

# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XXXV, Number 4

4th Quarter, 2008

## Peveto Woods Weathers The Storm(s)

*I wish to thank Victoria Bayless for her fine job of managing Peveto Woods and serving as sanctuary committee chairman for the past 6 years. She and her committee did a wonderful job of maintaining the sanctuary and coordinating improvements for the benefit of birds as well as all the people that have enjoyed visiting Peveto Woods.*

**H**urricane Rita produced a huge amount of work for the committee and clean up volunteers. Their hard work was starting to show real rewards until Hurricane Ike hit in September.

I agreed to take a turn with the responsibilities starting last May. The summer consisted of working with the grass cutting and helping the winter plantings through their first summer. Plans for a pond were in the works and I was hoping to have something for the fall migrants. However, Hurricane Ike brought a 12 foot storm surge along with high winds into Cameron Parish. The salt water washed over Peveto Woods



The Leonard East Memorial bench has now survived both Hurricanes Rita and Ike

Sanctuary, downing many trees, and covering much of the forest floor with a thick layer of sand. The debris that washed into the sanctuary will require some clean up days, but it is not as bad as the debris following Rita. It will take time to determine the damage done to the vegetation. Many of the trees and under story appear badly burnt from the salt water. Hopefully, many of the oaks will again survive.

The sand along the beach front washed into the sanctuary and about 100 feet of sanctuary was lost to the beach. The under brush and dying trees that bordered the beach front were swept away. Fortunately, most of the sanctuary is still there and will recover. It will take a few years to become thick and green again, but we learned from Rita that with time it will recover.

A clean up day is scheduled for Saturday, November 15th. The main effort will be to remove debris and re-establish walking paths. The water lines seem to be fine and some work may be done on setting up the pond. If you are interested in helping and wish more information, please contact me by phone or e-mail.

Dave Patton  
BRAS Sanctuary  
Committee Chairman  
wdpatton@cox.net  
home 337 232-8410

More photos of Peveto Woods and Cameron can be seen at [http://www.pbase.com/pattonpix/cameron\\_post\\_ike](http://www.pbase.com/pattonpix/cameron_post_ike)



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### The Barred Owl

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## President's Chip Notes

**D**ear BRAS members,

Thank you for your donations to our 2008 fundraising letter. So far we have raised \$7977--this is an increase from last year! We appreciate your generosity, and will be letting you know in future Barred Owl issues how the funds are spent. With permission, we are listing those BRAS members and friends who have made a contribution on page seven of this Barred Owl. If you haven't made your contribution yet and want to-- It isn't too late. Please consider making a year end donation to BRAS. **Again, thank you, thank you, thank you!**

was declined. They had many more requests for funding than funds. However, through board member Dave Cagnolatti, we have approached a corporate sponsor for the education program. This sponsorship will help defray costs associated with purchasing *Audubon Adventures* for the classroom. While the details haven't been worked out yet, this is exciting news—more on this in our next newsletter.

I hope to see you at the next speaker program or at one of the upcoming fieldtrips. We appreciate your involvement and support.

All the best,

*Harriett Pooler*

BRAS' grant application to the  
Baton Rouge Area Foundation

## 2009 BRAS MEMBERSHIP PATCHES ARE HERE!

**D**onna Dittmann graciously agreed to put paint to canvas and create a beautiful Golden-winged Warbler for BRAS! It turned out fabulous! In addition to being a well known birder and ornithologist at LSU, Donna is a talented artist. Her work has been exhibited and published in many venues including LOS and *Birding*. She donates much of her artwork to support conservation organizations and BRAS appreciates her generosity.



**BRAS is ready for your  
2009 memberships  
with these beautiful  
new patches!!**

# COME FLY INTO OUR FALL PROGRAM!

**BRAS will be hosting** our Fall Program at the LSU Museum of Natural Science on Wednesday, November 19th from 7-9 pm. Two guest speakers are on our agenda for the evening along with light refreshments and wine. Both speakers are part of our birding community in and around the Baton Rouge Area and are

delighted to share their knowledge with us. Carol Foil, a hummingbird bander, and Danny Heitman, an Advocate columnist, will be our guests of honor. Please read on to find out more about each of our presenters.

- Lindsay Seely, BRAS Programs Chair

## OPERATION RUBYTHROAT IN COSTA RICA

**H**ave you ever wished you could follow your hummingbirds as they leave in the fall on their amazing southward migration? Bill Hilton, Jr. of **Operation Rubythroat** has turned such a wish into a reality and into a scientific project of real discovery. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, as it turns out, are little studied on their wintering grounds ... and it is surprising to learn that more is known about those few unusual individuals who stay on our gulf coast to over-winter than has been known about them on their normal wintering grounds. Bill and his Costa Rican

collaborator, Ernesto Carman Jr, are changing all that.

Ernesto is a Tico bird guide and he set things in motion by sharing with Bill his discovery that hordes of wintering Ruby-throats feed in the aloe vera plantations in Guanacaste Province, in dry northwestern Costa Rica. Since that surprising discovery, Bill has been able to finance banding studies in the area by enlisting the help of many North American hummer enthusiasts through "Operation Rubythroat in Costa Rica". Every winter since 2005, Bill has taken groups of 10 or so 'citizen scientists' to Guanacaste Province to participate in his banding

studies there. (You can read about the project in great detail at [www.hiltonpond.org](http://www.hiltonpond.org))

Last winter, Baton Rouge Audubon member Carol Foil joined the first of the two 2008 expeditions to Guanacaste. At our meeting on November 19th, Carol is going to share her experiences and some photographs as well as tell you why her group, 'The Crazy '08s,' is the most accomplished bunch of citizen scientists ever to have accompanied Bill.

## "A SUMMER OF BIRDS: JOHN JAMES AUDUBON AT OAKLEY HOUSE"

**D**anny Heitman is an award-winning columnist for *The Advocate* (Baton Rouge) and a member of *The Advocate's* editorial board. He has contributed essays to *Smithsonian*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and other national publications and recently won the *In Character* prize for editorial and opinion writing.

Hailed by Audubon scholar Christoph Irmscher as a "spectacular feat," Danny's book chronicles the pivotal summer that the famous bird artist spent at Oakley House in St. Francisville, a summer that did much to make Audubon the man he became. Written for a general audience, "A Summer of Birds" includes eye-droppingly beautiful Audubon pictures from LSU's Hill Memorial Collection, lively historical pictures from Oakley's archive, and present-day photos by renowned photographer Lori Waselchuk.

**Books will be available for sale after Danny's presentation. If you are not familiar with the location of the museum, you can access the following website at [www.lsu.edu/sumns](http://www.lsu.edu/sumns) or call 225-578-2855. We look forward to seeing you there!**

## BRAS FIELDTRIPS

To pre-register for any BRAS Fieldtrip, contact Robert McLaughlin via email at [20legend@cox.net](mailto:20legend@cox.net) or by phone, during business hours, at 225-926-2223. Updated fieldtrip information can be found on our website at [braudubon.org](http://braudubon.org)

### October: Saturday, 10/18/08

Come join Devin Bosler for a trip to the Sherburne WMA South Farm Complex to look for fall migrants. The South Farm Complex has wonderful habitat diversity and we should see a wide variety of Sparrows, Warblers and water birds. We will meet at 6 a.m. at Coffee Call on College Dr. and we will carpool to the birding site. Please pre-register.

### November: Saturday, 11/1/08

Come join Richard Gibbons on a field trip to Beech Grove Plantation in East Feliciana Parish to look for fall migrants. Beech Grove Plantation is an 8000 acre spread consisting of upland hardwoods, swamp and open field habitats. We will meet at Coffee Call on College Dr. at 6 a.m. and we will carpool to the birding site. Bring insect repellent, hat, water and lunch for a picnic at the Plantation. Please pre-register.

### December: Saturday, 12/13/08

Join Dr. Van Remsen, renowned LSU Ornithologist, for a behind-the-scenes tour of the LSU Museum of Natural History! He will give us an insider's tour of LSU's extensive collection of birds and bird skins. LSU's collection is the fourth largest university based collection in the world behind Harvard, Berkeley and the University of Michigan. The tour of the Museum will begin at 2 p.m. Please pre-register.

### January: Date TBA

Join Dennis Demcheck on a leisurely half-day outing to three or four Baton Rouge homes to observe wintering hummingbirds. This trip will be two weeks after the Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count, so we will have a reasonably good idea of where the best birds are located. However, since the date has not yet been set for the CBC please check our website, [braudubon.org](http://braudubon.org) for updates. The trip will visit homes with hummingbirds that have a high probability of being easily seen. We will meet at 8 a.m. at Coffee Call on College Dr. Please pre-register.



# Atchafalaya Basin IBA First to be Recognized in Louisiana

by Melanie Driscoll

**T**he National Audubon Society recognized the Atchafalaya Basin as an Important Bird Area (IBA) on May 10th 2008, International Migratory Bird Day. This was the first such recognition for any IBA in the state of Louisiana. The IBA recognition ceremony took place at 1:30 p.m. at the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area headquarters on Whiskey Bay Road during Step Outside Day, and was open to the public.

At the IBA recognition ceremony, Paul Kemp, Vice-President of Audubon's Gulf Coast Initiative, spoke about the importance of the site to birds. Representatives of the major public landowners in the Atchafalaya Basin each spoke about their investment in and management of lands within the Atchafalaya Basin. These individuals included Michael Seymour of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Neil Lalonde of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Danny Breaux of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The largest remaining tract of bottomland hardwood forest in the United States, the Atchafalaya Basin is gaining recognition as an IBA due to its vital importance for



Paul Kemp, Director of the Gulf Coast Initiative, National Audubon Society, gives an Important Bird Area sign to Danny Breaux, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at the Atchafalaya Basin IBA recognition ceremony, May 10th, 2008 at Sherburne Wildlife Management Area headquarters.

breeding populations of Northern Parula, Kentucky, Hooded, Prothonotary, Swainson's and Yellow-throated Warblers, as well as Swallow-tailed Kites. America's Great River Swamp, as it is known, is also a migratory stopover site for globally important concentrations of more than 2,000 Wood Storks in the fall. The forest is also a migratory corridor for hundreds of thousands of Neotropical migratory songbirds, such as the Audubon WatchList Wood Thrush. The site is visited by hundreds of birders annually, as well as numerous hunters and anglers.

National Audubon looks forward to working in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other interested organizations and private landowners, in promoting sound bird conservation practices on the site for years to come. The Important Bird Areas program identifies significant bird habitat across Louisiana based on data reviewed by a technical committee of 18 experts using peer-reviewed

scientific criteria. The IBA Program is a voluntary effort to help willing private and public land managers provide the best stewardship practices for bird conservation on their property. It is a non-regulatory program providing sound scientific information to help build conservation partnerships.

**STEP OUTSIDE** is a national program administered by the National Shooting Sports Foundation to increase participation in outdoor sports. This year's event ran from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and included fishing, archery, boating, target and trap shooting, wood crafts construction, nature photography, raptors, bird watching and decoy painting. Each year, Step Outside Day is open to all children and adults, but is targeted to those with special needs.

For further information on the Louisiana's Important Bird Areas program contact Melanie Driscoll, Director of Bird Conservation, Louisiana Bird Resource Center, c/o LSU Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Baton Rouge, LA 70803; (225) 938-7209.

**IBAs are sites that provide habitat essential for the breeding, feeding, wintering or migration of one or more species of birds. IBAs may be large or small and either publicly or privately owned, sharing characteristics such as high bird diversity, threatened species, or the presence of unusually large numbers of birds. To be recognized as an IBA, a site is nominated and evaluated based on standard scientific criteria to ensure its significance to birds. The recognition of an IBA does not confer any legal or regulatory status, and is entirely voluntary.**

## BRING IN THE BIRDS

Did you lose trees and plants to Gustav? Are you looking for natives to attract wildlife?

Bill Fontenot's Prairie Basse Nursery near Lafayette has a great selection, and he has plenty of knowledge to offer the plant shopper.

Bill is offering a 15% discount to Audubon members on November 15.

Contact him at  
337.896.9187

or natrldlite@cox.net for hours of operation and directions.

2008 Christmas Bird Count  
compiler - Kevin Morgan  
Cowboyinbrla@cox.net

## In Memoriam:

Lee Daniel  
San Marcos, Texas

# BRAS EDUCATION IN ACTION

## Junior Birder Class

**B**REC's Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center was recently invaded by kids with binoculars! BRAS Education Chair Jane Patterson taught a 4-week bird education session to kids ages 8-12. The kids learned about using binoculars and field guides, how to identify birds by sight and sound, migration and breeding habits of birds, and how to attract birds to their own yards. A field walk was included in each session. The Swamp took quite a hit from Gustav and most of the trails are still out of service because of damage to the boardwalks.

Nevertheless, the walks were always successful and the kids (and some parents) got satisfying looks at Great and Snowy Egrets, Barred Owl, three species of woodpeckers and several spectacular Golden Silk spiders. We had varied success getting everyone to see all the birds, but we ended up with quite a respectable list. The kids were all thrilled to receive their customized Junior Birder certificates and patches at the end of class.



## 3rd Graders at Gramercy Elementary Learn About Louisiana Birds

"That's my bird! That's my bird!" was the call as hands were raised in the air. The kids in the 3rd grade science classes at Gramercy Elementary were treated to a lesson about Louisiana birds recently and the enthusiasm was obvious. Each child was given several pictures of intriguing birds that can be found here in Louisiana at different times of the year and asked to identify which group their birds might belong to. The fun introduction to bird identification was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Mitch Becnel and Mrs Duhe of Gramercy Elementary for the invitation to share our wonderful birds with their great students.

## Kids Who Bird

Due to the interest by the younger set in and around the Baton Rouge area, BRAS will be sponsoring a new bird club for kids. Designed for children ages 9-16, the "Kids Who Bird" club program will involve regular monthly meetings focused on an educational aspect of birds and birding, as well as regular field trips around the Baton Rouge area. Meetings will initially be held at the home of our Education Chair, Jane Patterson. The inaugural meeting will take place on Nov 6 and be held every Thursday evening. For information please call me,

**Jane Patterson at**  
753-7615 or email

[education@braudubon.org](mailto:education@braudubon.org)

## What Our Friends Are Doing

### Hilltop Arboretum

**Sun. Nov. 9, 7:30 a.m.**

Hilltop Arboretum: Full day New Iberia Garden Trip

**Sat. Nov. 22, 9 a.m.—12 noon**

Hilltop Arboretum: Holiday Crafts for Children - "Nature's Treasures"

**Sat. Jan. 24, 8 a.m. -12:30 p.m.**

Episcopal High School VPAC Auditorium: Annual Hilltop Symposium - "Gardening Design for a Changing Climate"

**For tickets or more information on all of the above, call 225 767 6916, email [hilltop@lsu.edu](mailto:hilltop@lsu.edu), or go to [www.hilltop.lsu.edu](http://www.hilltop.lsu.edu).**

**Sun., Nov. 16, 8:30 a.m.**

Hilltop Arboretum: *Velo Dendro* bike ride sponsored by Baton Rouge Advocates for Safe Streets (B.R.A.S.S.) and co-sponsored by Hilltop Arboretum and the LSU AgCenter. Plant experts will lead a 12 mile bike tour of significant trees, formal planting and natural ecosystems in South Baton Rouge. The ride will include BREC's Highland Rd. Observatory, Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, and Hilltop, with policemen to direct traffic. Post-ride entertainment will be offered at Hilltop. Go to <http://www.bikereg.com/events/> to register or for more information.



## LSU Leisure Class Birding Basics Cancelled

Our education chair was scheduled to teach an LSU Union Leisure class on Birding Basics but unfortunately Gustav took a bite out of that as well. Students had to withdraw from the class and it was cancelled. Jane is planning to schedule another one for the spring, so watch for announcement.

## Thanks to our Members!

*Baton Rouge Audubon is appreciative of one and all who make it possible for us to send you this publication, maintain our sanctuaries, and the other projects we undertake on behalf of conservation and birds. We can't do it without you!*

June 1, 2008 - Sept. 1, 2008

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH**  
(\$250)

Mary Guthrie, New Orleans, LA

**ROSEBREASTED GROSBEAK**  
(\$100)

Sara Simmonds, Alexandria, LA

# SNAPSHOTS FROM THE PERUVIAN ANDES



Juan Carlos Quispe (on horse), Phred Benham, Richard Gibbons, and Jano Nunez.

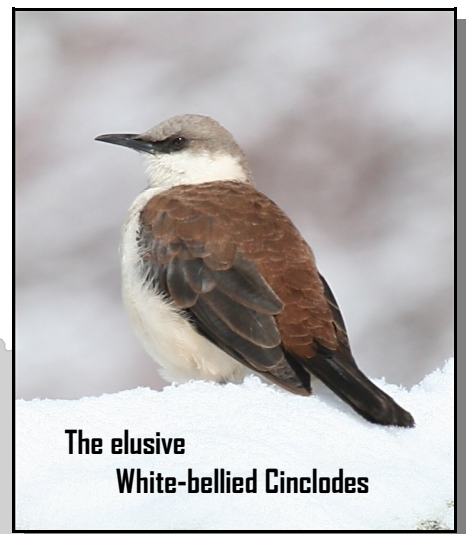
## Searching for the White-bellied Cinclodes

30 km SW of Huancavelica, Peru

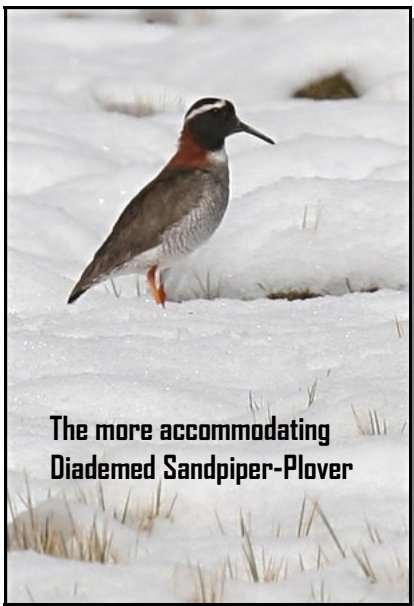
Elevation: 4,650 meters

12 July 2007

We spread out over the high Andean valley floor to identify and count the handful of bird species that inhabit these Peruvian peatlands. We hope to find the white-bellied Cinclodes, one of the world's rarest birds, which is regularly found a mere one hundred kilometers to the north.



The elusive  
White-bellied Cinclodes



The more accommodating  
Diademed Sandpiper-Plover

The grim population estimate of 200 motivated us to find additional populations, but so far, no luck.

- Richard Gibbons





## An Anytime, Anywhere Celebration of Nature in the City Simple citizen-science project reaches urbanites of all ages

**Ithaca, N.Y.-** Nature has the power to soothe and enthuse. More people are finding that out as they join the free, year-round “Celebrate Urban Birds!” citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. From schools, hospitals, and senior centers, to wellness programs, scout packs, and military bases, participants are reaping the benefits of a closer connection to the natural world and a new appreciation for city birds.

People of all ages and backgrounds participate in Celebrate Urban Birds through gardening, cultural activities and citizen-science. For the citizen-science part of the project, participants watch city birds for 10 minutes, check off 15 target species of birds, and send the information through the mail or the Internet to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Once enough data are gathered, scientists hope to learn more about how birds survive in cities and how they use urban green spaces such as parks, rooftop gardens, and even potted plants on balconies for food, resting sites, and shelter.

Some groups go beyond a single event by greening their neighborhood-creating habitat for birds on balconies, rooftops, front stoops, or community spaces. Others are tapping into the arts, creating dances, drawings, murals, sculptures, puppet shows,

and short films based on city birds. The Celebrate Urban Birds web site has lots of resources and suggestions about how to craft an event or project for libraries, nature centers, schools and youth groups, community gardens, home-school groups, or individuals.

Winners have been chosen for the project’s first “Beautiful Birds in Urban Places” video and photo contest. Marian Mendez of Hialeah, Florida, captured first prize with her images of birds found in her back yard. She said,

“I like to single out one bird and watch it for a while, trying to see the personality and mind behind it. And I’m out in the fresh air, getting sunshine and a new perspective on life.” You can see Marian’s photos and other great entries on the web site. Stay tuned for the next photo contest! Learn more about Celebrate Urban Birds and sign up at



[www.CelebrateUrbanBirds.org](http://www.CelebrateUrbanBirds.org)

## BRAS Thanks One and All for Supporting Our Education and IBA Programs with Their Donations!

(June 2008 - October 2008)  
**total \$7977**

### Donations of \$1000

J. D. Guillory, BR  
John C. Stovall, BR

### Donations of \$500

Peter Monroe, New Orleans

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Dorothy Prowell, BR

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8 Anonymous

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**Keep Your Membership Current!**

If your membership expires, you will no longer receive *The Barred Owl*. Well, eventually we take your name off the list. It is expensive to produce and membership dues help to cover that cost. Please see the expiration code on the first line of the label above your name. The month and year in which your membership expires are indicated after your membership organization (e.g., BRAS DEC 09 for BRAS-only members and NAS DEC 10 for NAS members).

*Keeping your membership current is important!*

**BRAS and National Audubon Membership**

You may join NAS by going to their website (audubon.org) and you automatically become a member of both NAS and BRAS. You will receive the quarterly award-winning *Audubon* magazine as well as the quarterly BRAS newsletter, *The Barred Owl*.

**BRAS Only Membership**

If you want all of your dues to support local conservation and education, join BRAS only. You will NOT receive the *Audubon* magazine. You WILL receive *The Barred Owl* and a free sanctuary patch. You may join on-line at any level by visiting our website www.braudubon.org, or send this form with your check to: BRAS, P.O. Box 67016, BR LA 70896.

**Patches** Extra sanctuary patches or patches for NAS members are \$10 each and can be ordered by mailing the form below. If you are joining BRAS and want a free patch, you must put "1" in the blank.

**Baton Rouge Audubon Society (BRAS)**

Please enroll me as a member of BRAS! Enclosed is my check for:

- \$25 Individual Membership
- \$30 Family Membership
- \$50 Wood Thrush Membership
- \$100 Rose-breasted Grosbeak Membership
- \$250 Louisiana Waterthrush Membership
- \$500 Painted Bunting Membership
- \$1000 Cerulean Warbler Membership
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Contribution
- # \_\_\_\_\_ of patches (indicate 1 which is free with BRAS membership; additional patches \$10 each; NAS member patches @ \$10 each; no patch will be sent if there is no indication.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL COMPLETE FORM TO:  
Baton Rouge Audubon Society; PO Box 67016; Baton Rouge, LA 70896