



Charter 2016

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**President’s Note:**

**Greetings, Master Naturalists!**

April is upon us. Each year April seems to be the busiest month to be a naturalist. Spring break, Easter, Rendezvous, various animal migrations, blooming wildflowers, and the midpoint of our master naturalist certification course all converge in this one month! This year, we’re adding the City Nature Challenge to the mix.

The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is a friendly competition between the world’s cities to see who can find the most nature in their regions. Last year the competition featured 16 cities in the U.S., and this year it’ll expand to feature over 60 cities globally. Our chapter is the organizer for the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana effort, and we’ve planned a variety of events for the CNC (April 27–30).

If you haven’t already, join the “City Nature Challenge: Southwest Louisiana” Facebook group. That’s where we can all collaborate and plan CNC events. Invite your friends to the group. It’s open, and we want to include everyone! Changes to the CNC events are inevitable, but here’s a schedule to give you an idea of what to look for.

**Calendar Quick View**

- Apr 6: LMNA Annual Rendezvous**
- Apr 11: SLAMN meeting**
- Apr 14: SLAMN Field Trip**
- Apr 21: SLAMN Workshop**
- Apr 27-30 City Nature Challenge**
- Apr 27-28 LOS Spring Meeting**
- May 5: SLAMN Workshop**
- May 19: SLAMN Workshop**



## President's Note:

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Event	Leader(s)	When	Where
Urban Nature Walk	<b>Irvin Louque</b>	April 27 Friday Afternoon	Tuten Park
Roadside Cajun Prairie Tour	<b>Robby &amp; Danielle Maxwell, Brian Sean Early</b>	April 28 Saturday Morning	Iowa to Kinder
Beetles and Bugs at Tuten Park	<b>Steven Barney, Irvin Louque</b>	April 28 Saturday Evening	Tuten Park
Sampling the Calcasieu	<b>Avery Williams</b>	TBD	Moss Bluff
Riverside Nature Walk	<b>Irvin Louque</b>	April 30 Monday Afternoon	Riverside Park

If you've got any ideas for a CNC event or would like to host an event, I'd love to help get it going. We'll also likely have an evening indoor event in the first day or two after the event to go through the CNC iNaturalist project and identify observations. That will help us get more species logged for the CNC. I'll announce updated times and where to meet for each event through Facebook and email.

In addition to participating at the CNC events, record any wild things you see. Weeds in flower beds, pollinators in your veggies, and insects in your neighborhood trees all count as long as you submit them to iNaturalist! Finally, spread the word about the City Nature Challenge and iNaturalist. Anyone can participate in the CNC by posting observations to iNaturalist from Southwest Louisiana. Participants don't need to be master naturalists or have any qualifications to make iNaturalist observations.

Have an exciting and busy spring,

**Irvin Louque**

Facebook Page: City Nature Challenge: Southwest Louisiana

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=City%20Nature%20Challenge%3A%20Southwest%20Louisiana>



## Meeting Notes

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## Upcoming Meeting Location and Date Tuten Park, April 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 at 6:00 P.M.

All members are invited to attend.

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

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

### Meeting Highlights

**Amazon Smile** account was set up for funding SLAMN. The link is on the SLAMN website. You are encouraged to use this link when buying from Amazon. 0.5% of the purchase price goes to the organization.

**Rendezvous 2018** The theme is LOUISIANA A NATURALIST PARADISE. It will be a celebration of all areas of LA. Each chapter is asked to present information about the habitat/species unique to their area. Each Chapter has been assigned a number of spots.

**City Nature Challenge:** The website is up and running for more information. Get the word out.

**Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalist** Facebook group page is now open to outsiders. Be sure to like this page and share with friends.

**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 for 2018: April 11, and October 3**

Reminder: SLAMN yearly membership \$15.00.

Mail your dues to:

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

### AMAZON SMILE

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-5541690>

### Amazon Smile Donation to Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists

When you make purchases through Amazon Smile, 0.5% of the purchases will go to Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists.



You shop. **Amazon gives.**

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to **Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

You can select a different charitable organization after signing in.

- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.
- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

## Local News:

[Back](#)**March 7, 2018 SLAMN Spring Field Trip Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery– by Barbara Morris**

On March 7<sup>th</sup> we headed to the Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery which is located at Forest Hill, Louisiana. This is a LDWF facility. **Robbie Maxwell** was one of the Biologist involved with the Paddlefish spawning. He and others went to the Mermentau River and caught eight mature Paddlefish to bring to the fish hatchery. He also participated in the spawning of the fish. It was interesting watching him at work.

This event is attended by school groups who will help raise the fingerlings. Our volunteer role at the event was to escort the groups around the facility. We witnessed dissection, learned to age fish, saw the Bass fingerling process, observed the Paddlefish swimming in tanks, and the collection and fertilization of the eggs. The activities director appreciated the help and would like for us to come next year.

The Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery is home to a Visitors Center boasting over 10,000 gallons of aquarium. Native Louisiana fish, reptiles, amphibians, and crustaceans can all be found on display. If the animals aren't enough of a draw, there are extensive wall murals hand-painted by local artists, **Gene Dupuis** and **Paul Wallace**, depicting natural Louisiana habitats. If you are in the Forest Hill area, you should stop in for a visit.



## Local News:

[Back](#)**SLAMN Spring Field Trip Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery**<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/booker-fowler-fish-hatchery>**April 14, 2018 SLAMN Field Trip**

On April 14 we will join the Gulf Coast Bird Club and head to High Island, Texas. This will be to visit the rookery where Great Egrets, Roseate Spoonbills and other birds are nesting.

***There is an \$8.00 admission fee. There is also a Kiosk that sells patches, T-shirts, and bird friendly plants. There is BBQ lunch at St. Matthews UM Church for \$12.00***

Houston Audubon High Island

<https://houstonaudubon.org/sanctuaries/high-island/history.html>

High Island Spring Migration Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/High-Island-Spring-Migration-620985007918601/>

Photos by Arlene Cain High Island Rookery - Roseate Spoonbill and Great Egrets



Local News:

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### March 17, 2018 Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Candidates attend the Bird Study Workshop

Everyone had a great time at the Ornithology/Birding study workshop held at Sam Houston Jones State Park. **David Booth** guided the group in observation of some great birds. **Irvin Louque** demonstrated bird banding techniques. **Theresa Cross** provided great demonstrations and an interesting activity on migration.



March 17, 2018 Master Naturalists Bird Study Workshop Sam Houston Jones State Park (32 species)			
Wood Duck	Northern Flicker	Tree Swallow	Hermit Thrush
Great Blue Heron	Pileated Woodpecker	Carolina Chickadee	Gray Catbird
Great Egret	American Kestrel	Tufted Titmouse	Brown Thrasher
Bald Eagle	Great Kiskadee	Brown-headed Nuthatch	Northern Parula
Rock Pigeon	White-eyed Vireo	Carolina Wren	Pine Warbler
Mourning Dove	Blue-headed Vireo	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Blue Jay	Eastern Bluebird	Northern Cardinal
Downy Woodpecker	Fish Crow		Common Grackle

## Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalist Planters at Tuten Park

A great thanks to **Barbara Morris** and **Patty Palmer** for volunteering to plant the garden boxes at Tuten Park. One garden box represents Cajun Prairie native plants. Prairie box plant list: liatris, coreopsis, rattlesnake master, tropical milkweed, eastern bluestar, Indian blanket, and possible buttonbush. The other garden box is more shaded and represents native woodland plants. Go by Tuten Park and enjoy the beautiful garden planter boxes these ladies put together.



As of March 28, our box is already contributing to the Monarch population! Monarch caterpillars on tropical milkweed.

## Local News:

[Back](#)**March 23-24, 2018 SLAMN at the Southwest Louisiana Garden Festival**

A big shout out to **Chet St. Romain** for his great work organizing volunteers for the SLAMN booth at the Southwest Louisiana Garden Festival. We had a great turnout at our SLAMN booth. All of our wonderful volunteers' are helping to get the word about Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists. Many of our members helped out at our booth talking to Garden Festival participants. We have a nice list of potential candidates for the next Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists program. A great thanks to all the SLAMN members that helped out at the booth: **Chet St. Romain, David Booth, Tommy Hillman, Patty Palmer, Jackie Lanier, Barbara Dupont, Lorie McGee, Edith Holland, Tom Morris, Brittany Manuel, Betty Talbot, Deborah Frank, Gay Gomez, Linda Wygoda, and Arlene Cain.**



## 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](mailto:irvinlouque@gmail.com)

## Volunteer Opportunities:

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**The Nature Conservancy** is looking for volunteers to help plant longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) at our Talisheek Preserve. Longleaf pine is the most important tree species on the preserve, and the volunteer planting event will help restore the historic structure and natural habitat to the site. Please be dressed for wet and muddy conditions. Bring: water bottle, and gloves.

Volunteer:

<https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/louisiana/volunteer/index.htm>

**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**

## Volunteer Opportunities:

### Louisiana Audubon – Volunteers Needed

Nesting season is coming fast, and protecting beach-nesting birds and their habitat is key to improving bird populations.

Audubon Louisiana needs volunteers on **Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>** to help install protective fencing and signs around vulnerable nesting sites on **Elmer's Island** (Grand Isle) and **Holly Beach** (Cameron Parish).

Interested in volunteering at one of these locations? Click on the event for more details and registration information!

- [Volunteer at Holly Beach!](#)
  - Saturday, April 14
  - 8am-12pm
- [Volunteer on Elmer's Island!](#)
  - Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>
  - 8am-2pm

For questions or more info, contact Nic Dixon at [ndixon@audubon.org](mailto:ndixon@audubon.org)

**Hope to see you on the beach!**



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

**Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana upcoming events and volunteer opportunities:**  
<https://www.crcl.org/get-involved/volunteer.html>

Freshwater Bayou Marsh Restoration:

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

April 12:

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/178.html>

April 13:

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/168.html>

April 14:

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/169.html>

April 21, 2018

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Oyster Shell Bagging – Coastal Louisiana Reef Restoration

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/167.html>

Freshwater Bayou Marsh Restoration:

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

May 3:

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/170.html>

May 4:

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/171.html>

May 5:

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/172.html>

May 19, 2018

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Oyster Shell Bagging – Coastal Louisiana Reef Restoration

<https://www.crcl.org/component/dpcalendar/event/162.html>



### **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: Monarch (Danaus plexippus)

**By Master Naturalist Robby Maxwell**

This picture is featured on The Naturalist Podcast Episode 14: Migration North and South, iNaturalist Seek <http://www.naturalistpodcast.com/the-naturalist-podcast-episode-14-migration-north-and-south-inaturalist-seek/>



Monarch Caterpillar - Photo by Robby Maxwell

**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>

## Fun with a Dip Net: Louisiana's Livebearers by Irvin Louque

I started keeping an aquarium when I was a student at McNeese. I quickly transitioned from a tropical fish tank to primarily native livebearer tanks. Through many dip-netting trips to Contraband Bayou, Prien Lake, and even the Atchafalaya Basin, I became familiar with the three livebearer species found in Louisiana. I've maintained a colony of Least Killifish (*Heterandria formosa*) since 2010, and I've kept Sailfin Mollies (*Poecilia latipinna*) intermittently.

Livebearers (subfamily Poeciliinae) are one of the most recognizable fish in the aquarium trade. Guppies, mollies, platys, and swordtails belong to this family. Though the name "livebearer" suggests that all species in this family give birth to live young, one South American species (*Tomeurus gracilis*) can lay eggs or retain them depending on the environment. All other livebearers give birth to live young, an advantage for small fish that occur in shallow unstable waters with lots of predators.

Three species of livebearers can be found in Louisiana, with all three co-occurring in any shallow, vegetated freshwater systems in South Louisiana. They can be easily sampled by dipnet, but male Least Killifish may fall through the holes of a standard dipnet. All native livebearers can be sexed by assessing the anal fin. The anal fins of mature males are elongated into a straight tube called a gonopodium for delivering sperm internally to the female. The anal fins of females and immature males are rounded. Female livebearers often show a black gravid patch on the abdomen when they are only a few days from giving birth.

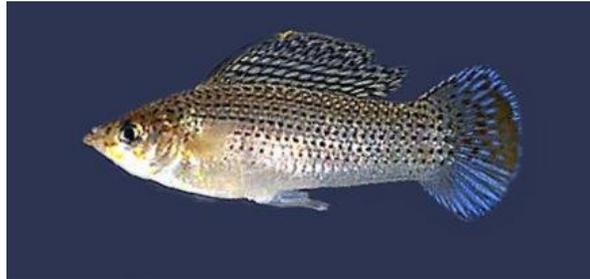


Female Western Mosquitofish, source: public domain<sup>i</sup>

The **Western Mosquitofish** (*Gambusia affinis*) is a very common fish that you're likely to see in any ditch in the southern United States. They're often inaccurately called minnows, though a friend of mine more appropriately calls them native guppies. Males grow up to 5.1 cm (2.0 in) total length and females grow up to 7.0 cm (2.75 in) total length.<sup>i</sup> Both sexes are gray to silvery in color, sometimes with a bluish sheen.

Western Mosquitofish, despite the name, consume a wide variety of foods including mosquito larvae, other small invertebrates, zooplankton, and detritus.<sup>ii</sup> With their upturned mouths and set back dorsal fins,

Western Mosquitofish are able to survive in low dissolved-oxygen conditions by exploiting the oxygen saturated surface of the water.<sup>i</sup> Western Mosquitofish are known for being rather aggressive for their size, though other small livebearers co-occur with them in south Louisiana. They are not commonly kept in community aquariums because of their aggressiveness and lack of “pretty” colors.



Male Sailfin Molly, source: public domain <sup>iii</sup>

The **Sailfin Molly** (*Poecilia latipinna*) is Louisiana’s largest and showiest livebearer with males measuring up to 15 cm (5.9 in) total length and females measuring (10 cm (3.9 in) total length.<sup>iii</sup> Female and immature male Sailfin Mollies generally have a silvery background color, with dark spots along their sides and fins. Mature male Sailfin Mollies generally have orange and blue splotches of color across their bodies, sometimes mottled in black or yellow.<sup>i</sup> Sailfin Molly genetics can be found in some of the aquarium-bred molly varieties, through hybridization with other molly species.

Sailfin Mollies are our most saltwater tolerant livebearer—they can tolerate 0–80 ppt.<sup>iv</sup> They can be found in estuaries, salt marshes, and tidal flats, but they can also be found in freshwater ditches far inland. They eat algae, rotifers, small crustaceans, and aquatic insects.<sup>v</sup> Sailfin Mollies are a good schooling aquarium fish, but they breed quickly and easily like their congeneric relative, the guppy.



Female Least Killifish by Flickr user Brian Gratwicke, licensed CC BY 2.0.<sup>iv</sup>

The **Least Killifish** (*Heterandria formosa*) is the smallest North American fish, and the among the world’s smallest vertebrates. Females only grow up to a maximum of 3.0 cm (1.2 in).<sup>iv</sup> While they aren’t

particularly showy, they are distinctly colored. Least Killifish at first glance appear green with a similar pattern to a Largemouth Bass. They have a dark line running from snout to caudal fin on each side with several dark vertical bars. There is some variability with some individuals having very light vertical bars and some with very dark bars. Females and males have a dark spot on the dorsal fin, often with some orange on that fin. Females often have a dark spot on the anal fin as well. The gonopodium of Least Killifish males is particularly prominent, often about half the male's length.

Least Killifish can be found in almost any shallow, well-vegetated water body in south Louisiana. They can survive brackish water, but are usually found in freshwater. Least killifish embryos derive nearly all of its nourishment directly from the mother, unlike mosquitofish or mollies.<sup>iv</sup> Also unlike other livebearers, Least Killifish give birth to their clutch over one to two weeks, birthing only one or two offspring at a time. This strategy allows their offspring to be about the same size as any other livebearer offspring, despite its small adult size. They are an easy fish to keep and breed in aquariums (especially tanks with lots of plants), though they do best with only other Least Killifish because of their small size.

This is just a short introduction to a family of fish that have interested me for years. Because of their popularity in aquariums, livebearers are well-studied, especially their evolution and ecology. I highly recommend reading about the fascinating evolutionary history and origins of the Poeciliidae. Two sources I recommend reading are "A phylogenetic and biogeographic perspective on the evolution of poeciliid fishes" (Hrbek, et al. 2007)<sup>xi</sup> and "The origin and biogeographic diversification of fishes in the family Poeciliidae" (Reznick et al. 2017).<sup>xi</sup>

#### References:

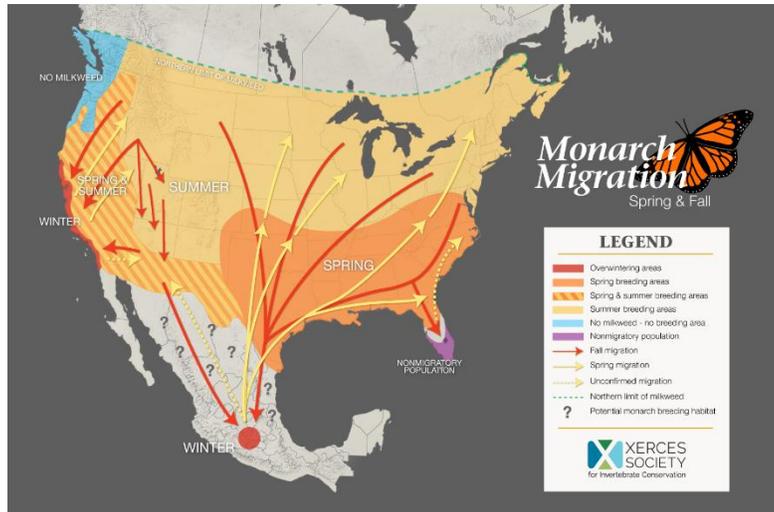
- i <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1616904>
- ii <http://www.fishbase.org/summary/Gambusia-affinis.html>
- iii [https://www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/Gambusia\\_affinis.htm](https://www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/Gambusia_affinis.htm)
- iv <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=297095>
- v <http://www.fishbase.org/summary/Poecilia-latipinna.html>
- vi <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/fish/discover/species-profiles/poecilia-latipinna/>
- vii [https://www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/Poecil\\_latipi.htm](https://www.sms.si.edu/irlspec/Poecil_latipi.htm)
- viii <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=19057074>
- ix <https://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/factsheet.aspx?SpeciesID=852>
- x <http://www.fishbase.se/summary/Heterandria-formosa.html>
- xi <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17185005>
- xii <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0172546>

Naturalists Notes:

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**Migrations, Monarchs, Milkweeds, and the MicroPrairie**  
**Words and Photographs by Robby Maxwell**

The topic of migrations is one of the more fascinating aspects of the animal kingdom. Migrations occur in groups as diverse as jellyfish, worms, insects and arachnids, crustaceans, fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals large and small. Migrations are generally seasonal, and can be local, such as an earthworm’s vertical migrations in the soil or the snakes in the Shawnee National Forest moving between the bluffs and swamp every year. Large scale



migrations occur in species like American bison, which also once had human migrations attached to them, American eels with their treks between the Sargasso Sea and the farthest reaches of rivers and streams in North America, and many species of ducks and geese with hunting seasons tailored to take advantage of and protect them seasonally. Monarch butterflies have become a sort of mascot of migratory species with increased awareness of their movements ranging from Canada, throughout the U.S., and to their main wintering grounds in Michoacán, Mexico. All migratory species need habitat corridors to

From the Xerces Society <https://xerces.org/monarchs/>

provide resources on their journeys, and the fragmentation of habitat corridors is a primary conservation concern. Most declines we see can be directly attributed, at least in part, to the elimination of the links between one seasonal home and another. Monarchs are no exception, and there are simple things anyone in their range can do to facilitate their migrations north and south.

When we planted our half-acre prairie patch in 2015, we made a point to put a diversity of locally sourced milkweeds out. We planted aquatic milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*), butterfly weed (*A. tuberosa*), green milkweed (*A. viridis*), and fewflower milkweed (*A. lanceolata*). They’re not only striking flowers to have in a garden, but they’re also a key component of many habitats across the U.S., with unique species that utilize their toxic sap. Monarchs utilize their sap, like some other insects, to make themselves poisonous to predators by consuming milkweeds as caterpillars. During their migration



Clockwise from top left: aquatic milkweed, fewflower milkweed, green milkweed, and butterfly weed, all in our prairie.

north, monarchs will stop by and drop eggs on milkweeds. Three short lived generations of monarchs hatch every year with a fourth long-lived migratory generation hatching in the late summer/early fall.

We noted our first northbound monarch at the house on February 25, and have seen them almost daily at the house since. In mid-March I witnessed a pair mating over the prairie, and about a month after seeing the first monarch fly through the property, I spotted eggs on the leaves of aquatic milkweed. The eggs soon hatched, and we are hosting what are probably the first monarchs hatched on this plot of land in decades. One of the advantages to growing multiple milkweed varieties is that they have different peak growing seasons, and can provide food throughout the warm months. I couldn't even tell you where my green and fewflower milkweeds are right now, but they'll make themselves apparent, soon, and be ready for future generation of monarchs. The aquatic milkweed is a very early growing and blooming variety, and is no doubt a great host plant.



*Monarch egg, newly hatched caterpillar eating egg case, and caterpillar on aquatic milkweed*

While this is the first time we've really noted the northward migration at the house, we've noted the fall southward migration since we moved out here in 2011. It's never been as striking as the convergence I saw one fall at the Devils River in Texas (check it out sometime, it's amazing), but we do occasionally witness dozens at a time passing through and sleeping in our oaks overnight. The planting of the prairie also enhanced this past year's fall migration at the house. People often focus on milkweed for monarchs, which is definitely essential, but fail to enhance food resources for fall migrations. The habitat corridor must go both ways, right? Luckily, we have a bumper crop of fall-blooming goldenrod and other flowers in the micro-prairie, and the monarchs took note. For one week during their journey to Mexico, we had a strong south wind kick up. Two or three dozen monarchs got stuck at the house. They



*A fall migrant on Bidens sp.*

would sip on the goldenrod nectar by day, and in the evenings go to roost in the tree line bordering the prairie. We dragged our lawn chairs over, and would sit out and have a drink watching the monarchs do their thing every evening after work that week. Once the winds shifted, they moved on with good energy stores to help them on their way.

You don't have to plant a half acre to make an impact. Migrant conservation is about making corridors, and even something as small as a potted plant or two can make an impact, especially if multiplied many times over across the monarch's range. For SW Louisiana, I'd recommend planting aquatic milkweed to start out. It's as hardy as any native you can find, has good growth rate, and has local populations with pink or white flowers. Butterfly weed is striking, and has traffic cone orange blooms, but can be a little trickier. Local genetic strains thrive, but people often have trouble getting strains that aren't from SW LA to persist down here. Butterfly weed growing naturally in SW LA is a rarity these days with the loss of the prairie, but local strains are available from private collections. Tropical milkweed is another commonly utilized nonnative option, but there are some issues with its use that can be remedied with active management. For the fall, keep some goldenrod around. There are multiple species, and some are of high conservation value to the prairie down here. Goldenrod is commonly maligned as causing seasonal allergies, but that's a myth. The associated Ragweed is making you snuffle, as it's wind-pollinated with pollen that floats through air and tickles your sinuses.

We've noted many small ecological victories in the first year of our prairie, and I'm sure they'll compound as it matures. The recent transformation into primo monarch habitat is something we're very proud of, and I hope to watch the seasonal movements and changes from the porch for many years to come.



#### **Monarch Resources:**

Journey North: Track and learn about Monarch and other seasonal migrations

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>

Xerces Society: Comprehensive Monarch information with links to milkweed resources

<https://xerces.org/monarchs/>

Wikipedia article: a very comprehensive look at monarchs with a robust compilation of resources

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarch\\_butterfly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarch_butterfly)

**My blog: see some of the plants mentioned in this article with background on the prairie planting we did**

<https://maxwellmicroprairie.wordpress.com>

## Upcoming Events:

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**Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Workshop Dates and Description for 2018.** (Times and dates are subject to change.) **Application and registration for New Members is required.**

**Apply at:** <http://www.swlamasternaturalists.org/apply.html>

Date	Title	Time	Location	Coordinator
1/20/2018	1: Overview - Naturalist Skills	8am-2pm	Tuten Park	Irvin Louque, Danielle Maxwell
2/3/2018	2: Backyard Wildlife Management	8am-2pm	Tuten Park	Theresa Cross
2/17/2018	3: Longleaf Pine	8am-2pm	Tuten Park, David Daigle's Ranch	Chuck Battaglia, Chris Doffett
3/3/2018	4: Coastal Ecology/Geology	8am-2pm	Rockefeller SWR	Brian Sean Early
3/17/2018	5: Bird Study	8am-2pm	Tuten Park	David Booth
3/24/2018	6: Citizen Science	8am-2pm	Tuten Park	Theresa Cross, Irvin Louque
<b>*4/6-8/2018</b>	<b>LMNA Rendezvous</b>		<b>Camp Hardtner</b>	
4/21/2018	7: Amphibians and Reptiles	8am-4pm	Sam Houston Jones State Park	Chuck Battaglia, Brad Glorioso
5/5/2018	8: Cajun Prairie	8am-4pm	Eunice	Tommy Hillman
5/19/2018	9: Pollinators	8am-4pm	Gray Ranch	Chuck Battaglia, Chris Reid
6/2/2018	10: Aquatic Invertebrates	8am-4pm	Tuten Park, Calcasieu River	Danielle Maxwell, Robby Maxwell
6/9/2018	11: Riverine Ecology (Overnight)	8am-2pm		Theresa Cross, Robby Maxwell
6/9/2018	Nocturnal Animals (Overnight)	4pm-10pm		Theresa Cross, Robby Maxwell
6/23/2018	Graduation Overview of iNaturalist	11am-3pm	Tuten Park	Irvin Louque

## April 7-9, 2018 LMNA Rendezvous

Louisiana Master Naturalists will hold its annual Rendezvous at Camp Hardtner in Pollock, LA. The Louisiana Master Naturalists Association will host an annual Rendezvous where members meet to learn, volunteer, and get to know their fellow Louisiana Master Naturalists.

*Rendezvous 2018 Registration Form* found here: [Rendezvous 2018 Registration Form](#)

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



**April 17, 2018 Tuesday 7 pm**

**Parra Ballroom, Holbrook Student Union McNeese State University Free and open to the public**

**Freshwater ecologist and National Geographic Fellow Zeb Hogan presents Monster Fish**

**April 20, 2018 Friday 7 pm**

**FG Bulber Auditorium McNeese State University admission: \$20.00 adults, \$5.00 children**

**Peter Bros From the Original Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom (live animals)**

## Upcoming Events:

[Back](#)

### 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)

### April 7, 2018, Saturday 9am – 2pm <https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/hilltop/>

Hilltop Spring Fling Plant Sale Ready, set, GROW!!!

Hilltop Arboretum, 11855 Highland Rd, Baton Rouge, LA 70810

**April 6-8, 2018** - 28th annual Bogs, Birds, Baygalls, and more B's. Allen Acres, Pitkin, LA - Email [native@camtel.net](mailto:native@camtel.net) or call 337-328-2252 to register

**April 7, 2018** - Saving Our Monarchs!" Bug Lady New Orleans, City Park Spring Garden Show April 7, 2018 from 2-3 pm. - <http://neworleanscitypark.com/botanical-garden/spring-garden-show>  
More information contact Linda Auld at [nolabuglady@gmail.com](mailto:nolabuglady@gmail.com)

### April 14, 2018

Louisiana Audubon – Volunteers Needed

Nesting season is coming fast, and protecting beach-nesting birds and their habitat is key to improving bird populations.

Audubon Louisiana needs volunteers on **Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>** to help install protective fencing and signs around vulnerable nesting sites on **Elmer's Island** (Grand Isle) and **Holly Beach** (Cameron Parish).

Interested in volunteering at one of these locations? Click on the event for more details and registration information!

- **[Volunteer at Holly Beach!](#)**
  - Saturday, April 14
  - 8am-12pm
- **[Volunteer on Elmer's Island!](#)**
  - Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>
  - 8am-2pm

For questions or more info, contact Nic Dixon at [ndixon@audubon.org](mailto:ndixon@audubon.org)

**Hope to see you on the beach!**

### April 20, 2018

Coastal Prairie Burn Workshop April 20 near Vinton. This is a great opportunity to learn about prescribed burning and its benefits to natural landscapes. It's Free! Follow the link below!

<https://allevents.in/.../coastal-prairie-burn.../98800008042462>

### Apr 19, 2018 to Apr 22, 2018 Galveston Island, Texas [16th Galveston FeatherFest](#)

Galveston is one of the top locations in the country for birding because it hosts a wide variety of habitats in a small geographical area where some 300 species make their permanent or temporary home throughout the year. Contact: Julie Ann Brown, GINTC, 832-459-5533, [FeatherFest@gintc.org](mailto:FeatherFest@gintc.org)

## Upcoming Events:

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**Apr 19, 2018 to Apr 22, 2018 [South Texas Birdiest Festival in America](#)**

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

**South Texas Botanical Gardens & Nature Center, 8545 S. Staples St., Corpus Christi TX 78413**

Named "Birdiest City in North America" for a decade, Corpus Christi's location in key spring migration pathways draws birders nationwide and around the world. General admission to the festival is included with Botanical Gardens Admission (\$8 for vendors, Raptor Project, and Botanical Gardens self-guided tour). Contact: [wmwomack@stxbot.org](mailto:wmwomack@stxbot.org) 361-852-2100 x225.

**Apr 20, 2018 to Apr 22, 2018 49 Ludwig Lane, Grand Isle, Louisiana 70358**

[Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration](#)

See songbirds in oak-hackberry woods, shorebirds and waders on beaches and in the marshes, and raptors overhead. Grand Isle is an essential stop for songbirds during their spring and fall migrations across the Gulf of Mexico. The celebration is held annually to correspond with peak bird migration in April. Contact: 985-787-2229, email: [jlandry@tnc.org](mailto:jlandry@tnc.org) .

**April 20 – 21, 2018 Bayou Teche Black Bear Festival - <http://bayoutechebearfest.org/>**

**Bayou Teche Black Bear and Birding Festival**

**Downtown Historic Franklin, Louisiana**

**Bayou Teche Birding:**

**The St. Mary Loop: A part of the America's Wetland Birding Trail -**

<http://bayoutechebearfest.org/birding.html>

**April 27-30, 2018 iNaturalist City Nature Challenge**

From April 27th to 30th, we're asking everyone in Lake Charles and all of Southwest Louisiana - residents, visitors, commuters, students, teachers, pedestrians, park lovers, parents, children, EVERYONE - to become citizen scientists and help us make as many iNaturalist observations as we can. The City Nature Challenge 2018 is a friendly competition between more than 75 cities on six continents – see the full list of cities here. Let's put SWLA on top!

**May 12, 2018 - Cajun Prairie Spring meeting Eunice**

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

**July 21-29, 2018 - National Moth Week - <http://nationalmothweek.org/>**

**Sept 15, 2018 - Pollination Celebration Hammond -**

<http://www.lsuagcenter.com/profiles/lblack/articles/page1503086955839>

**Sept 22, 2018 - Butterfly Festival, Haynesville - <http://www.haynesvillela.org/attractions.html>**

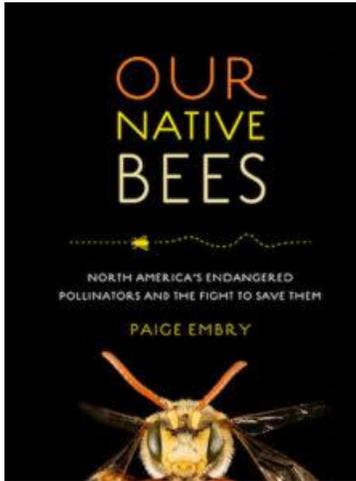
**Sept 28-30, 2018 - Butterfly Blast at Allen Acres**

Allen Acres, 5070 Hwy. 399, Pitkin, Email [native@camtel.net](mailto:native@camtel.net) or call 337-328-2252 to register

## Resources for the Naturalists:

[Back](#)

## Books:

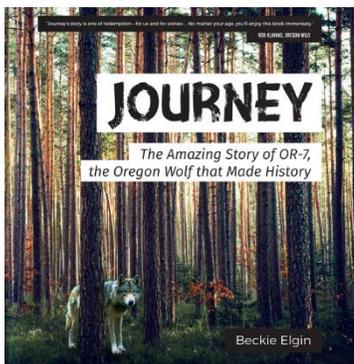
**Our Native Bees by Paige Embry - 2018**

[http://www.timberpress.com/books/our\\_native\\_bees/embry/9781604697698](http://www.timberpress.com/books/our_native_bees/embry/9781604697698)

For years we've been hearing story after story about the importance of conserving honeybees – specifically the European Honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. Then on 26 January 2018, *Science* magazine published “Conserving honey bees does not help wildlife” by Jonas Geldmann and Juan P. González-Varo, in which the authors reported that “managed honey bees can harm wild pollinator species.” It turns out that the non-native European Honeybees don't need to be conserved nearly as much as the native species of pollinators do.

The Well Read Naturalist

<http://www.wellreadnaturalist.com/2018/03/our-native-bees/>

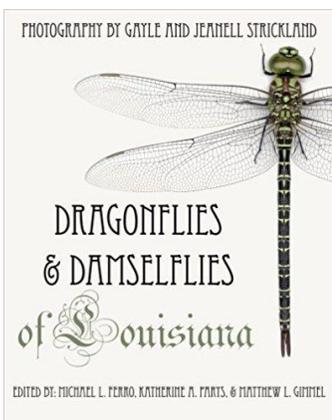
**Journey The Amazing Story of OR-7, the Oregon Wolf That Made History by Beckie Elgin October 2016**

[https://inkwater.com/books/index.php?route=product/product&product\\_id=1451&search=elgin](https://inkwater.com/books/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=1451&search=elgin)

The remarkable tale of the first wolf to roam the Pacific Northwest in nearly a century. Filled with maps, sketches, and photos, this intimate account of Journey teaches us not only about wolves, but about our own relationship with the natural world. Crafted in a clever, entertaining, and very informative format that intertwines a fictionalized narrative of Journey's life with a wealth of information about Grey Wolf biology, the work of the people who study them, and a number of other relevant topics. Journey can easily be read by adults as well as older children.

The Well Read Naturalist

<http://www.wellreadnaturalist.com/2018/03/our-native-bees/>

**Dragonflies and Damselflies of Louisiana – December 2010**

**by Michael L Ferro (Author), Katherine A Parys (Author), Matthew L Gimmel (Author), Gayle Strickland(Photographer), Jeanell Strickland (Photographer)**

[https://www.amazon.com/Dragonflies-Damselflies-Louisiana-Michael-Ferro/dp/145636149X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1522759641&sr=1-1&keywords=dragonfly+of+louisiana](https://www.amazon.com/Dragonflies-Damselflies-Louisiana-Michael-Ferro/dp/145636149X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1522759641&sr=1-1&keywords=dragonfly+of+louisiana)

Celebrate the beauty and diversity of nature with this field guide to Louisiana's dragonflies and damselflies. This level of detail can't be found in any other guide currently available; it provides both top and side high resolution scanned images of 118 species of dragonflies and damselflies known from the state of Louisiana and adjoining states. All species are represented by life-sized images, and smaller species are shown as both life-sized and enlarged images. In addition, both male and female specimens are provided for most species. A photographic "head shot" of each species is also included and most species showing variation in color pattern are represented by multiple photographs. Close-up photographs illustrating taxonomically important characters are given for most species.

## Resources for the Naturalists:

[Back](#)**Apps:**

**MotionX-GPS app for your smart phone**

<http://gps.motionx.com/>

**How to Geotag your Photos for iNaturalist**

<https://vimeo.com/175298466>

**Suggested App for iNaturalist**

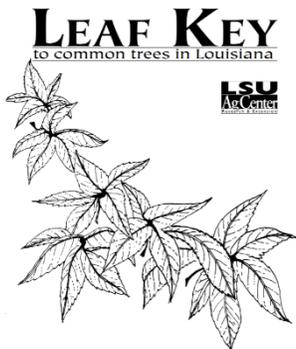
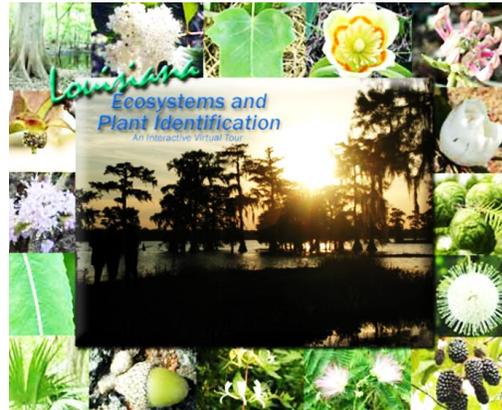
The #1 multi-sport GPS app for the iPhone

- ▶ Great for hiking, biking, skiing, snowboarding, running, sailing, flying, navigating, geocaching, and more
- ▶ Over 5 million users, top rated around the world
- ▶ Most accurate iPhone GPS
- ▶ Best map selection: choose from 14 different sources including road, terrain, satellite, and marine map types
- ▶ Free map downloads worldwide! Including OpenStreetMap, terrain maps, and NOAA marine charts
- ▶ Unlimited map downloading for use offline

**Websites of Interest:**

**Louisiana Ecosystems and Plant Identification**

<http://www.rnr.lsu.edu/plantid/>

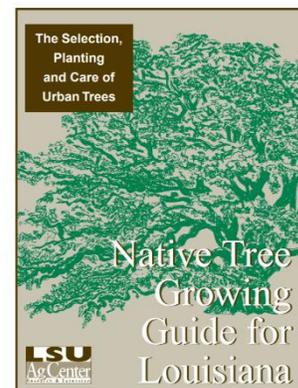


**Leaf Key to Common Trees in Louisiana**

<https://store.lsuagcenter.com/p-50-leaf-key-to-common-trees-in-louisiana.aspx>

**Native Tree Growing Guide for Louisiana**

<https://store.lsuagcenter.com/p-53-native-tree-growing-guide-for-louisiana.aspx>



**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/>

**Like us on Facebook:**

**Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists**  
<https://www.facebook.com/SWLAMasterNaturalists/>



**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.



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

