



Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Nature Notes



Charter 2016

Vol.6 Issue 4 2021

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SLAMN Class of 2020/2021

President's Note

Happy Autumn!

This is my favorite time of the year! Hummingbirds and other winged friends are migrating. Goldenrod and Blazing Star glow with LSU Purple and Gold. Everyone is eager to get outdoors. We have great events planned for Fall and I hope you will join us.

The General Meeting on October 5th will be held at the LSU AG Center near Burton Coliseum. We will have a social hour with snacks at 5:30, and the meeting begins at 6:00. The speaker will be Dale Hamilton from the Gulf Coast Bird Club, who will present on Migrating Birds in Louisiana. This will get us ready for the hike into Kisatchie Forest on October 9th. Watch for an email with more information and sign up on Track it Forward.

At the October meeting, we will accept nominations for Board Positions as well as Committee sign-ups. What will you give back to the organization this year?

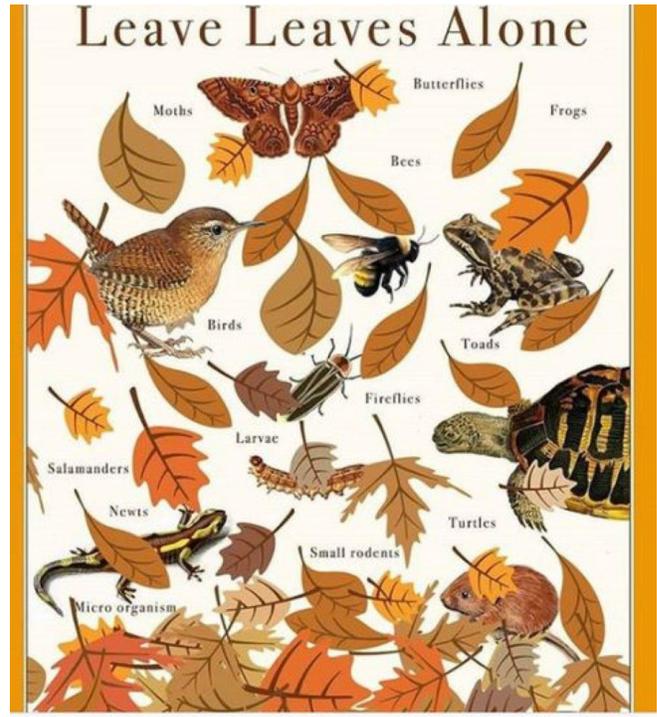
Registration is open for 2022 Classes. Family members and friends who are interested should sign up at SWLAMasternaturalists.org. Did you know you can download the membership renewal form and log volunteer hours on the web page as well?

Education and Outreach during this time of the year can focus on wildlife food and winter habitat. The seed heads on native plants are an important source of food for birds. Leaves and brush piles are habitat for reptiles, moths, mammals, bees, and other insects which are also in the food web. We can teach by example or just make a small difference one yard at a time.

Hope to see you soon,

Barbara Morris

President SWLA Master Naturalists



About SLAMN Nature Notes

Southwest Louisiana Master Naturalists Nature Notes is published the final week of the following months:
March, June, September, and December.

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

Editor's Note

Our latest board meeting brought some changes for me. Annale Manual has agreed to accept a nomination to replace me as Treasurer. At that time, the board appointed me chairperson of the Publications Committee and editor of Nature Notes. Annale will become Treasurer on January 1, 2022. I will remain a representative to LMNA.

In this issue you will notice some changes in formatting since the last issue. Many of these will turn out to be temporary as your publications committee continues to develop a template that works for us.

We have also been a bit slow in getting the volunteer and continuing education opportunities posted online. We will be working on it as soon as this issue is out.

You can send any news, articles, reviews, photos, suggestions, feedback, or other items to me, Clay Ardoin, at clayardoin@outlook.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Clay Ardoin, SLAMN 2018



October Sunflowers in Southwest Louisiana

Helianthus angustifolia

Photos by Clay Ardoin



Chapter Business

Next General Meeting

The next general meeting will be held on October 5th at the LSU AG Center Building next to Burton Coliseum. There will be a “social half-hour” starting at 5:30 so that folks can mingle and chat with the meeting kicking off at 6:00. You can bring snacks if you wish.

The guest speaker will be Dale Hamilton with Gulf Coast Bird Club. Dale will discuss the ongoing bird migrations.

Elections for Office

The Nominations Committee submitted the following slate of candidates for offices and Board membership for the term starting next year.

- President: Barbara Morris
- Vice President: Lori Marinovich
- Secretary: Patty Palmer
- Treasurer: Clay Ardoin
- Board Member at Large: Emerald Fletcher (new)
- Board Member at Large: Robby Maxwell
- Board Member at Large: Theresa Cross
- Board Member at Large: David Booth
- Board Member at Large: Tommy Hillman

There were no nominations from the membership, but Annale Manuel later agreed to accept the nomination in Clay’s place, leaving Clay free to chair the Publications Committee. The board approved the change.

Field Trip

The next field trip is scheduled for Saturday October 9th at Kisatchie National Forest. We are currently arranging the details and will keep you posted.

Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be held on December 2nd at Tuten Park. The agenda is still open, so contact a board member if you have a suggestion. As always, all members are invited to attend as observers.

New SLAMN Logo

We have engaged with Sam Wrobel to design and produce a new logo for our chapter. Robby Maxwell is spearheading this effort, and Sam should have preliminary designs ready for review by the next board meeting in December.

Preparation for the 2022 Course

The programs committee and board of directors have been planning for the upcoming year. We still have some work to do to finalize the schedule and arrange for instructors. When that is complete, we will post the schedule to Track-it-Forward and call for volunteers to serve as facilitators or even co-teachers.

[Recruiting](#)

Promotions Committee chair David Booth is leading the effort to find and schedule opportunities for recruiting new members such as manning booths or tables at local events. He is also looking at advertising and other methods of reaching perspective students.

If you know anyone who might be interested, please direct them to our website and Facebook page where they can learn more about us and fill out an application. We currently have two new applicants for 2022. There are also five students from 2020/21 who have not completed their coursework who will be given another opportunity this year, though we will ask them to repeat the entire course. They will not be charged.

[Strategic Planning with LMNA](#)

Louisiana Master Naturalist Association is engaging in some strategic planning to become more than just a body that coordinates the annual Rendezvous. The LMNA Board of Directors will meet in person this month in Baton Rouge to discuss opportunities for LMNA to become more relevant to the chapters.

They will be considering many things including

- Pooling resources to purchase common insurance for all chapters
- Sharing educational methods and resources including recorded lectures (See the News below.)
- Developing guidelines for curriculum development such as defining basic knowledge that each Master Naturalist learns.
- Encouraging the various officers from each chapter to form inter-chapter committees to share what they have learned about executing their office.

[Emerald Fletcher Added to the Board of Directors](#)

The Board of Directors voted to offer Emerald Fletcher a seat on the Board of Directors, and she accepted. Emerald is the new Program Manager at Tuten Park, and her presence on the board will be of great benefit to our chapter.

[Temporary Editor Made Official](#)

At the recent board meeting Clay Ardoin accepted the positions of Chairperson of the Publications Committee and Editor of Nature Notes. Pending the approval of the general membership, Annale Manual will replace him as Treasurer beginning in 2022.



Global Care Day at Tuten Park

Left: Bob Thibodeaux talking trees

Below: planting live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*)

Photos by Lori Marinovich



News

[LMNA Shared Resources](#)

Various chapters have begun to submit their recorded workshop lectures and other educational videos for publication on the [LMNA YouTube channel](#). The Greater Baton Rouge chapter has been posting lots of lectures. If you have not been there recently, you should check it out.

You can find the link to the YouTube channel on the [LMNA website](#), which also hosts a Blog with member submitted articles. Irvin Louque recently posted an article about the founding of our chapter. The site also includes a page for Louisiana flora and fauna with photos and blogs by some outstanding nature writers including Kelby Ouchley, Bill Fontenot and Bob Thomas, LMNA President and accomplished scientist and educator. If that's not enough to get you interested there is another page with Louisiana maps of all sorts that you are sure to find interesting and informative.

[Location of 2022 Rendezvous Will Change](#)

Camp Hardtner has restricted the use of their facilities to church groups, and they have cancelled our reservation for the 2022 Rendezvous. The LMNA has appointed a committee to select a new location. We will keep you posted.

[Field Trip to Bob Thibodeaux's Arboretum](#)

By: Lori Marinovich

Bob Thibodeaux has a lifelong passion for the native Louisiana live oaks. We toured his arboretum and his homestead properties and got a firsthand experience of his lifelong passion. In his presence you can feel his love of the land. Our group met at his home site to get briefed on his journey as a farmer and community leader.

During his life he created a nonprofit called Acorns of Hope. Bicycling throughout the coastal zone he would stop and plant live oaks to replenish the lost Chenier plains. I met Bob during the Acorns of Hope years as he rode the Cameron Creole Nature trail route from Lake Charles through Cameron Parish. We were the first stop and planted several of his oaks on the land around the power center as part of hurricane Rita/ Katrina recovery.



Bob showing tree growth

Photo by Lori Marinovich



Naturalists at Oak Alley Photo by Barbara Morris



Bob's homeplace, Oak Alley *Photo by Lori Marinovich*

Bob is a generous soul. His goal is to give away seedlings to replenish our tree canopy in a sustainable way. Our first gift was received as part of an industry wide Global Care Day sponsored by LyondellBassell. Emerald Fletcher and I assisted the industry volunteer leaders by matching them with Bob. He donated 20 seedlings to replenish Tuten Park on September 18, 2021. Bob provided the trees, his famous 10-10-10 compost and soil and the super-secret compost juice to give these baby trees a great start. We were gifted with a great lesson on soil health and the importance of the native live oaks.

Bob is a treasure to our state and a master of the land; my life is richer from all I have learned from him.

It was a pleasure to visit his home and home place. The mature Oak Alley was magical. SLAMN members walked through the Alley and witnessed nature at its best. Our members called out birds, stopped to identify fungi and enjoyed all the beautiful spiders. Crossing the creek under the covered bridge was a highlight before a respite at the homestead structure.



Fungi lesson *Photo by Lori Marinovich*

Photo by Pam Langley



Call for Volunteers

In addition to our usual call for committee members, we are seeking a minimally technically oriented person to help with IT administration moving forward. Please don't be put off by the technical requirements. Administrative skills are likely more important.

As always, contact members on the committee of your interest to join or to provide suggestions or ideas.

IT Coordinator/Administrator (title TBD)

Contact Clay Ardoin: clayardoin@outlook.com

Duties:

- Administer user access and accounts across all IT systems and online tools.
- Serve as our primary contact with the service providers.
- Assist the Treasurer in interpreting automated payments to the online service providers and approving/scheduling any non-automated payments.
- Assist the Publications Committee with website maintenance.

Programs 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.
- Produce brochures, flyers, and other organization documents as needed.



Publications Committee:

Contact Clay Ardoin: clayardoin@outlook.com

Maximum members: 4

Duties:

- Publish newsletter (Nature Notes) quarterly
- Maintain and update website

Volunteer Committee:

Contact Lori Marinovich: 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.

[Nominations Committee:](#)

Contact Irvin Louque: irvinlouque@gmail.com

Maximum number of members

Duties: Present a slate of nominees for office to the Board of Directors each year in September.

[Social Media Committee](#)

Contact Tommy Hillman: tommyhillman@att.net

Duties: Maintain the Facebook site and group.

[Field Trips Planning Committee](#)

Contact Barbara Morris: tblsjm5@yahoo.com

Duties: Organize field trips with emphasis on learning about local ecosystems and organisms.

[Handbook and Bylaws Committee](#)

Contact Pam Langley: pamxyz@bellsouth.net

Duties: Review and update Handbook and Bylaws with the direction and approval of the Board.

[Rendezvous 2022 Planning Committee](#)

Contact Barbara Morris: tblsjm5@yahoo.com

Duties: Plan and prepare to host the Rendezvous in in 2022.



Photos by Lori Marinovich

Naturalist Notes

Damselfly

By Kathleen Simon

Little damsel
Oh so blue
What do you seek
What do you do
Tiny insects on the fly
Courtship fights and
Flights on high

Your space you guard
No others come
Just you and yours
And then your young

You greet the day
With the morning sun
You eat your prey
While on the run

So many I fear
Too many to name
200 million years
Not one and the same

There's Citrine and Fragile
And Eastern forktail.
There's River and Azure
And Rainbow bluet.
There's Powdered & Violet
and Blue-fronted dancers.

Arthropoda, Insecta
Odonata, Zygoptera



Photo by James Smithers

Magical Monarch Migration

Article and Photos by Robin Basone

As a passenger on a recent SLAMN field trip, I overheard the following question, “what makes monarch migration special”? I was hooked.



Danaus plexippus caterpillars on milkweed

Intense study of monarch migration began in 1937 when Dr. Fred Urquhart and his wife Norah, both with the zoology department at the University of Toronto, noticed Monarchs with tattered wings in late May. They knew immediately that Monarchs (*Danaus plexippus*) could not withstand wintering in the area and wondered if the tattered wings indicated that the monarchs had traveled a great distance. Their studies lasted for thirty-eight (38) years.

They began a tagging system, attaching a .01 gram tag to a monarch that read “please return to the University of Toronto”. They received information that indicated one monarch had traveled at least 735 miles to the Atlanta, Georgia area. In 1975, Ken Brugger and Catalina Trail found an area near Mexico City that was host to 22.5 million monarchs overwintering. They had

responded to a newspaper and become researchers for the Urquhart’s. It was soon discovered that this was one of thirteen areas that hosted the monarchs each winter. The Urquharts visited in January 1976 and found a monarch that had been tagged in Chaska, Minnesota in September of 1975.

Monarchs that winter south of the Hudson Bay in Canada travel the farthest, covering nearly 2,400 miles. They typically reach the Gulf Coast in September by traveling 25-30 miles per day, reaching Mexico in October.

Monarchs are Milkweed butterflies and were formerly treated as a separate family but are now a subfamily (*Danainae*) of brushfoots. After overwintering in Mexico, on the return trip the life cycle begins. Milkweed plants in northern Mexico and along the Gulf Coast are vital because this is the main food source for their larvae.



Danaus plexippus caterpillars on milkweed

The monarchs are the only butterfly species that mimics bird-like north-south migration. Remarkably, very few individuals make the entire trip. So, most monarchs that “return” to traditional wintering areas have never been there before. What magical innate instinct leads them there?



Danaus plexippus chrysalis on plant stand



© loyallonghorn



SLAMN Calendar

All dates are subject to change.

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

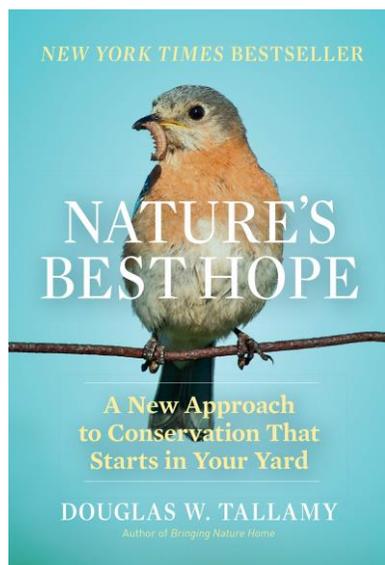
October 2021		November		December		January 2022		February		March	
5	General Meeting Elections			2	Board Meeting						
9	Field Trip Kisatchie										
30	Walk and Wag										
April		May		June		July		August		September	
								8-10	Rendezvous TBD		

Resources for the Naturalist

Two by Douglas Tallamy

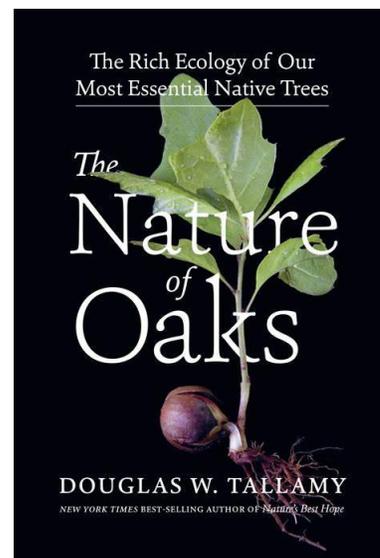
Book Reviews by Irvin Louque

In early 2021, I read Douglas Tallamy's two most recent books, *Nature's Best Hope* and *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Trees*. Both books are offshoots of Dr. Douglas Tallamy's work as a Delaware-based entomologist and wildlife ecologist studying the impacts native plants have on insect communities. In these books, Tallamy offers a pragmatic, modern land ethic: that anyone who owns or manages land can drastically increase the ecosystem value of that land by planting native plants, specifically a handful of keystone plants.



In *Nature's Best Hope*, he outlines the scale of the problem: the prevalence of the suburban, manicured landscape built around imported plants. A landscape like this is worthless for the birds that millions of people enjoy watching and feeding. Nearly all songbirds must feed their young caterpillars which typically don't occur in the diversity or abundance needed on nonnative plants. These caterpillars can overwhelmingly be found eating just a handful of genera of plants, a group Tallamy dubs the keystone species. Just like the beaver is a keystone species which creates wetlands that many other species utilize, these plants support the abundance and diversity of insects that songbirds and many other species rely on to thrive. According to Tallamy, no genera of plants supports more species than oaks, and that's the subject of his second book that I read in 2021.

The Nature of Oaks is a guide to the ecology of oak trees that I didn't know I needed. I've lived around live oaks and water oaks my whole life in south Louisiana, but I had not considered or known about the vast community of insects that they support. Tallamy's focal tree is the White Oak (*Quercus alba*) which he planted in his yard just long enough prior to writing the book that he's seen it grow up to early maturity. In the book, he covers each month of the year, starting with October, the month of acorns! The style is somewhat similar to *A Sand County Almanac* since the book covers each month of the year and the organisms that might be seen at that time, focused on insects. In the back of the book, there are species recommendations for each region and interspersed throughout the book are tips for enjoying and planting oak trees. Overall, I'm a big fan of *The Nature of Oaks*. I found the writing to be relaxing and informative. Thanks to the wealth of photos, I could really visualize the various insects mentioned, some of which I'd seen before but others not so much. At one point, Tallamy mentions that a similar book could be written about the biodiversity that depends on other trees and plants. I sure



hope authors take him up on that, because I'd certainly enjoy reading a book about the biodiversity river birches, red maples, and sunflowers support throughout the year.

I highly recommend anyone interested in backyard wildlife or gardening for wildlife to check out both of these and any other books Dr. Douglas Tallamy has written. They're great resources and sources of inspiration. Keep in mind that he is writing from the perspective of a Delaware/Pennsylvania region naturalist, but the two books are generally applicable to a Louisiana naturalist too. Tallamy also has a project that he introduces in *Nature's Best Hope* called "Homegrown National Park." You can learn more at homegrownnationalpark.org, but it's a supplement rather than a replacement for reading the book. There are audio and eBook versions as well as physical books that are currently available in my local library and probably yours too.



Master Naturalists at Bob Thibodeaux's Arboretum

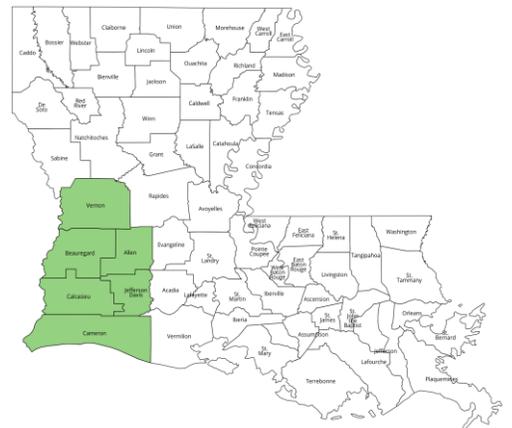
Photo by Theresa Cross

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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*

Board of Directors		Back
President	Barbara Morris	tblsim5@yahoo.com
Vice President	Lori Marinovich	Elleu1@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Clay Ardoin	cardoin@infolink-usa.com
Secretary	Patty Palmer	pmpalmer8@hotmail.com
LDWF	Robby Maxwell	robjamax@gmail.com
LDWF	Theresa Cross	tcross@wlf.la.gov
SLAMN	Tommy Hillman	tommyhillman@att.net
Gulf Coast Bird Club	David Booth	david@boothenvironmental.com
Past President	Irvin Louque	irvinlouque@gmail.com
3801 Nelson Road, Lake Charles, LA 70601		225 206 0400



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