Communicate-Discoveries/dp/1771642483>

Resources for the Naturalists:

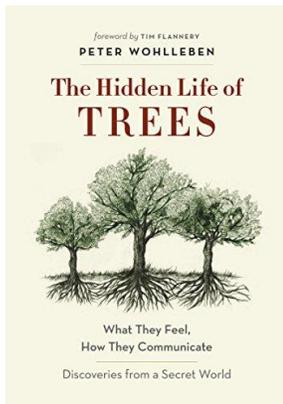
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Books:

The Hidden Life of Trees

September 13, 2016 by Peter Wohlleben

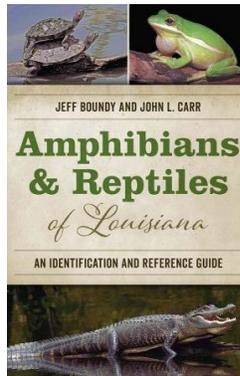
<https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-Life-Trees-Communicate-Discoveries/dp/1771642483>



Are trees social beings? In this international bestseller, forester and author Peter Wohlleben convincingly makes the case that, yes, the forest is a social network. He draws on groundbreaking scientific discoveries to describe how trees interact with each other and their environment. Wohlleben also shares his deep love of woods and forests.

Amphibians and Reptiles of Louisiana: An Identification and Reference Guide by Jeff Boundy, John L Carr  
Available April 10, 2017

<http://www.target.com/p/amphibians-and-reptiles-of-louisiana-an-identification-reference-guide-paperback-jeff-boundy/-/A-51701502>



This guide provides a means of identifying the 147 amphibian and reptile species currently known in Louisiana, as well as information on their natural histories (behavior, geographic range, populations, food and feeding habits, reproduction, and habitat). Written in a style that will be useful for both laypersons and experts, it will help those interested in the amphibians and reptiles of Louisiana appreciate our biodiversity heritage.

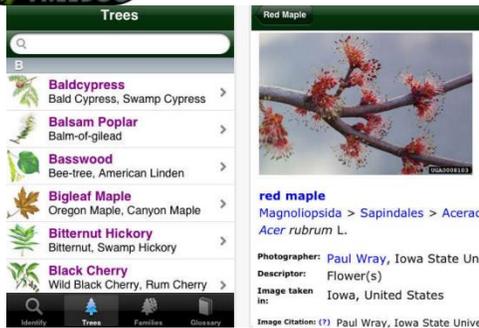
Apps:

TreeBook

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/treebook/id340811192?mt=8>



TreeBook is the authoritative guide to 100 of the most common trees in North America, produced by veteran forester Steve Nix (of forestry.about.com fame), and developed by Ash Mishra (developer of the very popular CBC Hockey and CBC Radio apps).



vTree by John Peterson

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/vtree/id576191197?mt=8>



Virginia Tech Tree Identification brings the award winning Virginia Tech digital dendrology material to your iPhone. It contains fact sheets for 969 woody plants from all over North America with an in-depth description, range map and thousands of color images of leaves, flowers, fruit, twigs, bark and form.



Resources for the Naturalists:

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Websites of Interest:

Louisiana Amphibian and Reptile Enthusiast

<http://www.louisianaherps.com/>

**Amphibians and Reptiles of Louisiana**

A guide to the natural history and identification of herptiles in The Pelican State

Amphibians and Reptiles of Louisiana Photo Galleries L.A.R.E. Links Ask Me! Curriculum Vitae About Me

The Amphibians and Reptiles of Louisiana site is a great reference guide with a beautiful photo gallery arranged by location.

Friends of the Louisiana State Arboretum

<http://friendslaarb.org/>

The Friends of the Louisiana State Arboretum website has a wonderful online field guide to the trees of Louisiana with downloadable PDF's for each tree.

If you are going to the Annual LMNA Rendezvous, this site will help you become more familiar with the area.

**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*

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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: arlenevidaurri.cain@yahoo.com

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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.

