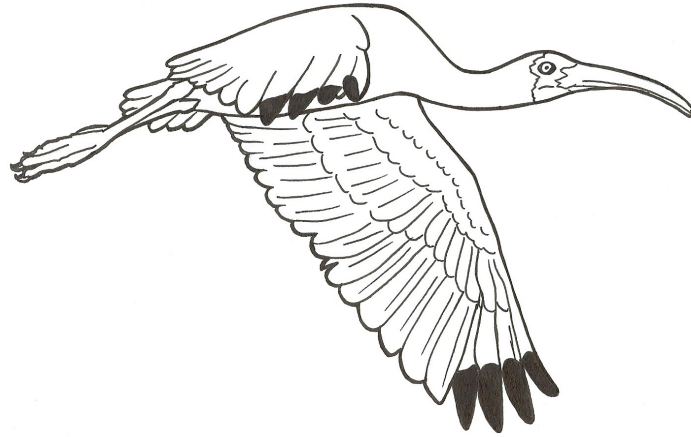


# the IBIS



Newsletter of the Orleans Audubon Society.

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Volume: XXXVIII Issue: 1

September/October/November 2024

## Orleans Audubon Society's 75th Anniversary Wine and Cheese Party

Tuesday, September 17

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Community Church Unitarian Universalist, 6690 Fleur de Lis (Lakeview).

RSVP to Joelle Finley, (504) 715-2647 [jjf1946@gmail.com](mailto:jjf1946@gmail.com) before September 12<sup>th</sup>.

Join us in celebrating 75 years of conservation work focused on Louisiana and the southeastern U.S. The party will be catered by Joan Garvey, OAS Membership Chair ... yum!



## Bird Surveys in Cuba

Speaker: Arturo Kirkconnell

**Tuesday, October 15**

6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program

Community Church Unitarian Universalist, 6690 Fleur de Lis (Lakeview).

Arturo Kirkconnell was a former bird curator and researcher at the National Museum of Natural History in Havana, Cuba for 37 years, and has been leading bird tours since that time. Arturo has published about 80 scientific papers and several books, among them: Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba (2000) along with Orlando Garrido, and the main author of the same book (Second edition, both by Cornell University Press), Birds of Cuba, a photographic guide, Bloomsbury, UK (2020), The Birds of Cuba, Annotated Checklist BOC series:26 (2020). Also, A Birdwatcher's Guide to Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico & the Caymans, Prion LTD (2010). At present he is freelance guide and organizes Bird Surveys Tours to Cuba and Dominican Republic. Arturo is an Elective Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, USA since 2010, Honorary Member of the Linnean Society of New York in 2010. He is also member of The American Birding Association, USA, Caribbean Ornithological Society, Zoology Society, Cuba, and Neotropical Bird Club, UK.

Cuban Trogon



Cuban Tody



## From the Mesetas, to the Steppes, to the Marismas: Central Spain's Wildlife and Its Conservation Needs

Speaker: Wendy Rihner

Tuesday, November 19

6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program

Community Church Unitarian Universalist, 6690 Fleur de Lis (Lakeview).

In April of 2024, Wendy Rihner crossed off two bucket list items in one trip to central Spain. Travelling with Field Guides Birding Tours, she not only visited the land of her favorite literary character (some might say her literary hero) Señor Don Quixote, but she also hiked through some of the birdiest regions of Spain. Spain is indeed the birdiest country in Europe, but its birds and other wildlife face threats not too dissimilar from those faced by wildlife here at home. Focusing on a few habitats such as mesetas (plains), steppes (unforested grasslands), and marismas (marshes), Wendy will highlight some of the special birds and other wildlife that inhabit these systems and the threats they face today.

European Roller



Spanish Eagles



Red Fox



### OAS Fall Field Trips

At the discretion of the leader(s) trips will be divided into groups if the number of attendees becomes too large. Bring binoculars, field guides, bug spray, rain gear, sunscreen and refreshments. Boots and cell phones may be useful. Snacks and drinks are recommended. Contact the trip leader if you have questions. Any last minute changes will be posted on the OAS Events web page, so check here for updates: <https://jjaudubon.net/events/>

eBird users: Please share your eBird account email address with the trip leader and the trip leader or designee will keep the trip list to share with participants.

## OAS Fall Field Trips

### **Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge – half-day trip**

Saturday, September 7, 8:00 a.m.,

Meet at the Bayou Ridge Trail entrance located on the left side of U.S. 90 (Chef Menteur Highway). Take the I-510 Exit off of I-10, turn left on Chef Hwy and proceed about 4 miles.

Leader: Peter Yaukey, (504) 400-3286, [pyaukey@uhcno.edu](mailto:pyaukey@uhcno.edu)

### **Couturie Forest, City Park - Half Day Trip**

Saturday, September 28, 7:00 a.m.

Meet at the Couturie parking lot on Harrison Ave. just east of the police stables and City Park volunteer house.

Leaders: John Keegan (504) 296-9486, [keeganjohnadam@gmail.com](mailto:keeganjohnadam@gmail.com) and Marcie Blanchard [marcieblanchard@yahoo.com](mailto:marcieblanchard@yahoo.com)

### **SELU's Turtle Cove Environmental Research Station - Pass Manchac Boat Trip**

[https://www.southeastern.edu/acad\\_research/programs/turtle\\_cove/](https://www.southeastern.edu/acad_research/programs/turtle_cove/)

Saturday, October 5, 8:30 a.m. to noon - half-day trip

FREE but gas money donation accepted. Trip is limited to first 20 registrants.

Send an email to Joelle Finley, [jif1946@gmail.com](mailto:jif1946@gmail.com) before September 29<sup>th</sup> to reserve your spot and receive final information.

### **Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge – half-day trip**

Saturday, October 5, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the Bayou Ridge Trail entrance located on the left side of U.S. 90 (Chef Menteur Highway). Take the I-510 Exit off of I-10, turn left on Chef Hwy and proceed about 4 miles.

Leader: Peter Yaukey, (504) 400-3286, [pyaukey@uhcno.edu](mailto:pyaukey@uhcno.edu)

### **Grand Isle - All Day Trip**

Saturday, October 12, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at Moran's grocery/gas station (It is now open!) on the corner of Hwy. 1 and Hwy 3090 (Fourchon Rd.) right where you come off of the new bridge. Note: The new bridge across the Intracoastal Waterway is a toll bridge.

Leader: John Nelson (504) 258-1009 [johnnygnelsoniv@gmail.com](mailto:johnnygnelsoniv@gmail.com)

### **St. Bernard – Half Day Trip**

Saturday, October 26, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at Walgreen's on the corner of Paris Rd. and Judge Perez in Chalmette.

Leader: Glenn Ousset (504) 495-4284 [gousset@bellsouth.net](mailto:gousset@bellsouth.net)

### **Jean Lafitte National Park-Half Day Trip**

Saturday, November 2, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the Visitors' Center Parking Lot in the Barataria Unit of the park located on Hwy. 45. Follow signs off of the West Bank Exp. for the National Park.

Leader: Wendy Rihner (330) 348-3810, [wrihner@gmail.com](mailto:wrihner@gmail.com)

### **W. Ravena Road, Diamond and Fort Jackson – All Day Trip**

Saturday, November 9, 8:00 a.m.

Cross the Crescent City Connection, On Westbank Exp. exit Hwy 23 (Lafayette St/Bell Chase Hwy), drive 5 miles and meet in Breaux Mart parking lot, 7902 LA-23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037, on the right just past the intersection with Hwy 406 (Woodland Hwy). Lunch at a Subway.

Leaders: Joelle Finley and Ken Harris 504-715-2647, [jif1946@gmail.com](mailto:jif1946@gmail.com)

### **Audubon Park and the Fly – half-day trip**

Saturday, November 30, 8:00 AM

Location: Meet in the parking lot off Magazine St. (St. Charles side of Magazine) near the golf club house.

Leader: Peter Yaukey (504) 400-3286, [pyaukey@uhcno.edu](mailto:pyaukey@uhcno.edu)

### **Fontainebleau State Park–Half Day Trip**

Saturday, December 14, 8:00 a.m.

East of Mandeville on Hwy 190. Meet at the large parking lot closest to the lake. \$2.00 entrance fee required.

Leaders: Holly Morales (985) 264-4406, [holly@moralesmusic.com](mailto:holly@moralesmusic.com) and Glenn Ousset (504) 495-4284 [gousset@bellsouth.net](mailto:gousset@bellsouth.net)

## OAS Birding Course Series

OAS is pleased to announce the offering of a series of both in person and Zoom only birding courses taught by Dr. Peter Yaukey, a lifelong avid birder and biology professor at the University of Holy Cross, New Orleans. While the course series follows something of a progression, participation in the earlier courses is not a prerequisite.

The fee for each course is \$100. To register, mail a check payable to “Orleans Audubon Society” c/o: Mary Joe Krieger, OAS Treasurer, 3623 Nashville Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70125-4341. Include your name, mailing address, email address, phone number, and **course title**.



Or pay the course fee electronically using PayPal and **indicate which course you are registering for**. Scan the QR code with your smart phone camera or go to <https://jjaudubon.net/donate/> and use the “Donate” button. Then email Mary Joe Krieger at [maryjkrieger@gmail.com](mailto:maryjkrieger@gmail.com) with your registration information and the date of your payment. For more information, contact: Dr. Peter Yaukey, [pyaukey@uhcno.edu](mailto:pyaukey@uhcno.edu), (504) 400-3286.



### Zoom Advanced I Birding Course

**September 9 - October 7**

5 Zoom classes held Monday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Topics will include field strategies, bird migration, foraging behaviors, bird habitats, identification of raptors, fall warblers, and others. All sessions will also be recorded and posted online with a link provided to enrollees. Enrolment is limited to 25 participants.

### In Person Beginning Birding Course

**October 16 - November 2**

3 Wednesday evening lectures, 7:00 to 8:30 PM

3 Saturday morning birding fieldtrips, 8:00 to 10:00 AM

Topics will include bird body parts and field marks, seasonal cycles and migration, birding equipment and digital tools, attracting birds to your yard, field strategies and techniques, how to identify 100 common birds and some less common ones to watch for! Enrolment is limited to 20 participants.



### Zoom Advanced II Birding Course

**October 28 - November 25**

5 Zoom classes held Monday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Topics will include shorebirds and gulls. All sessions will also be recorded and posted online with a link provided to enrollees. Enrolment is limited to 25 participants.

### In Person Advanced II Birding Course

November 14 - December 7 (skips week of Thanksgiving)

3 Wednesday evening lectures at UNO, 7:00 to 8:30 PM

3 Saturday morning birding fieldtrips, 8:00 – 10:00 AM

Topics will include shorebirds and gulls. Enrolment is limited to 20 participants.

## Sankofa Birding Walks



### Second Saturdays Bird Walks at Sankofa Wetland Park

Saturdays: September 14, October 12, November 9, December 14

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Sankofa Wetland Park & Nature Trail, 6401 Florida Ave, New Orleans, LA 70117

Leader: Dr. Peter Yaukey

Explore an urban oasis! Enjoy birdwatching with Dr. Peter Yaukey from the Orleans Audubon Society. These birding walks are hosted by Sankofa and Speaking of Science.

## BRAS Birding Event

Baton Rouge Audubon Society and its partners present:

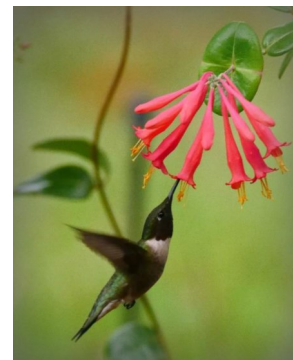
### Hummingbird Celebration!

Saturday, September 14, 2024

7:00 am to noon

LSU Ag Center Hammond Research Station

21549 Old Covington Highway, Hammond, LA 70403



Featuring:

- Hummingbird banding by Dr. Erik Johnson, Audubon Delta
- Feeding stations to watch hummingbirds in the gardens
- Information about hummingbird-friendly plants
- Presentation about Hummingbirds by Jane Patterson, BRAS

## Help OAS Celebrate, Document and Archive Its History

In light of its 75 years of existence, OAS is gathering photos, other digital media, news clippings, and other archival materials to document its long history. We would especially like to fill in gaps in our knowledge about past officers. OAS would also like to find out more about the society's early beginnings in 1949 and thereabouts and also its revitalization and incorporation in 1970. Moving forward, we plan to do a better job of documenting what is happening now for current and future generations. Documenting OAS members, functions, conservation and advocacy is important too. While we are looking especially for photos, news clippings, documents and letters from the past, we welcome all photos, videos (or links to videos), news clippings, and other items you care to share. If you have a story to tell, please send it as well, or if you know someone whom we should interview, please make a recommendation. Materials may be emailed to [OrleansAudubon@aol.com](mailto:OrleansAudubon@aol.com) or mailed to Jennifer Coulson, President, Orleans Audubon Society, 64340 Fogg Lane, Pearl River, LA 70452.

OAS is also looking for a volunteer to assist with this historical journey. We need someone to visit the Tulane University Special Collection to search through several boxes of archived materials about OAS, namely the Clarence Scheps materials from the mid-1960s, and a few other items. Contact Jennifer if you are interested in the library assignment.

Four Orleans Audubon Society directors birding in Panama: Phillip Wallace, David Muth, Dan Purrington, Mike Tift.



Drawing by Joan Garvey

## **Swallow-tailed Kite Project Field Notes: Kites nesting near White Bluff along the Pearl River**

By Jennifer Coulson

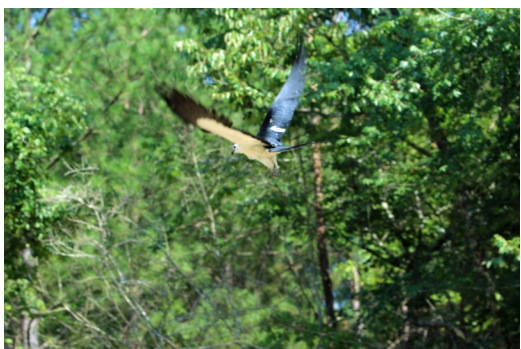
The first indications that Swallow-tailed Kites might be nesting in the White Bluff area were from aerial surveys which OAS conducted in 2021. I observed a single kite flying low on July 14, and then a roost of four kites on July 22, and then John Nelson observed a roost of 19 kites on August 4th. These kites were all seen near the Pearl River below the MS-44 bridge.

The White Bluff spot has remained in my memory bank as a place to check on aerial surveys, and I have seen the occasional kite or two there now and again, hunting or flying in a pattern as if it might be patrolling the airspace over a nest, but I wasn't able to confirm nesting until this year.

On June 8, 2024, my pilot, Wayne Wilson and I were flying in his Cessna 150, a small two-seater airplane. The first part of the flight had not been very productive, making the discovery of a group of 6 kites at 11:25 a.m. especially exciting. The number of kites was interesting, but their behaviors were even more so. As we circled overhead at an altitude of about 800 feet, we focused on a group of three adults chasing and striking an adult Red-tailed Hawk as it soared over their breeding territories. I exclaimed, "There *has* to be a nest here!" The hawk flew away from the angry mob of kites and out of sight. Only four minutes later two adults chased an adult Bald Eagle over this same area, and all birds headed south. The pair of kites returned after escorting the eagle away from their airspace.

Convinced that there was at least one nest here and probably several, we circled for another 20 minutes, while Wayne followed kite movements and I scanned the tops of canopy trees through 12-power binoculars searching for nests. I failed to find a nest from the air, but named the suspected nest the “Hit Redtail Chasing Eagle” nest. I could barely contain my excitement because it had been a long time since I had found a solid lead, and this was a lead that was sure to further grant goals of conserving kites on working forests! The White Bluff nesting neighborhood was a patchwork of bottomland hardwood forest, upland pine forest and pine plantation.

I researched the ownership of the White Bluff kite area and one of the landowners sourced wood to International Paper’s mill in Bogalusa. Our partners at IP introduced me to the landowner who was interested in kites and the working forest collaboration. On June 13, John Nelson and I met the landowner to obtain a key and get a tour of the properties. Behind two locked gates, we pulled our trucks over to discuss a few of the roads. As we climbed out of my truck, I could hear kites. They were giving “happy” calls behind me, and I wondered if adults were displaying over a fledgling. And as luck would have it, one of the other landowners just happened to be driving by and pulled over to chat. He told us where he had been seeing kites while fishing and gave us permission to go on his property too.



Release of the White Bluff male.



White Bluff male captured on a working forest and outfitted with a GSM-GPS transmitter.

Kites began alarm-calling, and soon rallied support, amassing to a group of 8. John and I investigated and I inadvertently flushed a Great Horned Owl perched low in a stand of pine plantation trying to avoid low-swooping kites. The White Bluff kites had a variety of large raptorial predators to contend with. We identified a trapping spot near the suspected “Hit Redtail Chasing Eagle” nest area and called it a day.

John Nelson and I returned two days later to attempt to capture a kite and place a tracking device on it. We arrived to observe 4 adults circling an area where I suspected a nest. We set up the nets and tethered my Great Horned Owl on a perch between the nets. Within three minutes a kite hit the top of the tall net but immediately backed out. My heart sank, thinking that may have been our only chance. We had not been able to catch a kite yet this season, and the clock was ticking. We waited some nerve-wracking minutes hiding in brush on opposite side of the nets. We finally caught the White Bluff male at 8:45 AM with 7 more adults circling overhead.

I was determined to find the “Hit Redtail Chasing Eagle” nest from the air, because our ground efforts had failed to produce a nest. I knew the nest had to be close to the hawk and eagle mobbing site, so on the June 21 aerial survey, I repeatedly searched the bottomland hardwood tracks to the north and south of a track of pine plantation. No nest. I couldn’t believe I was going to have to give up. But then I thought to myself, “What am I doing wrong? Maybe the nest is not typical. Maybe I am assuming too much.” So we circled back around, again and again. Then I noticed a narrow line of tall trees one tree deep along a road through the pine plantation. Two of those trees were spikey-topped sweetgums, and bingo! I found the nest in one of them! The nest was empty with a recent fledgling perched beneath it.

On June 25, Tom Coulson, Travis Carroll, John and I found the White Bluff tagged kite’s nest from the ground and searched for the fledgling. John found a Great Horned Owl perched low in an oak tree next to the nest tree. We did not find any kite remains, but we also did not find the fledgling. The adults didn’t seem too upset, so hopefully the fledgling was OK.

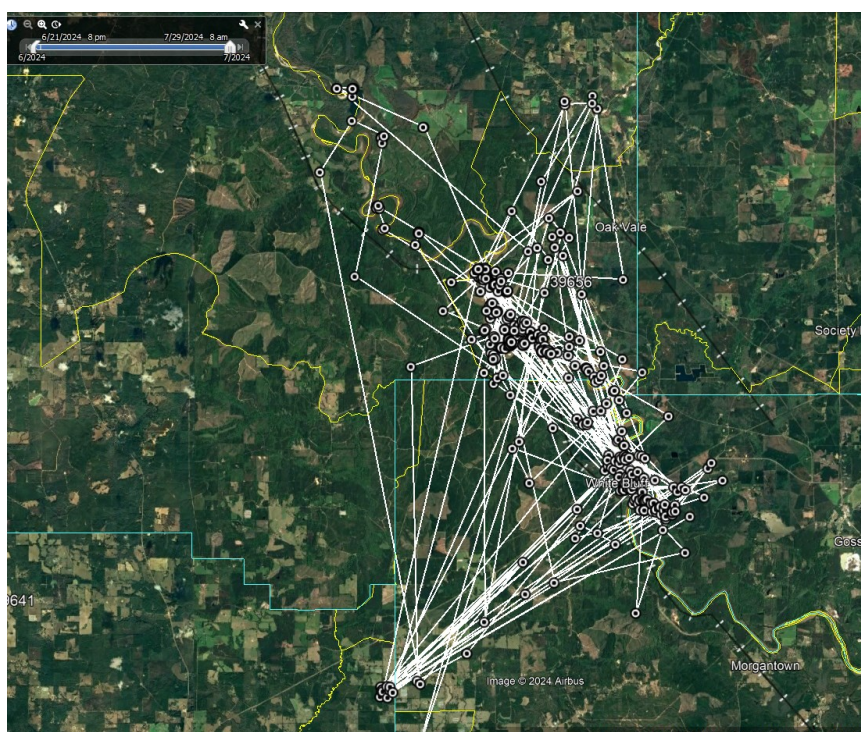
On the July 13<sup>th</sup> flight we searched the White Bluff kite nesting neighborhood again, hoping to find another nest. The nest I found was a stone's throw from the spot where we trapped the White Bluff male, along a trail we had all walked multiple times in search of a nest. In fact, it was where I had seen the four kites circling on the morning that we trapped the White Bluff male, and I remember telling John, "There has to be a nest right there." I wanted to name it "Humiliating" but later decided to call it the "Trapping Trail" nest.

I'd like to end this journal entry with the July 16 magic moment! John and I were to return the key for the White Bluff area, so we visited the site once more. I had always wanted to drive over the MS-44 bridge to look for kites and there was no traffic, so we actually stopped on the bridge. One kite was hunting north of the bridge and three were circling south of it. One of the three was a fledgling! At 11:36 AM we watched as the fledgling circled and got lower and lower over the water. I told John, "Watch the fledgling! It's going to bath or drink on the water!"

Like a pilot learning to fly and do touch and goes, the fledgling kept aborting the mission, unsure as to whether it could touchdown on the water and lift off again before running into a large and looming sandbar. It aborted at least three but probably four times and almost ran into the sandbar several times. Its fly skills were clearly still a little shaky, but it did succeed in bathing on the river. I told John, "That's the first time in 30-something years of studying kites, that I have ever seen a fledgling bathing and drinking." John wrapped up the observation by saying, "Why didn't we think to video it?"

As for the White Bluff tagged male, he remains local, and he has visited several other kite nesting neighborhoods upriver from where we captured him. His last location, on July 29, is just 4 miles north of where he nested, possibly indicating that he is still attending his fledgling. His two farthest foraging areas that he frequents are 7 miles to the south-southwest and 10 miles to the north-northwest of where he nested. The foraging locations included 14 over hayfields and 6 over pine plantations.

OAS would like to acknowledge its partners on the Swallow-tailed Kite use of working forests project: American Bird Conservancy, Avian Research and Conservation Institute, International Paper, Weyerhaeuser, Mississippi State University, and McDaniel Charitable Foundation. For more updates on tagged kites and their movements, visit Orleans Audubon Society's YouTube channel or the OAS Facebook page.

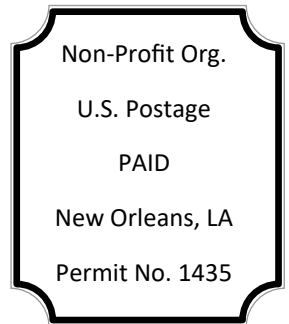


Tracks of the White Bluff male, depicting his breeding home range



The SE Louisiana Chapter of the  
**National Audubon Society**

Orleans Audubon Society  
3623 Nashville Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125



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