

# Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists

## Nature Notes



Charter 2016

Vol 2 ISSUE 5 October 2017

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### President's Note:

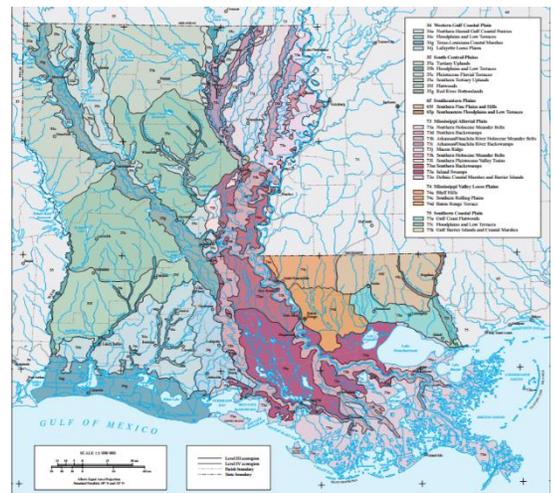
Greetings Master Naturalists

One year ago the first issue of [Nature Notes](#) was released. Looking back on Volume 1 Issue 1, it's like a time capsule on the beginnings of our chapter. Our website wasn't yet created, and we still had our Anhinga logo. We had just recently certified our first group of master naturalists.

Since then, our members have branched out in all directions. The SWLA Master Naturalists have contributed nearly 2,000 observations to iNaturalist and various projects. Members have traveled to wildlife festivals around the country. Many of us participated in the second annual Louisiana Master Naturalist Association Rendezvous this spring.

### Calendar Quick View

- October 4 SLAMN Meeting 6:00 pm Tuten Park Lake Charles
- October 7 Birding by Ear Tuten Park
- October 13 Tall Grass Prairie Workshop Eunice
- October 28 Bird Banding at Sam Houston State Park
- November 1-5 Yellow Rail and Rice Festival Jennings



We've formed committees dedicated to developing volunteer projects, promoting the chapter at area festivals and events, and a field trip group is in the works. Several members have taken their skills on the road with some attending various wildlife and birding festivals and trips, Dan Guillory took a summer field job at Rocky Mountain National Park, and many of us who went on trips contributed to our iNaturalist project along the way. Collectively, **we are having a positive impact** in Southwest Louisiana and the world.

We are already taking applications for the 2018 course and three people have already applied. This could be the first year we fill the 20 spots available for the course. Share what the Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists are doing with your friends. Hand out our chapter business cards, help promote us at events, share our posts on social media, and mention what you've learned at holiday gatherings.

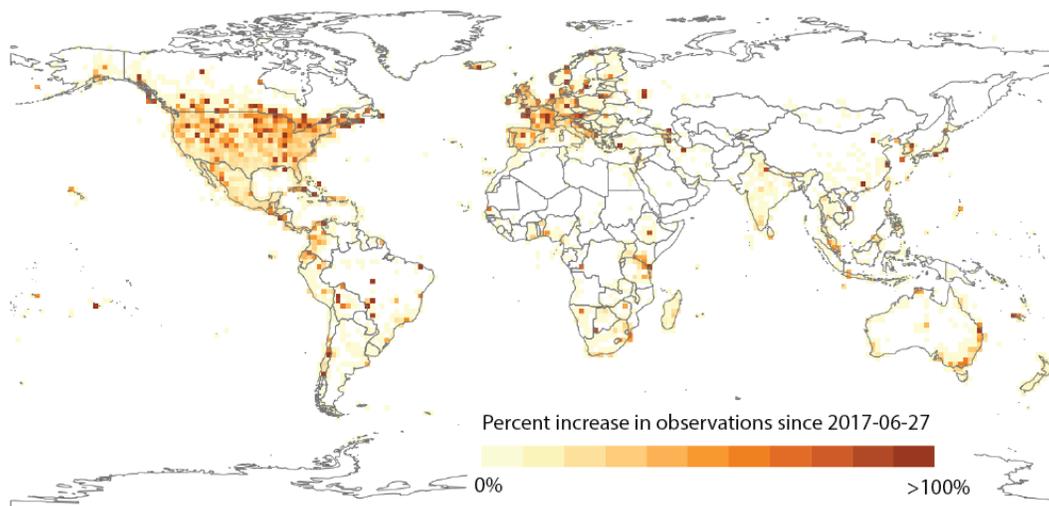
We've made so much progress as an organization in a year and even more since our chapter started in late 2015. With more certified naturalists and more experience, what will we do in the next year?

Thanks,

Irvin Louque



Where has iNaturalist grown in 80 days with 1 Million new observations?



## Meeting Notes

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## Upcoming General Meeting Date and Location

### October 4, 2017 at 6:00 pm at Tuten Park

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries biologist **Philip Vasseur** will be the guest speaker at our October 4th meeting. He will provide an update on the state's whooping crane project.

#### July 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting Highlights

**President:** Irvin Louque  
**Vice-President:** Tommy Hillman  
**Treasurer:** Robby Maxwell  
**Secretary:** Julie Amy  
**At-large Board Members:**  
 Chuck Battaglia,  
 Brian Sean Early,  
 David Booth,  
 Theresa Cross,  
 Lori McGee

- 501 c3 Status Update: We are a nonprofit organization that is not politically active.
- We are a further sub of this 501c3 and we can run our business tax free. Any donations to SLAMN are tax deductible.
- Four Committees were organized and everyone is encouraged to participate in a committee
- Committees are: Course Planning Committee, Publications Committee, Volunteer Committee, and Promotions Committee.
- SLAMN business cards were designed and available on the website.
- Irvin Louque discussed The City Nature Challenge and plans to get Lake Charles involved in the nationwide event with a tentative date of April 14-18 2018. This is a nature challenge multi day bio blitz in a metro area.

#### October News

- **Guest Speaker Philip Vasseur will present and update on Louisiana's Whooping Crane project.**
- At our October 4th meeting, we will be electing officers. The board has nominated a slate of officers for the October election. We will elect officers at the October meeting in a secret ballot election.

#### Proposed 2018 Slate of Officers and Board Members

**President:** Irvin Louque

**Vice-President:** Tommy Hillman

**Treasurer:** Robby Maxwell

**Secretary:** [Open for Nominations](#)

**At-large Board Members:** Chuck Battaglia, David Booth, Theresa Cross, Brian Sean Early, Lori McGee

- **2018 LMNA Rendezvous** will be held on **April 6-8, 2018** at [Camp Hardtner](#) in Pollock, LA.
- **Volunteers are needed for the 2018 Rendezvous.** To volunteer contact [katherine@thehaplesshiker.com](mailto:katherine@thehaplesshiker.com)

*Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Chapter meetings are held quarterly on the first Wednesday of the month at Tuten Park at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.  
 Chapter tentative meeting dates: October 4, 2017, January 3, 2018*

Check the SLAMN Website for documents to record your continuing education and volunteer hours.

<http://www.swlamasternaturalists.org/nature-notes--docs.html>

Send the completed forms to:

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

Reminder: SLAMN yearly membership \$15.00.

Mail your dues to:

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

## Local News:

[Back](#)**Sam Houston Jones Parkway Clean-up by Barbara Morris**

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, the Southwest LA Master Naturalists group, working along with the Beach Sweep Southwest Waterways group, coordinated the Cleanup of Sam Houston Jones State Park. A total of 37 volunteers from the community came out to clean the trails and ponds. **Irvin** and **Samantha Louque** pulled trash out of the river. **Edith Holland** and **Chet St. Romain** cleared the Orange trail along with the Boy Scouts. **Tom Morris** and his two granddaughters

worked on the park area and the Green trail. **Lori McGee** and her husband worked on the red trail. **Barbara Morris** was the coordinator of the volunteers, so she made sure everything went as planned.

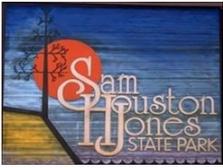
The group picked up about eight large bags of bottles, glass, and trash. Also lumber, chairs, buckets, and assorted items that floated down the river during the flood stage. The prize of the day was a large chair made out of a baby bed.

The **La Chien Black Pot Cookers** were there to supply us with a delicious lunch.

It was a great day and the Director of the park, **Jason Guillory**, invited us to come back any time we want to clear or clean the trails.



## Local News:

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## September 23 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 September 23. Several SLAMN members were there to lend a hand. The birds banded are: Black-and-white Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Blue Jay, Carolina Wren, Northern Cardinal, White-eyed Vireo, and Brown Thrasher.

The next bird banding at Sam Houston Jones Park will be October 28<sup>th</sup>. Anyone interested helping or interested in learning about bird banding, is encouraged to contact Irvin Louque through phone or email:

(225)206-0400, [irvinlouque@gmail.com](mailto:irvinlouque@gmail.com)



## Local News:

[Back](#)**October 7, 2017 8:00 - 9:30 AM.****The Gulf Coast Bird Club's 3rd Annual Listen Up! Birding by Ear Stroll at Tuten Park Lake Charles**

**Theresa Cross**, Biologist/Educator with LA Wildlife and Fisheries, will conduct a presentation and sensory display of animal furs, and skulls. **Irvin Louque**, Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalist with Tuten Park, will lead the leisurely stroll, pointing out songs and calls of various birds. Join us and try out your skills recognizing the voices of local birds. Guides will also instruct from the lawn chair theatre (bring your own chair). Please reach out to your visually and/or mobility impaired neighbors and invite them to participate also.

### SLAMN Committee News

**All SLAMN members** are encouraged to participate in one or more of the newly created committees. Contact members on the committee of your interest to join or to provide suggestions or ideas. Each committee will keep us all informed through Nature Notes, our website, and email.

***We encourage all SLAMN members to participate with time and energy for all events sponsored by the Volunteer Committee and the Promotions Committee.***

#### Course Planning Committee

Contact Irvin Louque: [irvinlouque@gmail.com](mailto:irvinlouque@gmail.com)

- The 2018 application is available. A tentative schedule of 2018 Workshops is available on our website.

#### Promotions Committee

Contact David Booth: [david@boothenvironmental.com](mailto:david@boothenvironmental.com)

- We will have a booth at the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival

#### Publications Committee

Contact Arlene Cain: [arlenevidaurri.cain@yahoo.com](mailto:arlenevidaurri.cain@yahoo.com)

- We have business cards available for members on our website
- We have a black and white half page flyer available for member use on our website



#### Volunteer Committee

Contact Robby Maxwell: [robjamax@gmail.com](mailto:robjamax@gmail.com)

- Sponsored Sam Houston Jones State Park clean-up

## Continuing Education Opportunities:

[Back](#)**Continuing Education and Volunteer**

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



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)

**Sam Houston Jones State Park Bird Walk**

Join David Booth and bird enthusiast for a great morning Beginner's Bird Walk. It takes place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month at Sam Houston Jones State Park. Meet at **8:00 A.M.** meet at Sam Houston Jones State Park, at the deck overlooking the swamp across from the pavilion.

For more information contact David Booth – phone 337.526.0837, email: [david@boothenvironmental.com](mailto:david@boothenvironmental.com)

**Upcoming Education Programs at Tuten Park**

Tuten Park 3801 Nelson Road, Lake Charles

Sign up for any upcoming programs at: [bit.ly/TutenEd](http://bit.ly/TutenEd) or by email or phone: [irvin.louque@cityoflc.us](mailto: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.us](mailto:irvin.louque@cityoflc.us)

October 7, 2017 Saturday Birding by Ear 8:00-9:30 A.M.

October 19, 2017, Thursday Citizen Science 101, 6:00-7:00 P.M.

October 26, 2017 Thursday eBird: Citizen Science for Birders, 6:00-7:00 P.M.

November 2, 2017, Thursday iNaturalist, 6:00-7:00 P.M.

November 22, 2017, Wednesday Project FeederWatch: Citizen Science for Backyard Birders, 6:00-7:00 P.M.

December 7, 2017, Thursday Christmas Bird Count: Audubon's Oldest Citizen Science Project, 6:00-7:00 P.M.

## 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. 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  
Diane Borden-Billiot phone: 337-598-2216



### Check out the Chenier Plain Coastal Restoration and Protection Authority website (<http://www.cpcrpa.org/>) and Facebook page.

Attend a meeting and learn about the efforts to protect and conserve our coastal plains. Citizen participation is welcome. Meetings are held monthly (3rd Tuesday from 6 to 7:30 pm) between Calcasieu, Vermillion, and Cameron parishes. Check the website or Facebook page for location of meetings.

### Friends of Southwest Louisiana Wildlife Refuges and Wetlands

[https://www.fws.gov/refuge/cameron\\_prairie/what\\_we\\_do/about\\_the\\_friends.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/cameron_prairie/what_we_do/about_the_friends.html)

Friends of Southwest Louisiana Wildlife Refuges and Wetlands is a non-profit organization of volunteers, committed to supporting the mission of the U.S. FWS Refuge System, especially the Southwest Louisiana NWR Complex. Volunteers and student interns provide assistance with refuge programs including helping at the visitor centers, facilities maintenance, general grounds maintenance, and program assistance. For applications and more information call: 337-598-2216



## SAVE THE DATE!

**December 16, 2017**

## Sabine Christmas Bird Count

“Save the Date” and plan to volunteer

Save the date and be part of this unforgettable all-day birding event at the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge and neighboring hot spots. This is a Citizen Science event that provides important data on bird populations.

Get ready to participate!

Contact Jeannie Pousson phone: 540-7726 or email: [jeannie.pousson@gmail.com](mailto:jeannie.pousson@gmail.com)



## Upcoming Events:

[Back](#)**October 13, 2017 Tallgrass Prairie Workshop Eunice LA**

Go to website to register:

<https://www.louisianaglci.org/single-post/2017/08/25/Tallgrass-Prairie-Workshop>

Topics discussed in this course: history of cajun prairie, recreating tallgrass prairie, planting and establishment options, using grazing animals to great and maintain grasslands, and prescribed burning.

**October 7, 2017 8:00 - 9:30 AM.****The Gulf Coast Bird Club's 3rd Annual Listen Up! Birding by Ear Stroll at Tuten Park Lake Charles****November 1-5, 2017 The Yellow Rail and Rice Festival  
Jennings Louisiana**[https://www.snowyegretenterprises.com/Snowy Egret Enterprises/Yellow Rails %26 Rice Festival.html](https://www.snowyegretenterprises.com/Snowy_Egret_Enterprises/Yellow_Rails_%26_Rice_Festival.html)

**SLAMN will have a booth at the Yellow Rail and Rice Festival**  
**Watch your email for more information.**

**November 3, 2017 Yellow Rails and Rice Festival 2017****Banding Workshop, Jennings Louisiana**[https://www.snowyegretenterprises.com/Snowy Egret Enterprises/Banding workshop files/banding%20workshop%20brochure2017.pdf](https://www.snowyegretenterprises.com/Snowy_Egret_Enterprises/Banding_workshop_files/banding%20workshop%20brochure2017.pdf)**Oct 20-21: Southern Garden Symposium, St Francisville**<http://www.southerngardensymposium.org/>**Allen Acres Plant ID Classes**<http://www.nativeventures.net/default.asp>**Oct 2-4: Sunflowers, Legume, and mint family plant ID classes Allen Acres****Oct 7-8 General plant id class City Park, New Orleans****Oct 10-12: Wetland Plant ID Class Allen Acres****Oct 30-Nov 1: Graminoid plant ID class Allen Acres****Nov 6-8: General plant ID Class Allen Acres****Nov 10 1 pm edible plant walk, Woodlands Conservancy, Belle Chasse****Nov 11-12 General plant id class, Woodlands Conservancy, Belle Chasse****Woodlands Conservancy**<http://www.woodlandsconservancy.org/projects-events/>**Nov 10: 1 pm Edible Plant Walk, Woodlands Conservancy, Belle Chasse****Nov 11-12: General plant ID Class, Woodlands Conservancy, Belle Chasse**



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**

*Add your observations to the Southwest Louisiana master Naturalists Project*  
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/southwest-louisiana-master-naturalists>



*Gilled Mushroom*

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

## Louisiana Dragonflies: An Introduction for Master Naturalists by Linda Wygoda



*Blue Dasher*

**What are dragonflies?** A dragonfly is an insect belonging to the order **Odonata** (from Greek, serrated teeth), infraorder **Anisoptera** (from Greek, the anisos, "uneven" and pteron, "wing"), because the hindwing is broader than the forewing). Dragonflies are one of the first winged insects to evolve, some about 300 million years ago. Modern dragonflies have wingspans of two to five inches, but fossil specimens have been found with wingspans of two feet. There are about 5000 species of dragonflies.<sup>(1)</sup>

### What distinguishes dragonflies from damselflies?

There are several differences between dragonflies and damselflies (infraorder: **Zygoptera**). The eyes of dragonflies are very large, almost meeting at the top of the head. Damselflies have more spherical eyes that are positioned closer to the sides of the head. Dragonflies have large cigar shaped abdomens, while damselflies have long thin abdomens. Dragonflies hold their wings horizontally, like an airplane, when perched. Damselflies, however, hold their wings above and almost parallel to the abdomen. Dragonflies are strong, active fliers and sometimes fly at great heights. Damselflies are not as active, and tend to fly in a fluttery weaker flight path at lower heights.<sup>(1),(3)</sup>

**Which dragonfly species are found in Southwest Louisiana?** Rather than list all the species that are possible in Southwest Louisiana, use the filter on the free [Dragonfly App from Odonata Central](#), to search for dragonflies in our area. Or, you can use the filters on the Checklist feature on the Odonata Central website. For Calcasieu Parish, 47 species are listed. Beauregard Parish has 59 species listed; Allen Parish, 60 species; Cameron Parish 34 species; Jefferson Davis has 44 listed species. There is also an excellent book on Louisiana Dragonflies<sup>(9)</sup> in the resource area and a free pdf file on Louisiana dragonfly distribution, that contains distribution maps and species lists but no photos or species identification information.<sup>(10)</sup>

### What are some unique features of dragonfly natural history?

- a. **Life cycle.** In their larval stage, which can last from one to two years, dragonflies are aquatic and may eat small fish, tadpoles, and other aquatic invertebrates. At the end of the larval stage, the dragonfly larva will crawl out of the water and its exoskeleton will crack open to release the adult insect. Adult life is short, in some species only a few weeks. Adults are predatory and can catch and eat their (usually insect) prey on the wing. They also mate while flying.
- b. **Migration.** A dragonfly called the **Globe Skimmer**, *Pantala flavescens*, had the longest migration of any dragonfly, approximately 11,000 miles back and forth across the Indian Ocean.<sup>(5)</sup> Tiny transmitters have been used to track some migratory dragonflies. The **Common Green Darner** was found to average about 7.5 miles a day during south bound fall migration, with one individual traveling 100 miles in single day.<sup>(4)</sup> Some dragonfly species can fly close to 35 mph. Their wings work independently allowing them to hover and change directions quickly. [The Migratory Dragonfly Partnership](#) invites you to join a growing community of citizen scientists working together to increase our knowledge about North America's five main migratory dragonfly species: **Common Green Darner** (*Anax junius*), **Variegated Meadowhawk** (*Sympetrum corruptum*), **Black Saddlebags** (*Tamea lacerata*), **Wandering Glider** (*Pantala avescens*), and **Spot-Winged Glider** (*Pantala hymenaea*). Four of these five migratory species are



*Black Saddlebags*

found in Louisiana, the exception is the Spot-winged Glider. There are two main citizen science projects: Pond Watch and Migration Monitoring. In the Pond Watch Project you monitor the same pond or wetland throughout the year and report on the presence, emergence, and behavior of the main migratory dragonfly species. The Migration Monitoring Project will involve you in reporting the timing, duration, and direction of travel of migrating species, as well as noting additional behaviors such as feeding and mating. Videos and photographic evidence is strongly encouraged. Both projects have protocols for collecting and recording data and identification resources are available on the website.<sup>(2)</sup>

- c. **Dragonflies swarm.** Large numbers of dragonflies, sometimes multiple species are sometimes found flying at the same time over the same area. These are swarms. There are two types of swarms: static swarms in which the dragonflies fly repeatedly over the same area feeding on clouds of insects. These swarms are often close to the ground. There are also migratory swarms consisting of hundreds to millions of dragonflies flying 50 to 100 feet above the ground in the same direction. Witnessing a swarm is a chance event in which you just have to be in the right place at the right time. But in an effort to study and collect data on these events, there is a citizen science project, in which you can enter data about your experience of one of these events. [The Dragonfly Swarm Project](#), allows you to report your observations of dragonfly swarms, read other people's accounts of this phenomena, and also has other information about dragonflies and other insects.<sup>(6)</sup>
- d. **Ecological impact.** Dragonflies are known to be voracious predators and so are important in the regulation of many insect populations.<sup>(7)</sup> Dragonflies are also an important prey species in many bird populations including flycatchers, kites, and kestrels. In 1995, Frank Nicoletti, noticed a relationship between kestrel migration and dragonfly migration while monitoring hawk migration around Lake Superior. He found a correlation in the counts of migrating hawks and the numbers of migrating dragonflies and was able to observe many birds eating dragonflies as they flew.<sup>(8)</sup>



*Common Green Darner*

Dragonfly photos courtesy of Arlene Cain

#### References:

- (1) Odes for Beginners; <http://www.odesforbeginners.com/default.aspx>
- (2) Migration; The Migratory Dragonfly Partnership  
[http://www.migratorydragonflypartnership.org/uploads/ROOT/File/MDP-citizen\\_science\\_projects.pdf](http://www.migratorydragonflypartnership.org/uploads/ROOT/File/MDP-citizen_science_projects.pdf)
- (3) Odonata Central  
<http://www.odonatacentral.org/index.php/PageAction.get/name/HomePage>
- (4) NSF Secret Life of Wild Animals; Dragonfly [https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/animals/textonly/dragonfly.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/animals/textonly/dragonfly.jsp)
- (5) Smithsonian Magazine: Dragonfly Fun Facts  
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/14-fun-facts-about-dragonflies-96882693/>
- (6) The Dragonfly Swarm Project: <https://thedragonflywoman.com/dsp>
- (7) Galveston County Master Gardeners  
[http://hortsciences.tamu.edu/galveston/beneficials/beneficial-11\\_dragonflies.ht](http://hortsciences.tamu.edu/galveston/beneficials/beneficial-11_dragonflies.ht)
- (8) Dragonflies and Kestrels  
<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/fall/DragonflyMigration.html>
- (9) Dragonflies and Damselflies of Louisiana, 2010 by Michael Ferro and Katherine Parys et al  
<https://www.amazon.ca/Dragonflies-Damselflies-Louisiana-Michael-Ferro/dp/145636149X>
- (10) A Distribution of Dragonflies and Damselflies of Louisiana by George Sims  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296485021\\_A\\_Distribution\\_of\\_Dragonflies\\_and\\_Damselflies\\_Odonata\\_of\\_Louisiana](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296485021_A_Distribution_of_Dragonflies_and_Damselflies_Odonata_of_Louisiana)

## Naturalists Notes:

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## What is the impact of Hurricane Harvey and Irma on ecosystems? By A. Cain

It can take several years to fully understand and appreciate the full impacts of these storms on ecosystems. One way to understand what effects these storms have on natural systems is to look at the impact of previous storms. Coastal changes caused by hurricanes include beach erosion, dune destruction, inundation, island breaching, and marsh erosion. Barrier islands often lose significant areas of beach and marsh during storm events. In the southeastern United States, most of the inlets cut through barrier islands have been formed during hurricanes. Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita resulted in the transformation of approximately 100 square miles of Louisiana coastal wetlands into open water. There are several studies of the immediate after effects of Tropical Storm Cindy and Hurricane Harvey already underway. These are some websites that will allow you to read about these studies and what has happened to date:

**Barrier Island Restoration:**

<http://www.audubon.org/news/why-louisianas-barrier-islands-are-essential-seabird-and-human-survival>

**Tropical Storm Cindy:**

<http://www.audubon.org/news/tropical-storm-cindy-just-wiped-out-most-shorebird-chicks-gulf>

**Hurricane Harvey:**

Hurricane Harvey's Impact on Coastal Habitats <http://www.audubon.org/news/the-latest-texas-hurricane-harveys-impact-coastal-habitat>

How do Hurricanes affect Migrating Birds? <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/how-do-hurricanes-affect-migrating-birds/>

Live Map of Birds Displaced By Hurricane Harvey: <http://birdcast.info/forecast/live-map-of-birds-displaced-by-hurricane-harvey/>

**Hurricane Irma:**

The latest from the Caribbean and Florida

<http://www.audubon.org/news/the-latest-caribbean-and-florida-hurricane-irmas-impact>

### Did Hurricane Harvey Signal the Last Dance for Attwater's Prairie Chickens?

<https://www.nrdc.org/onearth/did-hurricane-harvey-signal-last-dance-attwaters-prairie-chickens>



*Wilson's Plover chicks*



*Attwater's Prairie Chicken Chick*

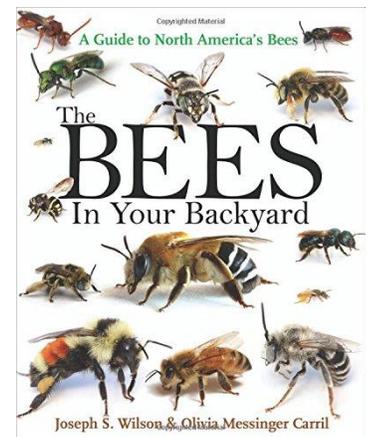
## What is That Thing? Field Guides for the Prairie Part II: Insects, Reptiles, and Amphibians By Robby Maxwell

In Part I of the “What is That Thing?” series (“Nature Notes” volume 2, issue 4), we covered plant field guides. I’m relatively new to plant field guides, only seriously using them as an adult. On the other hand, since I was a kid, I have been enamored by field guides about animals. I grew up with classic Peterson and Audubon field guides, and have slowly grown and expanded the collection over the years. The field guides in this review are fairly new to the collection, and just reflect a shifting focus (and availability) over the years. These guides have been thumbed through frequently, especially over the past ten months, as the prairie patch has emerged and changed throughout the seasons, showcasing an ever-changing cast of characters. From the early summer when I noticed a healthy diversity of bees to the current front line of fall butterfly migrations, these books have proved to be priceless in the pursuit of knowing what that thing in the yard is.

Part 1 of the series covered some of the range and different attributes of field guides in general, so I’m not going to rehash that here. We’ll just dive straight into the books.

### **The Bees in Your Backyard** by Joseph S. Wilson and Olivia Messinger Carril (2016)

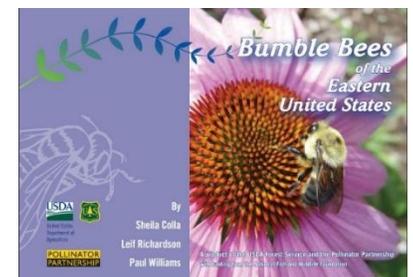
I’m starting out here with a truly awesome publication. This guide has it all from habitat and plant associations and backyard bee attractants to in depth identification keys. Bee mimics and species bees mimic are covered, as those are often sources of confusion. Some simple bee identification is possible from photos, but to really go to the next level, a hand lens or microscope is often necessary. This book will help identify North American bees to at least the family level (which is a respectable feat with most invertebrates), and some even further to genus or species. It’s full of excellent graphics and descriptions, and will walk you step by step from your beginnings as a bee novice to a backyard bee expert. One note on the Louisiana portion of the range maps: bee diversity in the state is not nearly as depauperate as the various maps in the book suggest. The maps reflect the lack of bee sampling and museum collections from the state, and that shortcoming should not take away from the greatness of this book. I can’t recommend this book enough, whether you’re dealing with visitors to your flower bed or observing bees over a landscape.



Available at Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/Bees-Your-Backyard-Guide-Americas/dp/0691160775/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1506689373&sr=8-1&keywords=bees+in+your+backyard](https://www.amazon.com/Bees-Your-Backyard-Guide-Americas/dp/0691160775/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1506689373&sr=8-1&keywords=bees+in+your+backyard)

### **Bumble Bees of the Eastern United States** by Sheila Colla, Leif Richardson, and Paul Williams (2011)

Like the milkweed guide I reviewed in Part I, this is an online publication covering a large geographic area, and thus has species that don’t occur in Louisiana. I went through and isolated species found in LA and neighboring states, and just printed out the relevant information. This saves a lot of time wading through information that I’ll never use locally. This is a great technique for many identification ventures, and will keep you from misidentifying a critter as something that might not be seen for 1,000 miles. The beauty in this guide lies in the species identifications and simplified scheme they present to identify bees by pattern. Within a species, there can be over a dozen forms, not only split between queens, workers, and drones, but also within those groups based on instar or just variations in color. It can be confusing to say the least, and this book does a good job

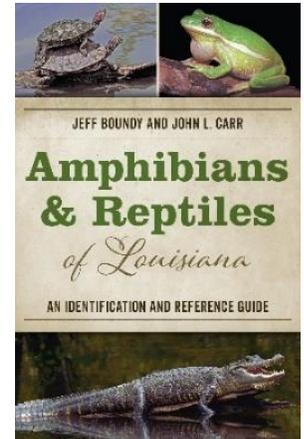


of giving a number of traits to help figure out what bumble bee is buzzing around. With the help of this publication, I've identified three species of bumble bees in the prairie patch this year (not to mention the carpenter bees, carpenter bee mimics, and bumble bee mimics in the Hibiscus that try to trick you if you don't have the first book in this review). Use this on its own or as a companion to [Bees in Your Backyard](#), and you'll have a whole new world of native (not honey!) bees open up to you.

Available as a free download from the Xerces Society: [http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/Eastern\\_Bumble\\_Bee.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/Eastern_Bumble_Bee.pdf)

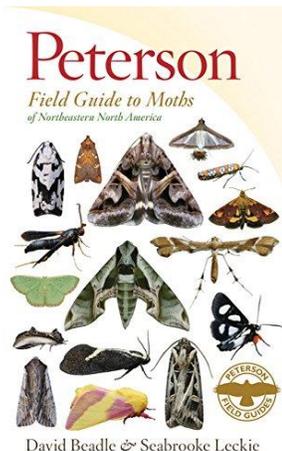
### **Amphibians & Reptiles of Louisiana** by Jeff Boundy and John L. Carr (2017)

We'll take a short break from insects, and go into another group of underappreciated creatures, reptiles and amphibians. Being in South Louisiana, we are just crawling with these guys, and it's good to know what you're looking at. We've identified nine species of snakes on our hectare alone, and guess what... none of them are venomous or dangerous to humans in any way. With this guide, you'll figure out that what you've been calling a water moccasin all these years is just a type of *Nerodia*, angry when disturbed, but happy being left alone to eat fish and frogs. South LA nights can be deafening with frogs, and this is the book to help sort out who's making all the ruckus. Excellent range maps, descriptions, clear pictures presenting key traits, and up-to-date taxonomy make this a must-have for every naturalist in the state. Our very own Master Naturalist, Chuck Battaglia, has photos featured in the book. Check it out!



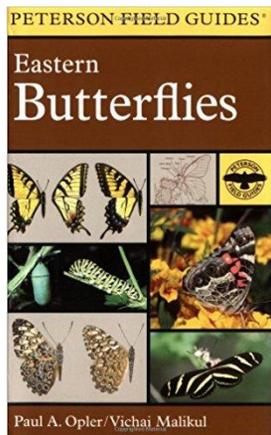
Available at Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/Amphibians-Reptiles-Louisiana-Identification-Reference/dp/0807165484/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506691449&sr=1-1&keywords=amphibians+reptiles+louisiana](https://www.amazon.com/Amphibians-Reptiles-Louisiana-Identification-Reference/dp/0807165484/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506691449&sr=1-1&keywords=amphibians+reptiles+louisiana)

### **Peterson Field Guide to Moths of Northeastern North America** by David Beadle and Seabrooke Leckie (2012)



Moths are the often overlooked Lepidopterans, with their butterfly cousins always stealing the show. As a naturalist, that should be a hint to you that moths make up a fascinating, beautiful, and diverse group of creatures that you should become familiar with! Moth diversity is staggering, and this field guide, with large pictures pointing out key traits (as Peterson guides do), is a great place to start figuring it all out. It's written for the Northeastern US, and range maps do not extend into LA, unfortunately. The good news is that it does provide descriptions of many local moths and can at least get you to a close relative. Set up a light trap with a sheet and a light, or just turn the porch light on and pay attention, and you'll be surprised what turns up. Keep an eye out for day-flying hummingbird moths. If you've never seen those, go out and try. You won't be disappointed when you find one. This book is a good introduction with pictures, short descriptions, and range maps.

Available at Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/Peterson-Field-Northeastern-America-Guides/dp/0547238487/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506692404&sr=1-1&keywords=moth+field+guide](https://www.amazon.com/Peterson-Field-Northeastern-America-Guides/dp/0547238487/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506692404&sr=1-1&keywords=moth+field+guide)

**Peterson Field Guides Eastern Butterflies** by Paul A. Opler and Vichai Malikul (1998)

As cool as moths are, I can't deny that butterflies hog the Lepidopteran spotlight. I wander the prairie seeking new species and trying to grab pictures (they're terribly difficult subjects), constantly. Recently, the Common Buckeyes showed up, and their caterpillars are chowing down on the *Agalinis* in the prairie patch. This field guide is classic Peterson, with a solid introduction covering everything from anatomy to butterfly gardening, color plates, informative species descriptions with some photographs and host plants, and range maps reminiscent of bird guides showing seasonality. There are even a few caterpillars in it, but linking larva to adults usually takes a combination of observation and some deep digging on the web. You can do that or just purchase the [Caterpillars of Eastern North America](#), which I might just go ahead and do since that looks like a good addition to the shelf. My copy of *Eastern Butterflies*, though fairly new, is already showing some wear and tear, as any good field guide should. Combine this with the bee guides, and you'll be well on your way to being the local pollinator guru you always wanted to be.

Available at Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/Field-Eastern-Butterflies-Peterson-Guides/dp/0395904536/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506692489&sr=1-1&keywords=eastern+butterflies](https://www.amazon.com/Field-Eastern-Butterflies-Peterson-Guides/dp/0395904536/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506692489&sr=1-1&keywords=eastern+butterflies)

**Dragonflies & Damselflies of Louisiana** Photographs by Gayle and Jeanell Strickland, Edited by Michael L. Ferro, Katherine A. Parys, and Matthew L. Gimmel (2010)

I've saved a very different publication for last. It's not exactly a typical field guide. It's not "pocket size," it doesn't have range maps, it doesn't have written descriptions, and it doesn't have natural history information. The beauty of this book lies in what it has, and it does it very well. This book breaks down the damsels and dragons of the state by family and species, and is full of superb scans and photographs of each type. The images, life-size and enlarged, display dorsal and lateral views and details of heads and genitals (a key identification characteristic of many). They also capture color differences within species as well as differences between the sexes. This book definitely lives up to the old cliché of "a picture is worth a thousand words," as the bare bones information accompanying the photos is more than adequate for most casual observation and identification of Odonates in LA. It's a beautiful work, and is a must-have for LA naturalists. The diversity and sheer volume of aquatic and

terrestrial habitats means that we are covered up in Odonates out here. They are my favorite insects to casually watch with their various behaviors, sizes, and shapes, and this book has really made viewing them that much more enjoyable.

Available at Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/Dragonflies-Damselflies-Louisiana-Michael-Ferro/dp/145636149X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506694726&sr=1-1&keywords=dragonflies+damsselflies+louisiana](https://www.amazon.com/Dragonflies-Damselflies-Louisiana-Michael-Ferro/dp/145636149X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506694726&sr=1-1&keywords=dragonflies+damsselflies+louisiana)

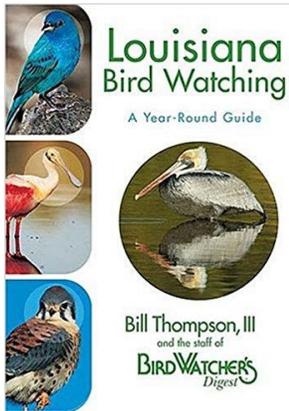
That wraps up my two-parter on field guides I use in the prairie. This isn't comprehensive by any means, as we get all kinds of bugs, birds, mushrooms, etc. out there. The books in this series are by far my most used resources, though. They're all great works compiling staggering quantities of information, and are a bargain considering how much work has gone into them (some are even free!) I'll get back to the prairie patch on the next piece. Now get out and go look at nature.

For more information on the Maxwell Micro Prairie, check out my blog: <https://maxwellmicroprairie.wordpress.com/>

## Resources for the Naturalists:

[Back](#)**Books:****Louisiana Bird Watching: A Year-Round Guide**

by Bill Thompson III; October 14, 2004

<https://www.amazon.com/Louisiana-Bird-Watching-Year-Round-Guide/dp/1591861039>

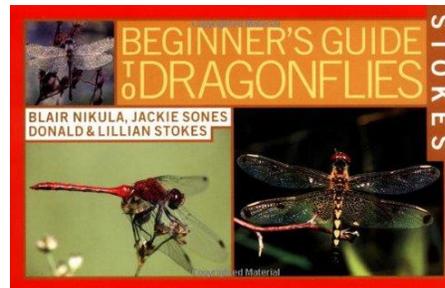
The birds that frequent the backyards of Louisiana differ from the birds that frequent the backyards of Tennessee. In addition to unique descriptions, each bird profile includes a range map to identify each bird's North American distribution. One hundred birds are profiled, each with a color photograph, to ensure accurate identification. A seasonal section informs the reader of: Migrating birds that can be

seen during that season, the foods and plants that can attract those birds, and where to go to view year-round and migrating birds

**Stokes Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies**

May 2002

By Blair Nikula, Jackie Sones, Donald Stokes, Lillian Stokes

[https://www.amazon.com/Stokes-Beginners-Guide-Dragonflies-Nikula/dp/0316816795/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506790557&sr=1-1&keywords=dragonflies](https://www.amazon.com/Stokes-Beginners-Guide-Dragonflies-Nikula/dp/0316816795/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1506790557&sr=1-1&keywords=dragonflies)

A pocket-size, brilliantly colorful, simple-to-use guide to dragonflies, containing dozens of full-color photographs that

enable readers of all ages to identify the most common species; range maps; tips on attracting dragonflies, information on habitat needs, life cycle, food preferences; and much more.

**Apps:****Dragonfly and Damselfly Field Guide and ID App**<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dragonfly-id-dragonfly-damselfly/id1011910922?mt=8&ign-mpt=uo%3D6>**Description**

The Dragonfly ID app is a comprehensive and easy-to-use resource to find and identify dragonflies and damselflies across the US and Canada. Geared towards both the avid dragonfly-watcher, and beginners, Dragonfly ID will help you find spots to look for dragonflies near you, help you identify the dragonflies and damselflies you see in the field, and learn more about the species you find.

Additionally, Dragonfly ID enables users to easily view and submit Odonata sightings from the field. This important citizen science project enhance our understanding of Odonata distributions and abundances.

**Butterflies & Moths of North America**<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/butterflies-moths-of-north-america/id356794891?mt=8>**Description**

eButterflyNA – Butterflies and Moths of North America – A Butterfly App is a member of the World Life Forms family of products designed to provide easy to use, powerful tools for accessing images and information of the world's diverse life forms. With over 450 life forms eButterflyNA can serve as a reference tool for entomologists, educators and students. The life forms are accessible by common name, Latin name and taxonomy. Each life form is presented with an image, a textual description, map range, and its's taxonomy.

Resources for the Naturalists:

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Websites of Interest:

**A Dance with Dragonflies - New Jersey and Westeros have more in common than you might think.**  
<https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/newjersey/blog/a-dance-with-dragonflies-1.xml>



- New Jersey
- Places We Protect
- How We Work
- Explore
- Volunteer
- Field Trips and Events
- Contact Us
- Ways of Giving
- Blog

A Dance with Dragonflies



Odonata Central

<http://odonatacentral.org/index.php/PageAction.get/name/HomePage>



Welcome to OdonataCentral

This site is designed to make available what we know about the distribution, biogeography, biodiversity, and identification of Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) in the Western Hemisphere. Use the navigation bars at the top of the page to move around in the site. Click here for a history and update of the site that appeared in Ardia 22(4): 2010.

Migratory Dragonfly Partnership

<http://www.migratorydragonflypartnership.org/index/about>



Welcome

To better understand and conserve North America's dragonfly migration, dragonfly experts, nongovernmental programs, academic institutions, and federal agencies from the United States, Mexico, and Canada have formed the collaborative *Migratory Dragonfly Partnership (MDP)*.

Regular monitoring and centralized reporting among participants across three nations will help us answer some of the many questions currently surrounding dragonfly migration and provide information needed to create cross-border conservation programs to protect and sustain the phenomenon. This site will allow you to submit dragonfly migration observations.

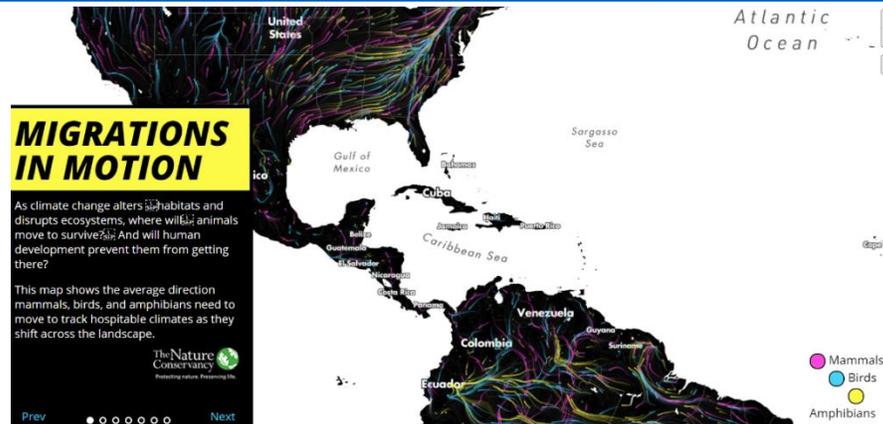
Migrations in Motion Nature Conservancy

<http://maps.tnc.org/migrations-in-motion/#3/19.00/-78.00>

Watch this interactive map show the migration of mammals, birds, and amphibians.

See how climate change impacts the migration of animals.

<https://blog.nature.org/science/2016/08/19/migration-in-motion-visualizing-species-movements-due-to-climate-change/>



**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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3801 Nelson Road, Lake Charles, LA 70601 225 206 0400		

**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](mailto:arlenevidaurri.cain@yahoo.com)

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**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.

