



Charter 2016

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President's Note:

Greetings, Master Naturalists!

We have been dealing with hurricanes, snow, and Covid-19 for the last year. But spring is here and we are ready to start anew. We do not know yet if we will still be able to meet at Tuten Park this year. We are looking for a new location while we wait for the park facilities to open. Do you know of a church hall or other facility where we can meet? Our meetings will be in person with a live ZOOM feed. We have found out that having guest speakers join virtually expands the field of available people.

The 2020 Class has resumed. The format for now will be online lecture one day with field experience on the following Saturday. The students went to Lake Martin on March 27th for the HERP class with Chuck Battaglia. Everyone was so happy to be hiking with others. The next class will be the Cajun Prairie and Pollinators Class on April 24. Everyone is welcome to come out to the Eunice Prairie where Malcolm Vidrine will be leading the group.

Calendar Quick View

- April**
 3 Rendezvous
 7 General Meeting
 10 Field Trip
 17 Earth Day
 24 SLAMN Class
 30 City Nature Challenge
May
 1 City Nature Challenge
 SLAMN Class
 2 City Nature Challenge
 3 City Nature Challenge
 15 SLAMN Class
 29 SLAMN Class

Prothonotary Warbler
 Photo by Arlene Cain



President's Note:[Back](#)

This year will bring new challenges and opportunities. Arlene Cain has announced that she is moving to Indiana. We want to thank her for the work she did publishing the SLAMN Nature Notes. The newsletter has been such a great resource for our club. A new opportunity is open for you to participate on the newsletter committee. Please contact me if you have always secretly wanted publish or just want to help. As always, the newsletter needs articles from you.

Please feel free to share any ideas or suggestions you may have with me or another member of the Board. We are always looking for field trip ideas, guest speakers, and volunteer opportunities. Let us know what ideas you have.

The Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists needs active, interested, volunteers. These volunteers will spread the awareness and understanding of our natural surroundings as we share our experiences with family and friends. We can all help improve the world one person at a time. So, get involved and let's have some fun.

Let's get outdoors together!
Barbara Morris



Meeting Notes

[Back](#)President: **Barbara Morris**

Vice-President:

Lori MarinovichTreasurer: **Clay Ardoin**Secretary: **Patty Palmer**

At-large Board Members:

David Booth,**Theresa Cross,****Tommy Hillman****Robby Maxwell**

Past President:

Irvin Louque

Upcoming Meeting Location and Date General Meeting April 7, 2021 TBA

March 3, 2021 SLAMN ZOOM Board Meeting

Committee Reports

Course: 2021 classes are underway

Volunteer:

Publications: Chairperson needed. Articles for Nature Notes newsletter are needed.

Membership Update – Patty Palmer:

- Patty received 9 membership renewal/release of responsibility forms; received 2 donation checks with membership renewal forms (~given to Irvin for deposit on March 12, 2021. Also, an email was sent to Clay on March 13, 2021 per his request, with check numbers and amounts to be deposited.)
- Clay received 3 membership renewal forms in mail; Clay will mail the forms to Patty.
- Patty will work to update the Xcel Membership database and then share with all Board members.

Promotions Committee:

Tri-fold Educational Screens for Display at Libraries – Lori Marinovich

- Great educational mode of communication. Barbara made one in 2020 that was posted at the Library in Moss Bluff/Lake Charles.
- The libraries are hungry for informational promotions and this is a great way to earn SLAMN volunteer credits.

City Nature Challenge April 28th – May 3rd – Robby Maxwell

- Discussed promotion methods of this event; could get fliers on event to the libraries.
- Rebuilding Lake Charles <https://www.visitlakecharles.org/rebuilding-swla/> is a promotional event being coordinated by the Tourism Bureau that could possibly relate to this event and help promote the City Nature Challenge.

New Business

Congratulations to Irvin Louque:

- Irvin is starting a new job on March 8, 2021 as Louisiana's Whooping Crane Outreach Coordinator with the International Crane Foundation. He will be working from home in Lake Charles and will still plan to be involved with SLAMN.
- Irvin's position will strive to increase public outreach, help decrease the number of Whooping Crane fatalities and increase the population of this endangered species.
- The City of Lake Charles plans to backfill Irvin's position. Clarence Ceaser is currently the Director.
- Thank you Irvin for all of your great work at Tuten & Riverside Parks and for being the Founding President of the SWLA Master Naturalist organization! We look forward to your regular Whooping Crane progress reports!

Acknowledgement & Huge Thanks - All

- Thanks to Lori for stepping up to chair the Volunteer Committee.
- Thanks to Pam Langley for volunteering to be the new SLAMN representative on the State LMNA Board replacing Deborah Frank.
- Thanks to Debra for her service as past LMNA Board representative!

Next Board Meeting June 2, 2021

Next General Meeting: July 7, 2021



Chestnut-sided Warbler
Photo by Arlene Cain

Reminder: SLAMN yearly membership \$15.00.

Please complete the [membership renewal form](#)

Mail your dues and form to:

Clay Ardoin

SLAMN Treasurer

227 Fallis Rd.

Lafayette, LA 70507



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

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

Access *Track It Forward* on the SLAMN website:

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

Local News:

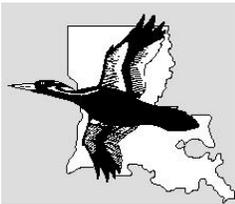
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HERPS at Lake Martin

Lake Martin is located south of Breaux Bridge. The Master Naturalist class met there to observe amphibians and reptiles. Chuck Battaglia was the group leader. Chuck is a founding member of SLAMN. He moved to the Lafayette WLF office last year.

We hiked along the levee to the west of Lake Martin. We observe alligators, red-eared turtles, mud turtles, musk turtles, painted turtles, river cooters, ribbon snakes, broad-banded water snakes, green anole lizard, and skinks.

Of course, being Naturalists, we also did bird watching and plant identification. It was a great day to be outdoors.



Louisiana Ornithological Society

<http://www.losbird.org/home.html>

Check out LOS. Join LOS and enjoy the wonderful field trips, newsletters, and meetings.



Global Big Day May 8th, 2021

<https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-8-may-2021>

Be a part of birding's biggest team! Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, join us virtually on 8 May and share the birds you find with eBird.

Participating is easy—you can even be part of Global Big Day from home. If you can spare 5 or 10 minutes, report your bird observations to eBird online or with our free eBird Mobile app. If you have more time, submit checklists of birds throughout the day. You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations through products like these animated abundance maps brought to you by eBird Science.

Local News:

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City Nature Challenge 2021: Southwest Louisiana

April 30-May 3

This weekend will be the most exciting weekend to be a naturalist and to use iNaturalist. The City Nature Challenge is a competition between cities worldwide to see which city has the most nature (and by that the most dedicated iNaturalists). Our area is comprised of the 6 parish Southwest Louisiana area (Vernon, Beauregard, Allen, Jeff Davis, Calcasieu, and Cameron). In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 City Nature Challenge will not be focused on competition; instead, we want to embrace the healing power of nature and celebrate tens of thousands of people all around the world, searching for and documenting their local biodiversity, together in this event.

Here's all you need to do to participate in the City Nature Challenge:

1. photograph (or record audio) wild organisms in our area
2. identify them the best you can
3. upload them to iNaturalist

Then naturalists from everywhere will work diligently to identify your observations by the end of that week when the announcements will be made. The City Nature Challenge is about each person taking part in going out and observing the natural world, so we're focusing on encouraging everyone to go out on your own, with a friend, or even while you're at that family gathering or festival and finding nature to contribute to the effort. Each year, the City Nature Challenge has provided a snapshot of the world's urban biodiversity, so I encourage everyone in our chapter to spread the word and to participate so that Southwest Louisiana's biodiversity is represented!

iNaturalist City Nature Challenge

City Nature Challenge 2021: Southwest Louisiana

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2021-southwest-louisiana>



City Nature Challenge 2021: Southwest Louisiana
APR 30, 2021 - MAY 3, 2021

About Members  8

Start spreading the news! Help find all of the creatures that call Lake Charles and Southwest Louisiana home. Southwest Louisiana sits at a crossroads of ecosystems - from coastal marshes and estuaries to flat Cajun prairies and winding rivers to hilly longleaf pine forests. We're all familiar with SWLA's natural abundance, the

[Read More >](#)

 Project Journal

Local News:

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Hit Me with your Best Shot Bird Photography Competition and Exhibition



Gallery by the Lake Inc. announces its third Gulf Coast Bird Photography Competition to celebrate the joys and benefits of birdwatching, draw attention to the diversity of bird life in Louisiana, and showcase the work of wildlife photographers from across the US. The contest will be judged once again by the editorial staff at Bird Watcher's Digest. This year's selected photos will be exhibited at the Gallery's second-floor Historic City Hall exhibit space from August 20th through October 16th. Cash prizes starting at \$300 for first place will be awarded.

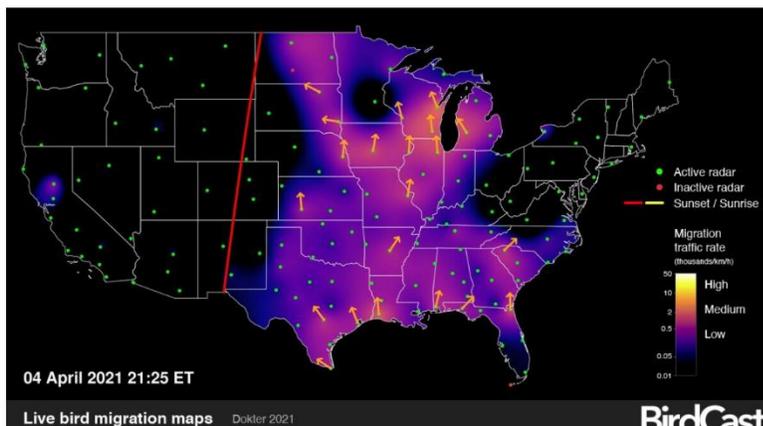
Entry Period

April 10th through 11:59 p.m. May 31st MDT at www.callforentry.org Check <https://www.gallerybythelake.org/> or contact **Dan Plummer** at danplum@aol.com or 337 842-6820 for more information.

BirdCast

<https://birdcast.info/about/>

BirdCast proposed to provide real-time predictions of bird migrations: when they migrate, where they migrate, and how far they will be flying.



Live bird migration maps

See real-time analysis maps of intensities of actual nocturnal bird migration, as detected by the US weather surveillance radar network between local sunset to sunrise. Cornell Lab of Ornithology currently produces these maps.

[Play live bird migration maps](#)

Volunteer Opportunities:

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Volunteer to serve on one of SLAMN's Committees

We want to encourage all SLAMN members to participate in one or more 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

Maximum number of members: 8

Duties:

- Develop schedules, finds speakers and coordinators for each workshop in the annual course.

Promotions Committee

Contact David Booth: david@boothenvironmental.com

Maximum number of members: 6

Duties:

- Keep SLAMN in the public eye and connect well with other affiliated groups.
- Maintain momentum of group developing interest and adding desired activities that are well attended by past graduates and new students

Publications Committee: CHAIR NEEDED

Maximum members: 4

Duties:

- Produce newsletter (Nature Notes) every 2 months
- Maintain and update website
- Produce brochures, flyers, and other organization documents as needed

Volunteer Committee:

Contact Lori Morinovich: elleu1@yahoo.com

Maximum number of members: no limit

Duties:

- Find, plan, and execute volunteer projects that have clear ecosystem benefits and/or publicity for our chapter and the natural world
- Priorities include outreach classes, natural space improvements for local nonprofits, public space improvements and improvements to private property.



Volunteer Opportunities:

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LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens Citizen Science Projects

<https://www.lsu.edu/botanic-gardens/research/citizenscience.php>

There is a project for...

Audubon Society

<https://la.audubon.org/>

Citizen Scientists can participate in bird counts. The observations are submitted to online databases which contribute invaluable data to bird population research. In 1900, the Audubon Society began The Christmas Bird Count, which was the first recorded citizen science project. Between December 14 and January 5 of each year, and participants can be part of the world's longest-running wildlife census.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home>

If you enjoy watching your backyard birds or participating in field trips and nature walks, there are many opportunities to record your observations and share the data with other citizen scientists and researchers. Some of the projects include: FeederWatch, NestWatch, eBird, Great Backyard Bird Count, Celebrate Urban Birds, and Habitat Network. The data is analyzed to help scientists better understand the diversity and abundance of birds in ecosystems throughout the year.

Monarch Watch

<https://monarchwatch.org/>

Citizen Scientists can learn about monarch biology and life cycle and get involved in monarch conservation by creating a monarch waystation in their yard. They can take part in tagging butterflies to help understand the dynamics of the monarch's spectacular fall migration through mark and recapture.

Journey North

<https://journeynorth.org/>

Citizen Scientists can learn about the biology, life cycle, and migration of many different organisms including: monarch butterflies, frogs, hummingbirds, dragonflies, earthworms, bald eagles, orioles, American robins, whooping cranes, loons, red winged blackbirds and report their sighting to an online database. The information tracks the abundance and diversity of the organisms with the changing seasons. Scientists analyze the data to monitor the abundance, diversity, and range of organisms in geographic setting with the changing seasons.

FrogWatch USA

<https://www.aza.org/frogwatch>

Frogs and toads populations have experienced dramatic population declines both in the United States and around the world. Scientists are try to understand the causes of the decline in populations in geographic ecosystems. Citizen Scientist use online tools to identify the calls of local frogs and toads and record their data online. The data is analyzed by researchers to help develop practical strategies for the conservation of these important animals.

Volunteer Opportunities:

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Nature's Notebook

https://www.usanpn.org/natures_notebook

Citizen Scientists have a wide range of projects to choose from with Nature's Notebook. Researchers analyze and use the observations of plants or animals for scientific discovery, groundbreaking research and in decision-making. Phenology data, (the responses of organisms to the changing of seasons, climate, and other habitat factors), helps decide the timing of events, from when to harvest or irrigate land to when to conduct controlled burns in forests. There are over 1,260 species on the USA-NPN's Nature's Notebook species list of plants and animals available to observe.

Xerces Society

<https://xerces.org/community-science>

Citizen Scientists have a number of projects that are important to the science of invertebrate conservation to choose from. Some of the projects involve making observations and submitting the data on local bumble bees, butterflies, and dragonflies to better understand the conservation status of these invertebrate organisms.

Project BudBurst

<https://citizenscience.org/>

Citizen Scientists make observations of events such as the first leafing, first flower, and first fruit ripening for a variety of plant species including trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses, weeds and ornamentals. Project BudBurst is particularly interested in observations of native plant species. The citizen science observations are reported online to a national database. Scientists can use this data to learn about the responses of individual plant species to climatic variation locally, regionally, and nationally, and to detect longer-term impacts of climate change by comparing with historical data.

Project Squirrel

<https://projectsquirrel.org/participate.shtml>

Citizen Scientists make observations about the fox and grey squirrels and submit the data to online databases. Participants will learn to recognize the differences between the gray and fox squirrels. By contributing data of squirrels from home, the office, school, a park, or anywhere, scientists are better able to understand the ecology of the local environment and how it is changing. Individuals can also participate in experiments on foraging behaviors of squirrels.

Lost Ladybug Project

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

The native ladybug population has been in constant decline over the past twenty years. During this same time, ladybugs from other parts of the world have increased both their numbers and geographic range in North America. Researchers do not know how or why this is occurring, the effects on ladybug diversity, and the impact on the populations of insects that ladybugs eat off of plants. The observations and data reported by Citizen Scientists will benefit research in finding answers to these important issues.

Volunteer Opportunities:

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Louisiana Iris Citizen Science Project

<http://www.louisianairisgnois.com/CitizenScience/index.html>

Help preserve our native irises!



Typical colors and forms of the five species.



I. brevicaulis



I. fulva



I. hexagona



I. giganticaerulea



I. nelsonii



Photos by Arlene Cain



Continuing Education Opportunities:

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LDEQ's EnviroSchool to host webinar: Understanding Public Participation BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ)

EnviroSchool will host a webinar on Understanding Public Participation. This session will focus on how you can be involved in the regulatory processes, including how to receive public notices, making public comments, where to find public notices, public meetings vs. public hearings, and making effective comments.

When: 10 a.m. Thursday, April 22

Online: Live Webinar Only

Please register by emailing enviroschool@la.gov .

The Public Participation Group (PPG) is a part of the Permit Support Services Division within the Office of Environmental Services. PPG is responsible for issuing public notices and conducting public hearings and meetings associated with permitting activities related to the four categories of media (Air, Hazardous Waste, Solid Waste, and Water).

Public involvement efforts are designed to enable the citizens of Louisiana to be a part of the environmental decisions that affect their lives. Through the public notices, public hearings and meetings, and availability of material associated with the permitting activities for public review, the citizens of Louisiana can present their comments and additional input of information that helps the agency decision-makers in their review and evaluation of the permits.

The EnviroSchool program at LDEQ is the environmental education outreach arm of the agency and provides training for communities, businesses, and other organizations on a number of regulatory topics. The program aims to inform attendees about the environmental regulatory process and to maintain and improve environmental compliance.

The workshops are free and open to the public. If you are interested, please feel free to register for any of our workshops. For more information, go to <http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enviroschool> or email EnviroSchool at Enviroschool@la.gov .



Magnolia Warbler
Photo by Arlene Cain

Continuing Education Opportunities:

[Back](#)
Conservation Biology Institute Webinar Series <https://consbio.org/>

[Understanding and Using New Tools for Conservation Planning for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation](#)

Climate-driven shifts in species and ecosystems are complicating efforts to conserve biodiversity at the landscape scale. Recognizing this challenge, agencies and non-governmental organizations are increasingly searching for tools and information that allow identification of climate refugia, corridors, and ecosystems which store irrecoverable carbon, areas that are key to enhancing the resilience of natural systems under climate change.


[SCGIS - Case studies from TNC addressing conservation in times of crisis](#)

In this webinar by The Nature Conservancy present two case studies showcasing conservation in times of crisis. Montserrat Acosta-Morel will discuss TNC's work engaging communities and building resilient islands in the Caribbean using nature-based solutions (#1 below); and Yuta Masuda will talk about the effects of local warming from deforestation on the health and well-being of local communities in the pantropics


[SCGIS - COVID-19: Rethinking our relationships with wild animals & wild places](#)

The COVID-19 coronavirus has catapulted across the ever-evolving interface between humans and wild places, generating global impact and alarm. Quarantines have been imposed, and borders have been closed. Free movement of people, the pursuit of normal daily routines, economic well-being — and in too many instances, health and even life itself — have been dramatically curtailed by a virus that previously lived beyond the pale and a disease that was ...

Bird Academy | [COURSE CATALOG](#) | [VIDEOS](#) | [LEARNING GAMES](#) | [OPEN LECTURES](#)

Upcoming Events

<p>January 28, 2021</p> <p>Webinar Series Conservation Food - Foraging</p> <p>Study Battling Birds in Panama with Bird Cams Lab</p>	<p>February 9, 2021</p> <p>Webinar Series Conservation</p> <p>Watch Birds and Share the Joy: How to Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count</p>	<p>February 16, 2021</p> <p>Webinar Series Songs - Calls</p> <p>Explore Nature Through Sound and Music: Tropical Islands and Ocean</p>
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Cornell Lab Bird Academy <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/>

Cornell Bird Academy offers a wide range of birding courses from nature journaling, bird photography, and bird identification to bird biology. These courses are for a cost and are self-paced.

If you are interested in birds and conservation, you will enjoy listening to Cornell's Open Lectures:

<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/live-events/>

Cornell's Open Lecture series are free. Most are about an hour in length.



iNaturalist Spotlight and Photos:

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iNaturalist.org's Journal Official Blog

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

Check out the "Observation of the Week" post.

iNaturalist Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Project
Observation of the Month by Master Naturalists Irvin Louque
 DeKay's Brownsnake (*Storeria dekayi*)

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



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

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

Spring Flowering Natives by Pam Langley

Most of the tropical plants that I had planted in my yard did not survive the freeze. Some that are returning are shade loving and since Hurricane Laura took out three of my large trees, they will not survive our August sun. Thankfully, I have been slowly replacing non-native plants with native plants in my yard. I thought I'd share with you some photos of the natives that are blooming this spring in spite of two hurricanes and a record freeze.



1 Red Buckeye

The first photo is a bloom of a red buckeye, *Aesculus Pavia*. I really thought it was a goner, because it had started leafing out just a few days before the freeze. But to my surprise, not even one leaf with affected! It is an understory tree, preferring part shade. It can get to 15' in height, but if you prefer a bush, you can keep it trimmed and it will bush nicely. I'm hoping that my one remaining pecan tree will provide enough shade for it to survive our hot summer sun. I have seen humming birds visiting the flowers and also lots of bumble bees.

The second photo is a close up of coral honeysuckle blooms, *Lonicera sempervirens*. This is a native vine that is easily kept in bounds by occasional trimming. It loves the sun and once established will withstand drought conditions. It is reported that humming birds like these blooms, but I've never seen one humming around my vines.

Next is the fringe like flower of daisy fleabane, *Erigeron annuus*. I did not plant this one. It is an annual that just appeared in my yard several years ago and I thought the blooms were nice, so I let it stay. It now comes up all over the yard. Those in the lawn get mowed, but I leave patches around the borders. Some of my neighbors have commented that I need to get rid of that weed. I think they don't want it spreading to their yard. But I was really pleased when my new neighbor right next door left a patch standing in his yard also.



3 Fleabane



2 Coral Honeysuckle



4 Yaupon Holly

Picture four is a close up of yaupon holly blooms, *Ilex vomitoria*. The blooms are not really noticeable without close scrutiny, but I'm hoping that they produce nice red berries this winter. The hurricane did provide me with the opportunity to rid my yard of some wax leafed ligustrum bushes that wreaked havoc with my sinuses every time they bloomed. I was happy to find some yaupon holly to replace them. No sinus problems so far!

Picture 5 is of a clasping coneflower, *Dracopis amplexicaulis*. They are called clasping because the base of the leaf wraps itself around the stem. These came from seed that I collected on one of our field trips. I wish I could remember when and where. It is an annual that reseeds itself. They grow to about 3 feet high and die out in the August heat

The last picture is of beeblossom or gaura, *Gaura lindheimeri*. This is one of my finds at Johnson Bayou, extreme southwest Louisiana. I gathered seed and at first thought it was an annual, but was surprised to learn it is a hardy perennial that makes a very deep root system. Gaura will bloom all summer long and does not like a lot of water. Bees of all types visit the blooms often. The wispy flower spikes can reach 3 feet in height. There are several different hybrid varieties on the market that do not get as tall, have dark pink blooms, and do not reproduce from seed. I'm not sure if the bees like the hybrids as well, but I don't, because I love being able to plant seed and see it sprout into a lovely plant!



5 Clasping Coneflower



6 Bee Blossom or Gaura

All of these plants require very little attention from me and have survived lots of hardships recently. I can't stress enough the importance of planting native plants. Our native plants feed bees, butterflies, caterpillars and other creepy crawlers that provide food to critters higher on the food chain. Our native plants also survive with very little labor provided by the gardener.

Go Native!

Gravel Fossils of Southwest Louisiana by James T. Doucet



After Hurricane Laura killed most of the insect life and stripped the leaves off of all of our trees, I had to find something else to fill the void that naturalist activities had filled so well before. I was aware that fossils could be found in our gravel deposits here in Louisiana, but I didn't think that Calcasieu Parish would be a particularly good place to search for them. I was very surprised to come across my first rugose coral fossil specimen in a gravel deposit near Calcasieu River on Highway 14. I stopped whatever I was doing at the time and began searching the area, which turned out to also be a fantastic place to find arrowheads and other human-made artifacts.

I spent the next several months (December 2020 - February 2021) focusing on finding more fossils, and have been relatively successful. Pictured are some of my more well-preserved fossil finds, most of which are corals, though I also have found small pieces of petrified wood at the gravel pile at the entrance of Riverside Park. Just about any gravel (particularly gravels that include brown limestone pieces and agates) can have fossils in them. Some gravels that can be found in Lake Charles contain so many fossils and beautiful agates that it astounds me that they were just left outside on the ground by someone. LSU has a very useful pdf document for identifying various fossils that can be found in our native gravels that I am linking to at the bottom, thanks LSU!





References:

Fossil Hunting in Louisiana Gravels

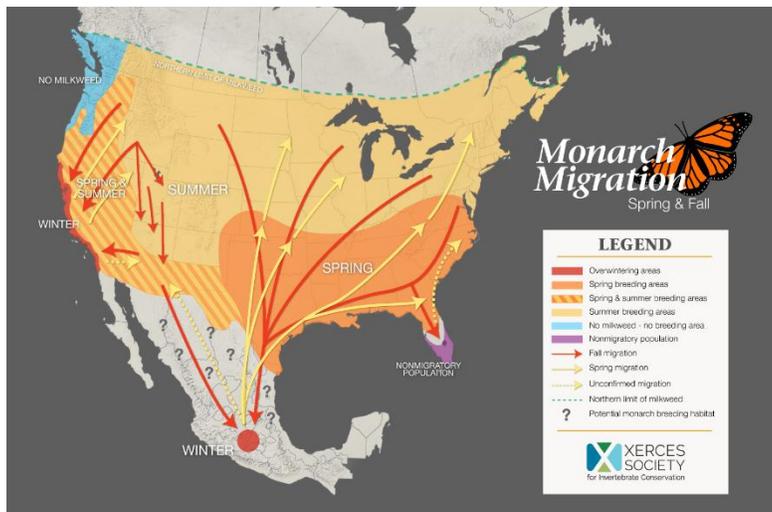
<https://www.lsu.edu/mns/files/activities/fossilgravels.pdf>

Migrations, Monarchs, Milkweeds, and the MicroPrairie

Words and Photographs by Robby Maxwell

(originally printed in Nature Notes Vol 3 Issue 2 April 2018)

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

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 Master Naturalists 2021 Calendar

All dates are subject to change.

For more information and to sign up, go to www.TrackitForward.com

January		February		March		April		May		June	
20	Board Meeting	6	General Meeting	3	Board Meeting	3	RENDEZVOUS 2021	1	Fungi and Mushrooms Class	2	Board Meeting
		13	Field Trip Bob Thibodeaux's Arboretum, Church Point	13	Coastal Ecology Class	7	General Meeting 5:30 PM	3	City Nature Challenge	12	Land Ethics and Backyard Habitat Class
				27	Amphibian and Reptile Class	10	Field Trip Kisatchie National Forest	15	Aquatic Invertebrates Class	26	Public Outreach and Graduation Class
						17	Earth Day Community Outreach	29	Riverine Ecology and Fish Class		
						24	Cajun Prairie and Pollinators Class				
						30	City Nature Challenge				
July		August		September		October		November		December	
7	General Meeting			1	Board Meeting Nominations	6	General Meeting Elections			2	Board Meeting
10	Field Trip					9	Field Trip Lacassine Pool				

Oxalis crassipes
Photo by Arlene Cain



Upcoming Events:

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April 28-May 2, 2021, National BugGuide Gathering <https://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>

May 14-16, 2021, 31st annual BBBB (bogs, birds, butterflies, baygalls and more b's.)
email: native@camtel.net for details

PLANT IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS

Allen Acres in Cravens, Louisiana; 5070 Hwy 399; Pitkin, LA 70656, 337-328-2252,
www.allenacresbandb.com

April 6-8, Plant ID Class

April 13-15, Plant ID Class

April 17: Edible Plant Class

April 20-22, Plant ID Class

May 4-6, Plant ID Class

May 11-13, Plant ID Class

May 18-20, Graminoid ID Class

May 25-27, Plant ID Class

Wild purple violets and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Photos by Arlene Cain



Resources for the Naturalists:

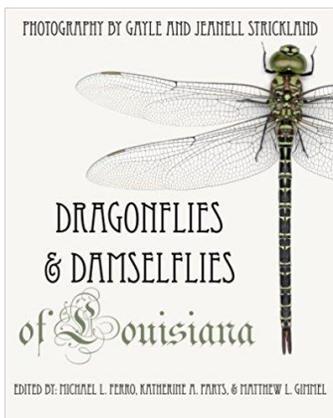
[Back](#)[Audubon Nature for Kids](#)

In many ways every child is born a scientist-exploring their world, leading small experiments, asking questions, searching for answers. That innate curiosity and drive to inquiry is what **Rachel Carson**, the groundbreaking conservationist and author, called a sense of wonder. “A child’s world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement,” she wrote. “It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood.”

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



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.

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>

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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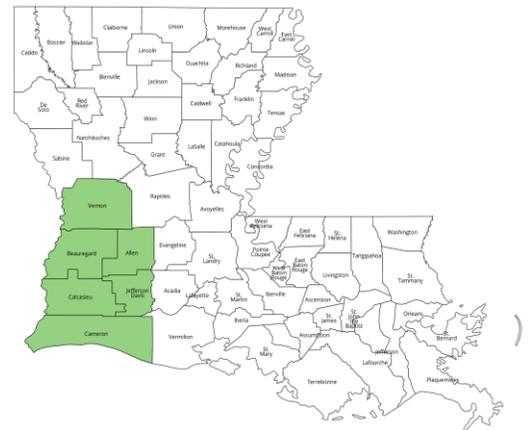
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About SLAMN Nature Notes

Southwest Master Naturalists Nature Notes is published the first week of the following months:

February, April, June, August, October, and December.

We welcome contributions of original writing of observations, and topics on nature in our area of Southwest Louisiana. We welcome reports, reviews, and digital photographs.



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