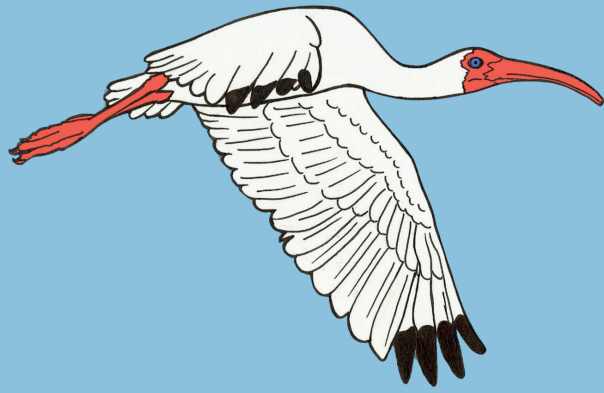


# the Ibis



Newsletter of the Orleans Audubon Society  
Volume: XXXVIII Issue: 3

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
February/March 2025

## Feb-March 2025 Programs

### Audubon Coastal Bird Surveys in Louisiana

Speaker: Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion  
Tuesday, February 18  
6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program  
Community Church Unitarian Universalist, 6690 Fleur de  
Lis (Lakeview).

Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion is Audubon Delta's Coastal Bird Technician, an Orleans Audubon Society Board Member, and a Committee Member for the Louisiana Bird Records Committee. Working primarily in Southeastern Louisiana, Chloe has been monitoring coastal populations of breeding Least Terns, Common Nighthawks, and Wilson's Plovers for the past 3 years. She is also responsible for coordinating the Audubon Coastal Bird Survey in Louisiana and running the New Orleans Rooftop-Nesting Bird Program in partnership with Orleans Audubon Society.

The Audubon Coastal Bird Survey (ACBS) provides scientists with valuable data for addressing conservation needs of coastal waterbirds and shorebirds along the Gulf Coast. As Audubon Delta's Coastal Bird Technician for Louisiana, Chloe is responsible for conducting and coordinating these surveys in coastal Louisiana during the spring, fall and winter. During this presentation, you will discover what it takes to conduct a coastal bird survey, learn some shorebird ID tips, and find out how you can become involved as a volunteer surveyor!



Baird's Sandpiper (top) and Whimbrel (bottom) by Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion

## The Little Things that Run the World and Why They are the Coolest Critters of All

Speaker: Zack Lemann  
Tuesday, March 18  
6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program  
Community Church Unitarian Universalist, 6690 Fleur de Lis (Lakeview).

Zack Lemann was born and raised in New Orleans and attended Duke University, where he earned degrees in both History and Anthropology. He began working for the Audubon Nature Institute in 1992 and has been there ever since. For both the old and newly renovated Audubon Insectarium, Zack served as the point person for animal acquisitions and scientific content and also worked on exhibit design ideas. Zack's current responsibilities as curator include overseeing exhibits and presentation areas using live animals.

With a combination of zoo/museum experience, biology master's degree coursework from the University of New Orleans, field experience and personal contacts with professionals in various natural history fields, Zack has gained a wealth of information about insects and their relatives. Sharing this knowledge has been a passion of his for over three decades, and Zack is now a requested speaker and presenter at events both in New Orleans and around the United States.

Zack's primary animal interest is in spiders, which he studied while in graduate school at the University of New Orleans. However, Zack is better known in local circles as a "bug chef." In addition to speaking about - and cooking - bugs at various Audubon Nature Institute events, he has been on national television programs as well, including "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "Today," and segments on Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel, and The Food Network, to name a few.

If you ask him a question about bugs, expect an enthusiastic answer...and you better grab a chair!



# OAS Birding Field Trips



- 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 events page of the Orleans Audubon Society website, so check <https://jjaudubon.net/events/> for updates.
- At the discretion of the leader(s), trips will be divided into groups if the number of attendees becomes too large.
- **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.

## **Grand Isle Winter Birds – All Day Trip**

Saturday, February 8, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at Moran's grocery/gas station 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)

## **Bayou Sauvage Urban National Wildlife Refuge – Half Day Trip**

Saturday, March 8, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the Ridge Trail parking lot on Chef Hwy: 17160 Chef Menteur Highway New Orleans, LA 70129. Immediately after crossing the Maxent Canal, look for the refuge sign and turn onto Ridge Trail Road.

Leaders: Jennifer and Tom Coulson 504-717-3544, [jacoulson@aol.com](mailto:jacoulson@aol.com)

## **Bonnet Carre Spillway – Half Day Trip**

Saturday, March 22, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the Norco Boat Launch. Take Airline Hwy (US 61) west, turn right onto the east Spillway levee, and turn left down to the boat launch. May need rubber boots.

Leader: Chris Brantley 985-237-5399, [chrisbrantley@charter.net](mailto:chrisbrantley@charter.net)

## **City Park-Couturie – Half Day Trip**

Saturday, April 5, 7:00 a.m.

Meet in the Couturie shell parking lot on Harrison Ave. between Marconi and the traffic circle in the park.

Leaders: John Keegan 504-296-9486 [keeganjohnadam@gmail.com](mailto:keeganjohnadam@gmail.com) and

Marcie Blanchard [marcieblanchard@yahoo.com](mailto:marcieblanchard@yahoo.com)

## **Grand Isle – All Day Trip**

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

Meet at Moran's grocery/gas station 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)

# Audubon Abita Bird Club Events

## Winter bird walk at the Abita Springs Nature Center

Saturday, February 15

7:30-10:00 a.m.

Please ride your bike, come with a friend, or park at the Post Office if the lot is full.

Location: Abita Springs Nature Center, 22315 Main Street, Abita Springs, LA 70420

## Adopt a bed at the Abita Nature Center

Saturday, March 18

Help us adopt a bed at the Abita Nature Center. Send me a message if you would like to donate plants, tools, bird feeders, or can come help prep a bird-friendly bed!

Location: Abita Springs Nature Center, 22315 Main Street, Abita Springs, LA 70420

## Swallow-tailed Kites

Tuesday, March 25

Talk by Swallow-tailed Kite expert, Dr. Jennifer Coulson

6:00-7:30 p.m.

Location: Abita Springs Town Hall, 22161 Level St, Abita Springs, LA 70420

## Birding by Ear with Dr. Donata Henry

Tuesday, April 29th

6:00-7:30 p.m.

Location (TBD): Abita Springs Town Hall, 22161 Level St, Abita Springs, LA 70420 **or** Abita Springs Nature Center, 22315 Main Street, Abita Springs, LA 70420

*To sign up for Audubon Abita Bird Club email announcements, send a request to Donata Henry: droome@tulane.edu*

# Nominating Committee Announcement!

OAS will elect officers in the spring of 2025 to serve a two-year term beginning on May 20. The Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations for its offices. Please contact a member of the Nominating Committee if you wish to nominate a candidate for the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer. **Nominations must be received prior to March 15.**

### Nominating Committee:

Glenn Ousset, Chair – 504-353-3412, gousset@bellsouth.net

Wendy Rihner – wrihner@gmail.com

John Nelson – johnnygnelsoniv@gmail.com



# Great Backyard Bird Count

## February 14-17th marks the 28th annual Great Backyard Bird Count!

Each year in February, birders around the world come together to observe and count as many birds as they can and report their findings. Data from this period accumulates in the eBird database, which scientist can use to assess global bird populations, as well as gain a snapshot of birds right before one of their annual migrations. So this February, go out to your favorite birding spots and join us for the Great Backyard Bird Count!

Find more info here:  
<https://www.birdcount.org/>



## Thank You to Sherry DeFrancesch! and welcoming a new editor of *The Ibis*

After serving as the Editor of *The Ibis* for 24 years and producing at least 96 issues, Sherry DeFrancesch is stepping down. She continues to serve OAS as Secretary, and on the Swallow-tailed Kite, Investment and Wild Bird Rescue committees. In her reign as Editor, Sherry improved the quality of *The Ibis*, both in terms of visual appeal and content. Sherry has passed the torch to Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion, who has graciously accepted and is producing this issue. So here's a huge "Thank you" to Sherry for all her many years of hard work and creativity, and a warm welcome to Chloe!

The upcoming issue of *The Ibis* will cover April and May. Any announcements of summer activities would also be appropriate. Submissions should be emailed to Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion: [chloe.sgvermillion@audubon.org](mailto:chloe.sgvermillion@audubon.org)



Sherry holding a young rescued Mississippi Kite

# Honoring the Cliftons in the creation of the Abita Springs Nature Center

By Dr. Donata Henry

Many of you may remember the beautiful riparian forest and wildlife gardens maintained by Walter and Olga Clifton, two life-long nature enthusiasts in the heart of Abita Springs. Among their numerous accomplishments, Walter and Olga maintained an extensive wildlife and hummingbird garden, including native and nectar-bearing plants, innumerable hummingbird feeders, a Chimney Swift tower and a platform on which Walter would regularly feed a Red-shouldered Hawk. They hosted an annual Hummingbird Festival where the public could purchase locally grown nectaring plants, encounter hundreds of migratory Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and observe hummingbird banding. Walter, the expert photographer, and Olga, the lively speaker, gave presentations all around the region on Butterflies of Louisiana, Hummingbirds of Louisiana, and Nesting Birds of Louisiana, filled with amazing images they had documented themselves, from nestling Turkey Vultures to the complete life stages of over a dozen butterflies. They also maintained and monitored Eastern Bluebird and Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes in The Nature Conservancy's Abita Flatwoods Preserve and Money Hill. Walter and Olga were long time supporters of The Nature Conservancy and helped establish the Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge. Abita Springs is fortunate to now continue their legacy through the establishment of the Abita Springs Nature Center, which will be opening to the public and begin programming outdoor events, speakers, and activities this spring. Stay tuned!

## Purple Martins Need Your Help!

**#1: We need a big turnout for both the Purple Martin "nuisance" hearing and trial at the Harahan City Hall, 6437 Jefferson Hwy, Harahan, LA 70123. On February 10th at 5:00 p.m.** there will be a hearing on all pending Motions regarding the Purple Martin nuisance case; If Motions are unsuccessful, a full trial is set for February 12th at 5:00 p.m. Your presence at both events may make the appointed Magistrate less likely to issue an unpopular ruling. A packed room of supporters will help the Stammers, a retired couple, and Purple Martins everywhere.

**#2: OAS member Sandy Rosenthal, founder of levees.org, has created a Facebook Page called "Harahan Residents and Supporters for Purple Martins."** Please join it to show your support for Carol and Andrew Stamm's colony of Purple Martin gourd houses.

**#3: Go birding anywhere in the Harahan area and report your bird list to eBird! Please do this as soon as possible.** If your eBird checklists are not set to be publicly available, please email a link to: OrleansAudubon@aol.com, and OAS will not divulge your name or birding location. If you find a good spot to bird in the Harahan area, please recommend it as an eBird Hotspot!



# Bird Entanglement: A Preventable Hazard

By Jennifer Coulson, John Nelson and Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion

Louisiana is often described as a fisherman's paradise. However, when discarded plastics and fishing tackle enter the environment, this paradise quickly transforms into a nightmare for birds. The good news is these wildlife hazards are 100% preventable. Herein, we discuss the most common types of entanglements, give local examples as illustrations, and provide easy solutions that all of us can adopt and promote.

Almost every species of vertebrate is susceptible to entanglement with plastics, netting and fishing tackle. In our area, we encounter wildlife entanglement cases most frequently in birds associated with water, including: anhingas, cormorants, gulls, terns, grebes, herons, egrets, Barred Owls, and Bald Eagles. Entanglement often renders the bird incapacitated and unable to fly or unable to open its bill to eat. Birds with a serrated edge to the bill, a common characteristic in piscivorous species, are particularly vulnerable to mandibular entanglements. The most widespread types of plastics birds encounter are fishing lines, trot lines, and plastic mesh used in landscaping to prevent soil erosion and as a lawn turf matrix. Fishing hooks, often attached to lures and lines, may cause additional injuries. But it's not just water birds and raptors that are affected, songbirds can become entangled too. Matthew Mullenix studied Loggerhead Shrikes nesting in Baton Rouge and discovered that parent shrikes sometimes incorporated fishing line or landscape mesh netting into their nests. In 2001, for example, 12% of the 43 nests surveyed contained fishing line, and nestlings became entangled and died at 5% of these nests.



Pied-billed Grebe entangled in turf mesh by Donata Henry.

All of us can help by cleaning up fishing tackle left behind by others. Jennifer and her husband, Tom, have seen so many instances of birds tangled in fishing line that they routinely visit popular fishing spots to clean up discarded fishing line and tackle. Sadly, they never come back empty handed. We recommend rallying volunteers to organize cleanups in local parks such as Audubon Park, City Park, and Lafreniere Park. We plan to reach out to support groups such as Friends of Louisiana Wildlife Refuges about cleaning up sites at Bayou Sauvage, Big Branch, and Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge. We intend to work with Pearl Riverkeeper to urge volunteers to focus on fishing tackle removal for the 2025 Pearl River Clean Sweep.

In the Pearl River Basin, old trot lines pose a real hazard to Barred Owls, and Jennifer even received one report of a Swallow-tailed Kite caught in a trot line. If you run a trot line, it is your responsibility to take it down when not in use. And if you encounter an old trot line, cut it down and dispose of it properly. People who fish should avoid casting in places where your line or rig is likely to become snagged or tangled. If your line becomes tangled, it's your duty to remove it. You owe it to wildlife! Fishermen may consider investing in an inexpensive lure retriever as well.

John has received several reports about and has rescued many wild entangled birds, including an Anhinga and two Pied-billed Grebes, which were caught in the plastic mesh netting used to grow and transport turf. This type of plastic turf support is truly a nightmare for birds, snakes, and other wildlife. If you are buying turf, make sure it is not grown in any kind of netting. Or if you already have this kind of turf, make sure the netting stays buried and well-covered. John has found several instances of this type of turf being used on area golf courses. If you see exposed mesh netting on a golf course, report it to us, or contact the managers directly to report the problem before it becomes hazardous to birds.



Regarding plastics, the plastic six-pack rings remain a big problem for wildlife, even though most are now designed to be easier to break apart. Even when disposed of properly, these light-weight plastics often blow out of garbage trucks and end up in the environment. The best way to protect wildlife from this type of entanglement is to cut up every single ring and hole before disposing. Helium balloon releases pose another deadly threat to our environment. Entanglement, usually in the ribbon, is a common hazard, and animals can also die from ingesting the deflated balloons. Balloon releases should be banned. Please discourage this practice and suggest wildlife friendly alternatives.

To pay tribute to individual birds and also help draw attention to the severity of the entanglement problem, we've assembled a list of some of our more recent encounters.

**Recent fishing line, tackle, and turf netting related rescues in the GNO area include:**

- Anhinga dangling from one wing by fishing line, Eastover, New Orleans East, 2023
- Barred Owl dangling from one wing by fishing line in Slidell, 2023
- 2 Barred Owls caught in trot lines in the Pearl River basin
- Laughing Gull dangling from one wing by fishing line in Lafreniere Park, 2023
- Nestling Bald Eagle that could not stand: his breast and one foot were caught in a treble hook, Metairie, 2020
- 2 Pied-billed Grebes entangled in turf mesh netting in Pontchartrain Park, 2024
- Pied-billed Grebe entangled in turf mesh netting, Abita Springs, 2024

**Birds found suffering from entanglement but which we could not catch:**

- 2 Anhingas in Audubon Park with fishing line or plastic turf mesh wrapped around bill
- Great Blue Heron with fishing line around bill in City Park
- Anhinga with fishing line wrapped around bill, line trailing lead weights in City Park

**Mortality cases which John documented from entanglement:**

- 1 dead Double-crested Cormorant hanging by fishing line in Pelican Park, 2025
- 1 dead Double-crested Cormorant hanging by fishing line near the pump station on Wilson Drive at Lake Pontchartrain, 2025
- 1 dead Anhinga hanging in fishing line



Dead Double-crested Cormorant entangled in fishing line by John Nelson.



Laughing Gull entangled in fishing line by Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion.

Education is key to preventing wildlife entanglement hazards. To further this cause, OAS has produced a "Wildlife-friendly fishing tips" flier which is available upon request. Fishing rodeos, such as the one held on the Bogue Chitto National Wildlife Refuge, may provide good opportunities for outreach. You may wish to check out OAS's YouTube video: "How You Can Help Birds" for further information about wildlife hazards and volunteering. See also the March-May 2024 issue of The Ibis for a related article "Louisiana Needs to Get the Lead Out of Hunting and Fishing" by Jennifer Coulson.



# Be a Part of Audubon Society

## Keep Your Membership Current!

### Join or Renew with the National Audubon Society and OAS:

Type into your browser bar or click on the National Audubon Society link below to join or renew your membership with National Audubon Society and Orleans Audubon Society. You will receive the award-winning Audubon Magazine and support Audubon's nation-wide bird conservation efforts. If you live within Orleans Audubon's service area (Washington, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, St. John the Baptist, Orleans, Terrebonne, Jefferson, St. Charles, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, and Lafourche Parishes), you will automatically join/renew with OAS when doing so with NAS. The minimum donation is \$20.00.

**Follow this link to renew:** <https://action.audubon.org/donate/chapter-membership?chapter=K00>

### Join or Renew with Orleans Audubon Society only:

OAS-only memberships expired on December 31. If you want all of your dues to support local conversation and education, you may select an "Orleans Audubon Society" only membership. In this case you will not receive Audubon Magazine and you will not become a member of the National Audubon Society. You will receive our quarterly newsletter *The Ibis* and may also opt to receive it electronically instead of by mail. Please donate a minimum of \$20.00 to become an OAS-only member.

**Join/renew at the \$100.00 donation level** and receive a fine art glicée of a Brown Pelican: Along with your usual membership, you will receive a signed and numbered limited edition fine art giclée of a watercolor painting "Pelican in Couturie Forest" by Joan Garvey (11" x 14" with 1" border).

**Join/renew at the \$150.00 donation level** and receive a fine art glicée of Swallow-tailed Kites: Along with your usual membership, you will receive a signed and numbered limited edition fine art giclée of a watercolor painting "Swallow-tailed Kites" by Joan Garvey (11" x 18" with 1" border, to fit a 16" by 20" frame). Joan's painting was inspired by William Kleinfelder's photograph.

**Join/renew at the \$200.00 donation level** and receive the fine art glicée of a Tri-colored Heron: Along with your usual membership, you will receive a signed and numbered limited edition fine art giclée of a watercolor painting "Louisiana Heron" by Joan Garvey (14" x 18" with 1" border; fits into a 16" x 20" frame).

**Become a Lifetime Member of OAS. Join/renew at the \$300.00 donation level** and receive a fine art glicée of a Reddish Egret: Along with your usual membership, you will receive a signed and numbered limited edition fine art giclée of a watercolor painting "Reddish Egret" by Joan Garvey (18" x 24" with 1" border).



Pelican in Couturie Forest by Joan Garvey



Swallow-tailed Kites by Joan Garvey



Louisiana Heron by Joan Garvey



Reddish Egret by Joan Garvey

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

Orleans Audubon Society  
3623 Nashville Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70125



To join or renew by check, clip the form below and mail it with your check, payable to "Orleans Audubon Society" to: Mary Joe Krieger, OAS Treasurer, 3623 Nashville Ave., New Orleans, LA 70125.

Please also provide your name, mailing address and email address.

To join or renew using PayPal, please visit: <https://jjaudubon.net/join/>

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**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

- \$20 OAS-only membership
- \$100 membership + pelican print
- \$150 membership + Swallow-tailed Kite print
- \$200 membership + heron print
- \$300 lifetime membership + egret print
- membership without print
- electronic *The Ibis* newsletter only