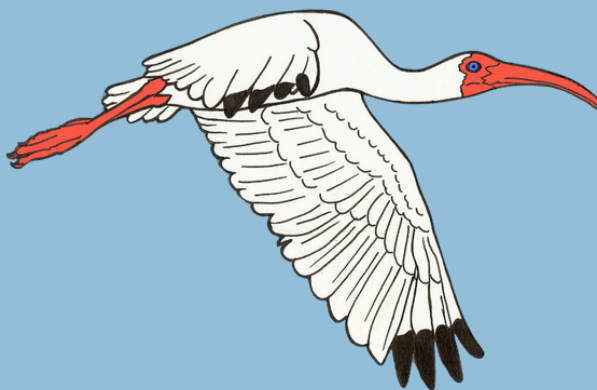


the Ibis



Newsletter of the Orleans Audubon Society
Volume: XIX Issue: 2

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
December 2025 to January/February 2026

Winter Programs

OAS Holiday Potluck!

Hosted by Kathleen Crago
Tuesday, December 9th
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
De Limon Club House, 801 Rue Dauphine

Bring your favorite dish or spirits to share and join us for some holiday cheer!

Directions and Parking Information: Enter at 801 Metairie Road, across from PJ'S. This street is Rue St. Ann-stay on Rue St. Ann until you come to the second stop sign. Park in front of the office on St. Ann or at the corners of the condos. The entrance is 801 Rue Dauphine



Woodlands Conservancy Bird Banding

Speaker: Jed Pitre
Tuesday, January 20th
6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program
Community Church Unitarian Universalist, 6690 Fleur de Lis (Lakeview)

Learn about the hows and whys of the bird banding project at The Woodlands Conservancy in Belle Chase!

Jed is the primary bander at Woodlands Conservancy in Belle Chasse, a position he has held since 2018. Jed has volunteered and worked as a field technician for nearly two decades on various avian-related projects for the National Park Service, Louisiana Audubon, Audubon Delta, American Bird Conservancy, Louisiana Bird Observatory, and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP). Jed earned his Master's degree in Natural Science from LSU, where he studied ornithology, conservation biology, and ecology. He recently retired in 2023 after teaching high school and college-level biology for 30 ½ years.



Jed with a banded Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler

Fifty Years of Change in Louisiana's Birdlife

Speaker: David Muth
Tuesday, February 24th
6:30 p.m. social, 7:00 p.m. program
Community Church Unitarian Universalist, 6690 Fleur de Lis (Lakeview)

The last major book on Louisiana's birds was published in 1974. In the 50+ years since, our state's birdlife has undergone profound change. For one thing, the list of species known from the state has grown by nearly 90 species, a pace that ensures that Louisiana will become one of the few states with over 500 species on our list. But we have also witnessed profound changes in bird populations. For our common migrants and residents this has mostly been negative, part of a depressing national trend. But we are also seeing explosions in populations of many species that were at a low point 50 years ago, but that are rebounding from the effects of pesticides and persecution. And we are also seeing southern species that were rare or unknown now occupying the state, presumably as a result of a warming planet and doubtless other factors not fully understood. A birder whose time afield roughly overlaps that fifty years surveys the changes, and relates a few birding stories in the process.



Photo: Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion

Audubon Abita Bird Club Events

Abita Bird Club CBC and Holiday Party

Tuesday, December 30th
6:30 p.m.
Location: Abita Springs Town Hall, 22161 Level St., Abita Springs, LA 70420

Join us at the Abita Town Hall for a holiday banquet following the Abita CBC!

What Tropical Birds are Telling Us: Is Reforestation in Northwestern Ecuador Working?

Presenter: Dr. Donata Henry
Tuesday, January 27th
6:00-7:30 p.m.
Location: Abita Springs Town Hall, 22161 Level St., Abita Springs, LA 70420

How do we know when conservation is working? What can we learn from the birds? In this talk Donata Henry will share the results of five years of mist-netting in an area of active forest management and restoration in the Choco Rainforest in Ecuador. And of course, you'll get a close-up look at some extraordinary tropical birds!

Dr. Donata Henry is a Senior Professor of Practice in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Tulane University. She co-teaches a tropical ecology field course in the Choco Rainforest at the FCAT (Fundacion para la Conservacion de los Andes Tropicales) Station where she guides students in investigating the ecology of tropical birds.

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. Please be considerate of others: if you have seen a bird, move out of the way for those behind you.
- **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.

Bayou Sauvage Urban National Wildlife Refuge -Winter Birding - Half-day Trip

Saturday, December 6th, 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.

Leader: John Nelson 504-258-1009, johnnygnelsoniv@gmail.com

Big Branch National Wildlife Refuge - Half-day Trip

Saturday, January 17th, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at Boy Scout Road parking lot. Take Hwy 190 2.7 miles east of Lacombe to Transmitter Rd; turn toward Lake Pontchartrain and drive to T-junction; turn right and go to the second parking lot on the left.

Leaders: Holly Morales 985-264-4406, holly@moralesmusic.com and Glenn Ousset (985) 353-3412, gousset@bellsouth.net

Joe Brown Park - Half-day Trip

Saturday, January 24th, 8:00 a.m.

Meet just inside Joe Brown Park. Exit I-10 at Read Blvd. and turn right on Read. The park entrance will be on the left about 1/2 mile down Read.

Leader: Shae Freeman 504-339-3055, 23joules@gmail.com

Audubon Park and the Fly - Half-day Trip

Saturday, February 21st, 8:00 a.m.

Meet inside the parking lot off Magazine St. near the Audubon golf clubhouse.

Leader: John Nelson 504-258-100, johnnygnelsoniv@gmail.com

Audubon's 126th Christmas Bird Count

The 126th Christmas Bird Count will be held from December 14, 2025 to January 5, 2026! Find a count near you and contact the count compiler to participate.

Ornithologist, Frank Chapman, and 26 other conservationists initiated the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) as a way of promoting conservation by counting, rather than hunting, birds on Christmas Day of 1900. Some counts have been running every year since then and the CBC now happens in over 20 countries in the western hemisphere. Now a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 120 years of community science involvement, it is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds.

The CBC count methods are simple. Each count takes place in an established 15-mile diameter circle, and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. All birds of all species are counted all day, giving an indication of the species diversity and total number of birds in the circle that day.

Participating in a CBC is one way that you can help birds. CBC data are used to document species population trends over time. CBC data have been used in hundreds of analyses, peer-reviewed publications, and government reports over the decades.

Christmas Bird Counts in Southeast Louisiana

Slidell CBC - Sunday, December 14th : *Compiler* - Wendy Rihner, wrihner@gmail.com, 330-348-3810

Grand Isle CBC - Tuesday, December 23rd : *Compiler* - Chris Brantley, chrisbrantley@charter.net

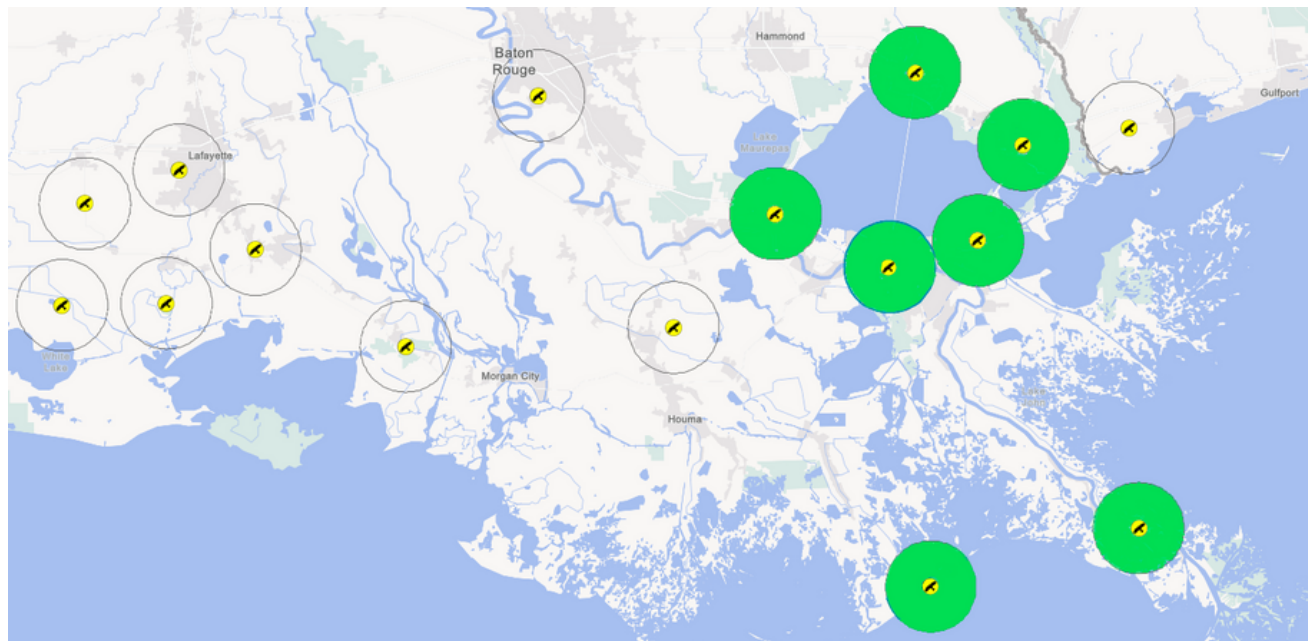
Reserve-Bonnet Carré Spillway CBC - Friday, December 26th: *Compiler* - Chris Brantley, chrisbrantley@charter.net

New Orleans CBC - Sunday, December 28th: *Compiler*- Glenn Ousset, gousset@bellsouth.net, 985-353- 3412

St. Tammany Parish CBC - Tuesday, December 30th: *Compiler* - Chris Brantley, chrisbrantley@charter.net

Venice CBC - Tuesday, December 30th: *Compiler* - John Nelson, johnnygnelsoniv@gmail.com

New Circle!! Crescent City CBC - Sunday, January 4th: *Compiler* - Shae Freeman, 23joules@gmail.co



Map of CBC survey areas, with Southeast LA circles highlighted in green.

Tracking Swallow-tailed Kite Use of the Barataria-Terrebonne Basin and Beyond – Final Report Highlights

By Dr. Jennifer Coulson

The Barataria and Terrebonne National Estuary Program (BTNEP) Swallow-tailed Kite tracking project has been highly successful, and we now know a lot more about kite use of the BTNEP service area. Working in partnership with BTNEP and the Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI), OAS identified, monitored and conserved more than 79 Swallow-tailed Kite activity centers in the Barataria-Terrebonne basin from 2023–2025. Activity centers (nest sites, breeding colonies, communal roosts and group foraging sites) were located and monitored using GPS-satellite technology, citizen science, and aerial, boat and ground surveys. From 2023–2025, we located: 20 nesting neighborhoods, 39 nesting sites, 8 roost sites and 12 foraging aggregations. OAS researchers also captured 1 adult kite, outfitting it with a GPS-satellite transmitter, and then tracked this “Belle River” individual. We then identified the Belle River kite’s nest and roost sites using her tracking data.

From 2023–2025, the Belle River female nested in St. Martin Parish. In 2023 she nested near the 21-inch Canal. In 2024 she nested deeper into the swamp, 6.4 miles to the south-southeast from her 2023 nest, near the 16-inch Canal. In 2025 she also nested near the 16-inch Canal, approximately 500 feet from her 2024 nest. Her nests were all successful, and she fledged at least one young each of the three years.

The non-breeding season tracks of the Belle River kite revealed her wintering grounds in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul near the Paraná River in Brazil and also a pre-migration range visited in 2024. On July 20, 2024, post-breeding, the Belle River kite initiated pre-migratory movements. She first spent a couple of days visiting known kite areas in the Barataria-Terrebonne Basin, including the vicinity of Bayou Sigur. Then she did something completely unexpected: on July 22 she headed north, flying over on the Homochitto River and Vicksburg, Mississippi. On the following day she visited the Big Black River, near where the “Slidell” kite we tagged in 2011 had visited during pre-migration. Then, for the next 11 days she held a temporary home range near Silver City, in Humphreys County, Mississippi, hunting along a channel off the Yazoo River.

This area provided her with great fields for hunting flying insects to fatten up before the long migration to the wintering ground. Belle’s pre-migration range was 235 miles north of where she nested!

OAS’s landowner-manager outreach resulted in discussions about kite conservation and obtaining access to 32 properties in 6 parishes, amounting to 7,657 acres of municipal and privately owned land within the Barataria-Terrebonne Basin proper. This included nine property owners and managers covering 32 properties in 6 parishes: Assumption, Iberville, St. James, St. Charles, St. Martin and Terrebonne. The vast majority of the acreage was privately owned (92.1%), with 7.2% owned by St. Martin Parish School Board and 0.7% owned by the City of Donaldsonville. OAS used the kite conservation recommendations brochure to encourage land stewards to enhance their land for kites, and instruct them in how to minimize or avoid disturbance and other threats to kites. Outreach also included letters, texts and phone calls to, and visits with land owners and stewards.



Photo: Rebecca Miller

Public outreach is a critical component of this project, especially because some uninformed people either fear or harbor hatred for Swallow-tailed Kites and shoot them. People have called me to report shooting events or ask if it is legal to shoot kites. In most instances people assume that the kite circling slowly overhead is after their backyard chickens, pet rabbit or Chihuahua, when, in fact, the kite is searching for a tree frog, wasp nest or baby mockingbird. On one of the boat surveys, Zach Miller told me that some of the locals he spoke with really disliked kites because they had witnessed kites hunting small birds. He was pretty certain from one conversation that the person had no reservations about shooting kites.

We employed a variety of proven conservation outreach and education methods to engage the general public in Swallow-tailed Kite conservation. OAS appealed to the public through media campaigns to: request sighting reports, recruit project volunteers, curtail illegal shooting, and report interesting findings. Newspaper and magazine articles reached over 179,400 people and were highly successful at increasing public awareness and were a great means of soliciting sighting reports and project volunteers. OAS also used multiple digital and print media communication platforms to reach an additional 21,800 people. Social media platforms included YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn. OAS produced four short videos highlighting movements and tracks of the Belle River tagged kite. OAS also provided project updates in *The Ibis*.

Dr. Coulson also gave seven environmental education presentations about the project to the community. These lectures reached 162 people, from high school to college students, and The Nature Conservancy's conservation professionals and land managers. During these presentations, Dr. Coulson discussed the Great Horned Owl as an apex predator of the Swallow-tailed Kite and exhibited her educational ambassador, "Hamy" the Great Horned Owl. She used these opportunities to request sighting reports and encourage volunteerism.

One of the more effective and long-lasting aspects of this conservation project was our recruitment and training of citizen scientists. OAS recruited and trained more than 35 citizen science volunteers. These citizen scientists included an interesting mix of people from birders and wildlife photographers to college students and professors, state and federal biologists, fishermen, crawfish harvesters and recreational boaters, but also a stay-at-home mom and her homeschooled children. Training included in person meetings, phone calls, texts, emails, and YouTube videos and the kite conservation brochure. OAS supplied these volunteers with copies of the kite conservation brochure and sighting request fliers to distribute to the public.

Future work in the Barataria-Terrebonne Basin will include searching for, monitoring and conserving kite activity centers and monitoring "Belle River" until her transmitter stops reporting or she dies. OAS also plans to deploy a GPS-satellite transmitter on another adult kite in 2026.



Photo: Rebecka Miller

OAS would like to acknowledge the project personnel: Jennifer Coulson, Thomas Coulson, John Nelson and Sherry DeFrancesch of OAS, Natalie Waters of BTNEP, and Ken Meyer and Gina Kent of ARCI. Paul and Ken Chadwick provided invaluable assistance with land owner liaisons. Zach and Rebecka Miller took us out in their boats, helped capture the Belle River kite, monitored roosts and nests, and photographed kites. Gary Meyers and a fellow wildlife photographer found and monitored one of the Swallow-tailed Kite nests at Lake Martin. Be sure to check out Gary's Facebook profile, "ImageHunter1 Nature Photography – Gary Meyers" to see his spectacular kite photos.

OAS's Many Accomplishments in 2025

By Dr. Jennifer Coulson

2025 has proven to be a difficult year for Orleans Audubon Society and the environmental community at large. Many important federal environmental programs were cut, Louisiana canceled its Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion coastal restoration project, and OAS lost one of its long-time leaders, Joelle Finley. Nonetheless, OAS managed some pretty incredible achievements, and some truly wonderful people have stepped up to fill Joelle's shoes: Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion is now Vice-President, Dr. Donata Henry joined the Board of Directors and is now the Program Chair, and John Nelson saved the day by taking over as Field Trip Chair. In addition, Ken Harris has been helping out significantly by co-leading field trips and giving a presentation in November.

In terms of member services, which are open to the public, OAS offered monthly program meetings, birding field trips and published *The Ibis* newsletter quarterly. *The Ibis*, available both digitally and in print, included articles on human-wildlife conflict, coastal restoration, citizen science, the creation of a working forest preserve, and the new Abita Nature Center. OAS held 15 program meetings, reaching 520 people. Programs ranged from Erik Johnson's Zoom talk "Re-greening the developed world" to Zach Lemann's in-person talk "The Little Things that Run the World and Why They are the Coolest Critters of All" to Pippin Frisbie-Calder's "Wetlands in Relief" which ended with a mini print-making session. OAS also held 16 birding field trips, with 330 participants. Popular field trip destinations began at Fontainebleau State and included three trips to the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, two trips to Couturie Forest in City Park, and two to Grand Isle.



OAS members learn printmaking from Pippin Frisbee-Calder. Photo: John Nelson

2025 was an active year for OAS's environmental education: OAS offered at least 8 programs and reached more than 210 people. Wendy Rihner and Jennifer Coulson gave presentations at the Jefferson Parish Library – East Bank Regional Library, Tulane University, Longue Vue House & Gardens, and others. Wendy also presented at the Coastal Environmental Science Meet-up Fair, and the William Bartram celebration. The Native Plants for Birds Campaign, spearheaded by Wendy Rihner, held at least 3 plant sales, raising a whopping \$1,525 for future 'natives' projects! In 2025 OAS started the Youth Environmental and Conservation Training Scholarship Program and awarded \$1,450 to budding high school environmentalists and conservationists, impacting 40 students.

OAS participated in two local birding festivals, reaching 185 people. OAS has been involved with the Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration for decades. This year David Muth gave a keynote address about coastal restoration, and John Nelson and Chloe St. Germain-Vermillion each led 3 birding tours. David was also awarded a plaque by the Grand Isle Community Development Team for the many years of expertise and service he has dedicated to the island. Glenn Ousset represented OAS at the St. Bernard Bird Festival by leading a bird walk, and Chloe also assisted with the migratory songbird banding demonstration at this event.



David receiving an appreciation award from Jean Landry in Grand Isle. Photo: John Nelson

OAS takes its responsibility as an environmental and conservation leader in the community seriously. Although our most important action in 2025 was not successful, joining the lawsuit to try to keep the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion coastal restoration project going was the right thing to do. OAS worked for better protections for Whooping Cranes (see Charlie Pfeifer's article). A sign of the times, OAS also wrote or signed on to 19 environmental advocacy letters addressed to state and federal authorities, possibly the highest number of letters ever. Read more about OAS's work protecting Purple Martins and those who provide nesting structures for them in this issue.

OAS's many bird monitoring and conservation projects reached new heights in 2025. The Swallow-tailed Kite project extended its reach all over Louisiana this year thanks to a new grant from the American Bird Conservancy and International Paper. We expanded the survey and conservation work into the Natchitoches area but also continued to work in the Barataria-Terrebonne Basin, as well as the Bogalusa Mill's fiber procurement area, which also includes southwestern Mississippi. Landowner-manager kite conservation outreach included offering four Bird Friendly Forestry Workshops in Natchitoches, Tangipahoa Parish and along the Pearl River in Mississippi.



Participants of the Bird Friendly Forestry workshop. Photo: Jenn Coulson

On the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, OAS volunteers conducted South Point Migration Surveys and monitored one of the rookeries. OAS continued to monitor Bald Eagle nests in Louisiana and Mississippi and produced a report to Southeast Louisiana Refuges about the three Bald Eagle nests we monitored on Bayou Sauvage. OAS partnered with Audubon Delta, providing volunteers for the Rooftop Nesting Bird Program and for Audubon Coastal Bird Surveys. In 2025, OAS also continued its wild bird rescue work, co-led by John Nelson and Sherry DeFrancesch. In addition to helping more than 75 distressed wild birds, transporting most to licensed facilities, OAS volunteers also advised the public on a variety of wild bird issues. 2025 was a particularly bad year for West Nile virus: at least 40% of the rescues were corvids suspected of having active cases.

One of OAS's main citizen science projects involves helping to organize and promote area Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). In 2025, seven area CBCs are projected to reach 105 people. Chris Brantley is a workhorse, serving as the compiler of three CBCs, and kudos to Shae Freeman for starting up a new CBC in the Greater New Orleans area! (Details on CBCs are provided in this issue.)

In addition to all of the above, as a 100% volunteer organization, OAS engaged 85+ volunteers who donated more than 2,500 hours of service! OAS would like to take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank everyone who gave a presentation, brought snacks to a meeting, led a field trip, contributed an article to The Ibis, or rescued, monitored or surveyed birds and nests, or participated in an environmental advocacy campaign.

THE JAILBIRDS OF HARAHAN

By Andrew C. Wilson, OAS Conservation Chair (JD, LLM Env. Law, Tulane Law School)



For more than two years, the Mayor and the City of Harahan, La. have conducted a relentless campaign to penalize Andrew and Carol Stamm for conditions allegedly caused by the Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) which return annually from South America to reestablish their long-standing, but seasonal and lawful, breeding colony in the Stamms' backyard. Each year, Purple Martins return to occupy the Stamms' nesting gourds which the Stamms have maintained at their home for more than thirty-six (36) years in accordance with conservation practices endorsed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, and leading ornithological organizations. There were no complaints about the birds until Stephen Peyronnin, now a neighbor, recently moved in across the street.

The First Prosecution

Although most of the Stamms' neighbors love the birds, based upon the written complaints of Stephen Peyronnin and a handful of disgruntled neighbors he contacted, sent to the City Council in May 2023, the City previously charged the Stamms for an alleged nuisance theory in, *City of Harahan v. Stamm*, Case No. 2532. The complainants had alleged that droppings from Purple Martins are landing on their cars and outdoor property but have presented no scientific proof to support their claims. So, the Stamms were arraigned for the criminal misdemeanor of maintaining a public nuisance. A trial then took place before the existing City Magistrate in the Regulatory Section of the Mayor's Court.

The Magistrate concluded that the Purple Martins were a nuisance, but oddly, after issuing his decision he concluded that he did not have jurisdiction to hear the case. This made little sense. He then transferred the case back to the City Council which originally had the case, in accordance with the law in effect at that time. The Council then changed the law to provide for new procedures as well as jurisdiction before the Mayor's Court. The existing Magistrate then recused himself from further proceedings because he had already issued a formal opinion in the case and as a result might appear biased if he proceeded with a new trial on the same issue.

The Second Prosecution

In August 2024, the Stamms were once again summoned to the Mayor's Court for an arraignment where they again pleaded not guilty. The City then appointed a Special Magistrate and a Special Prosecutor to pursue charges against the Stamms. Oddly, these paid appointments would eventually cost the City over \$20,000, at a time when the Fox News/channel 8 was reporting that the City of Harahan was broke. In response to the renewed charges, the Stamms filed numerous pre-trial Motions seeking a dismissal of the case, including a Motion to Quash or Dismiss arguing that the new law was an unconstitutional ex post facto law since it was enacted after the Stamms had already been charged. On March 24, 2025, the newly appointed Special Magistrate Stephen Petit agreed and dismissed the case with prejudice, with the obvious finding that the City had unlawfully sought to charge the Stamms under an ex post facto amendment to Harahan City Ordinance Section 10-8.

The Third Prosecution

Undeterred by the adverse ruling, on June 4, 2025, less than three months after that dismissal, the Defendants were served by the City with a new Violation Notice alleging that "multiple Purple Martin houses in rear yard" were "causing a nuisance to abutting neighbors." The notice ordered the Stamms to "relocate bird houses from rear yard ... to a remote location" by June 15, 2025. This was odd since neither the Mayor nor his Court has the authority to issue injunctive relief ordering citizens to do anything. Later that month, a subsequent Inspection Notice on June 13, 2025, directed the Defendants to comply with Section 10-8(b), which governs the sanitary removal and disposal of animal feces. However, the Notice failed to identify any factual basis for the alleged violation or articulate any specific abatement procedure.

Abatement of the Nuisance

Of particular concern is the fact that since the inception of this City's prosecution of Defendants for maintaining the nesting gourds, the Defendants have made significant, good faith efforts to abate any alleged nuisance. Section 10-8(b) provides that nuisances "by defecation" are to be remedied by removal of all feces and disposal in a sanitary manner. To that end, the Stamms had arranged for and offered bi-weekly professional pressure washing of the affected areas and offered to purchase car-wash memberships for each neighboring resident during the Purple Martin's Louisiana migratory season. These lawful, sanitary measures directly addressed the only abatement duty imposed by Section 10-8(b) and, in fact, offered far beyond what the Ordinance requires.

Still, the disgruntled neighbors refused these reasonable abatement offers and instead demanded that the Defendants remove or relocate all or a prohibitive number of nesting structures-an act that would destroy active nests, violate the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act which bars occupied nest disturbance, eliminate nesting sites for future returning Purple Martins, and, contravene the City's own self-imposed "Bird Sanctuary" moniker officially recognized by Harahan City Ordinance. Rather than enforce Section 10-8(b) as written, or acknowledge the Defendants' proposed Abatement and compliance, the City once again chose to pursue criminal prosecution, apparently siding with the complainants, by demanding removal and relocation of the structures as the only permissible abatement measure.

Significantly, the City did not even attempt to follow the mandatory bird nuisance abatement procedures prescribed by City Ordinance Section 10-5, which involve meeting with the Audubon Society and local Garden Clubs to devise a fair solution. The City, instead, simply sided with the complainants, which was not unexpected, since the case is being tried in the Mayor's Court and the Mayor has already stated on the record that he would have killed the birds by feeding them Alka-Seltzer, if he had the opportunity.

More Recusals

So, the Stamms appeared once again for their arraignment in August of 2025, at which time they were advised that both the City Attorney and the presiding Magistrate had recused themselves as they felt their association with the City Council and/or the facts of the case might create an appearance of impropriety. The Stamms were then summoned once again on October 9, 2025, for yet another arraignment, but this time before the same Special counsel and Special Magistrate as in the second prosecution, and once again for the same alleged nuisance offense.

Thereafter, the Stamms once again filed more Motions and Exceptions seeking the dismissal of the charges, including a Motion to Quash or dismiss based upon double jeopardy since they were being tried a third time for the same offence. These were/are all set to be heard at once on November 13, 2025. A trial date was also set to follow shortly thereafter, on December 17, 2025, as the Special Magistrate had made clear to the Stamms that the case was to be decided well before the Purple Martins return in early February. At that time, based upon the what appears to date to be the inevitable trajectory of this case, the Purple Martins will find they no longer have homes in which to nest. If that occurs it may essentially be a death sentence waiting for them at the end of their long journey from South America.

Special Magistrate and the Mayor

Meanwhile, the Stamms just learned that the Special Magistrate did not disclose the fact that he has previously represented the Mayor and/or the City in multiple matters. The matters include the Mayor's long and involved divorce proceeding among the following matters:

1. Tina Miceli (former Mayor of Harahan) vs. Tim Baudier (24th JDC Case No. 789-112) Category: Injunction, Expropriation, Habeas Corpus

Stephen M. Petit - Attorney of record for Tim Baudier

Matter dismissed 12/9/2018

2. Timothy L Baudier St vs Kristen Quinlan Baudier (24th JDC Case No. 663-427)

Stephen M. Petit - Attorney of record for Tim Baudier on 11/18/2010 when Baudier files for custody modification

A Final Judgment was entered on Jan 9, 2013

3. Mary Erler versus City of Harahan (24th JDC Case No. 757-888)

On March 12, 2019, Stephen M. Petit enrolls as Counsel of Record as City Attorney for the City of Harahan.

Clearly, the Special Magistrate's long association and employment with the Mayor created an obvious appearance of impropriety if he were to continue to preside over these proceedings. As a result, the Stamms have moved that he should be recused from presiding over any further proceedings involving the Mayor's relentless war upon the Purple Martins and the Stamms.

All of the pre-trial Motions filed on behalf of the Stamms including the recusal Motion were set for hearing before the Special Magistrate on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 5pm. The Special Magistrate refused to recuse himself, claiming the Mayor had no influence over the proceedings and could have presided himself, so it made no difference who presided which made no sense, given the Mayor's obvious bias. The Magistrate then denied all the Stamms' Motions, including the Motion based upon double jeopardy. The Stamms will now file a Petition for a Writ of Mandamus in the 24th JDC court in Gretna, seeking an order requiring the recusal Motion to be heard by a new judge. If granted all the Motions will be reheard.

The SE Louisiana Chapter of the

National Audubon Society

Orleans Audubon Society

3623 Nashville Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70125



Giving Tuesday & Year-end Giving
Giving Tuesday is Tuesday, December 2nd!

You can help OAS achieve its mission to conserve the wildlife and wild places of the southeastern U.S. and to foster an appreciation of nature. Please remember OAS on Giving Tuesday on December 2nd and also in your year-end donations. OAS has a lot of exciting projects that need funding! OAS volunteers capture, provide temporary care for and transport wild birds in need of help to licensed wildlife veterinarians and rehabilitators. Our Conservation Committee advocates for coastal restoration, scenic rivers, strengthening the Endangered Species Act, proper siting of wind farms and other energy facilities. OAS hopes to raise funds to continue its environmental-conservation youth scholarship program and expand the Native Plants for Birds campaign. We need to raise matching funds to rebuild the boardwalk at the Marguerite Moffett Audubon Sanctuary and repair the Bald Eagle/Osprey nest platforms at the sanctuary. We also need funding to help defray the cost of monitoring Bald Eagle nests, conducting coastal bird surveys, and monitoring and conserving rooftop nesting bird colonies.

If you like what we're doing, and want to contribute to local environmental education, advocacy, and conservation, please support OAS. If you wish to earmark your donation for one of OAS's projects, please contact Mary Joe or Jennifer and we will designate your donation accordingly.

OAS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and as such, your donation may be tax deductible. **If donating by check, make the check payable to "Orleans Audubon Society" and mail it to: Mary Joe Krieger, OAS Treasurer, 3623 Nashville Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70125. Or send a donation using the "Donate" button on the OAS website via PayPal. You may also wish to donate through a Donor Advised Fund.**