

The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XXXVII, Number 4

4th Quarter, 2010

The "John James"

CHRISTENING OF AUDUBON'S MINI-DREDGE

by Karen A. Westphal

The mini-dredge was a concept born of need. The hurricanes Rita 2005 and Ike 2008 destroyed thousands of acres of marsh in the Paul J. Rainey sanctuary and surrounding area, leaving behind shallow, open water areas. To dredge and pump sediment back into these areas in a traditional way for marsh restoration would cost thousands of dollars even if the work vessels could fit in the small waterways. Paul Kemp and Melanie Driscoll of National Audubon Society Louisiana Coast Initiative approached a local construction company with an idea for a more portable, small-scale dredge that could be used by landowners in limited access areas. Funding through the Together Green organization made the concept tangible. The construction company was so excited by the idea, they decided to donate the finished prototype to Audubon for testing rather than have us lease it.



The mini-dredge in the boat slip at the Paul J Rainey Wildlife Refuge headquarters.

On June 22, the mini-dredge was loaded onto a flat-bed trailer at the Javeler Construction, Inc in New Iberia. It was then trucked to Intracoastal City and off-loaded by crane at the Shell Morgan Landing. It took 2 ½ hours to tow the dredge to the Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Refuge headquarters. Preliminary testing and self-training (and numerous mud showers) were undertaken by Timmy Vincent and Karen Westphal of Audubon when time permitted.

On July 27, 2010, we felt it time to honor the people that helped to make it happen by holding a small christening party at the Rainey headquarters. Timmy Vincent and Karen Westphal set up the porch and dredge with extra shade in preparation for the day's activities. Timmy left to meet everyone at the dock for 8:30 while Karen stayed at the refuge headquarters to finalize food preparations.

The Audubon boat "Blue Goose" returned to the refuge headquarters around 9:15 with Paul Kemp and Ahmet Binselam of the Audubon Baton Rouge office, and was followed by the Javeler Construction Co., Inc boat carrying Les Cross (President), Brenda Cross (Vice-President), John Cross (their son, LSU grad working on the marsh restoration project), Lambert Pullin (the electrician for the dredge), and Hunter Southerland (Javeler field tech and head of deep-water dredging).

The weather was perfect. The low in the Gulf created a partly cloudy sky with moderate temperatures and a rather nice breeze. Since we had such a small group, the setting was relaxed and informal. The schedule

(Continued on page 8)

A Message From Our President...

Though it's still too early to tell it seems as if we've avoided catastrophe. That being said, I believe that no one would say that our coast and its inhabitants "dodged a bullet." As I write this the BP Horizon response website lists 2053 birds collected alive, about half of which have been released and 5673 collected carcasses. It is not confirmed that all of these birds died because the spill but we can assume a vast majority did. Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries agents along with U.S. Fish and Wildlife agents are now being allowed on the rookeries and we can expect this number to grow rapidly. In the last few days the numbers of dead birds being collected has increased dramatically. This will continue throughout the month while the dozens of bird islands from Venice to Cocodrie are searched.

What has been particularly frustrating has been the lack of published scientific findings on the effects of the oil. It's my understanding that this is because of the upcoming legal wranglings. Thankfully there have been few massive fish kills or species-threatening deaths to our bird-life. What is still of particular concern to scientists is the web of life further down the ladder. It is likely that we will never know the extent to which the spill affected a whole host of species from plankton, worms and other invertebrates which live along our shores and are vital to the ecosystem.

If there is to be a silver lining from this event it might be that with more national attention we might better address some of our coastal issues. It would seem almost a certainty that we will have safer and cleaner drilling in the future. As was pointed out to me by our great nature photographer C.C. Lockwood, the size of the oil-slick at its largest was still smaller than the amount of land we have lost from our wetlands over the last eighty years. It is my sincere hope that our work (Audubon's along with many other organizations) can come to fruition now to implement large-scale restoration projects.

I would like to urge everyone to take part in some way to seize this opportunity and spotlight for the future of our coast.

Best Wishes,

Eric Liffmann

President,
Baton Rouge Audubon Society
P.O. Box 67016
Baton Rouge, La. 70896
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BRAS wishes to acknowledge
Downtown Kiwanis Club
of Baton Rouge
for their support of our
Education Programs



Thank you so much!

Baton Rouge Audubon

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The Barred Owl

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Submissions should be emailed to
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Changes of address and other official
correspondence should be sent to:

**Baton Rouge
Audubon Society
P.O. Box 67016
Baton Rouge, LA 70896**

Autumn in Peveto Woods...

August/September means migration has begun. Those willing to brave the deer flies of the season are usually rewarded with some of the late summer specialties like Olive-sided Flycatcher (below) and Canada Warbler. Yellow Warblers are leading the way, along with some of the more challenging flycatchers such as the Willow/Alder (right). Early fall also brings a chance at the always elusive Mourning Warbler. My August and



September visits rewarded me with all these and more as we cut and groomed the trails for our human visitors. The rag weed has come up nicely as well as other ground plants to provide nice cover and winter food for the birds. Many of our trees have continued their slow demise following the effects of Hurricane Ike and dead trees and branches con-

tinue to come down with each storm. However, the wet summer has allowed the new trees and ground plants to make good progress in restoring our bird habitats. October should be great for the fall migrants and early arriving winter residents in the sanctuary.



BRAS wants to thank Kevin Colley for fabricating and donating a new, heavy duty, contribution box for Peveto Woods Sanctuary. We are working toward a kiosk sign-in station that can also serve as location for the new box. I also want to give an overdue thank you to Paul Fontenot of Lafayette, for giving me a pile of old satellite dishes several years ago. These have come in handy as I set up watering spots around the sanctuary.

Dave Patton
Sanctuary Chairman

HUMMERS ON THE MOVE!

Fall migration is in full swing. Ruby-throated hummingbirds are headed back to Mexico and Central America for the winter. Now's the time to have a feeder up to help the little guys fatten up for their long journey. They'll be gone by mid-October. But don't take down all of your feeders! Every winter a few western hummingbirds come to stay for the winter on the Gulf Coast and a good many can be found around the Baton Rouge area. The most common of these is the Rufous hummingbird -- a rusty little bird that breeds in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. But you might also be lucky



Watch your feeders and yard for rarities like the Calliope Hummingbird in late fall and winter

enough to host a Black-chinned, Buff-Bellied, Calliope, Broad-billed, Broad-tailed, or Anna's. If you see a hummingbird in your yard after October, it's worth reporting it! You can send an email to info@braudubon.org.

You might also like to join the Humnet listserv where humnuts from all over meet to talk about their favorite birds. (send an email with the content "subscribe humnet-I your-email-address Your Name" to listserv@listserv.lsu.edu to join the list).

BRAS PROGRAMS IN ACTION

USING BIRDS AND SCIENCE TO PREPARE THE NEXT GENERATION OF BATON ROUGE CONSERVATIONISTS

by Jared Wolfe
Programs Chair

This is the first of two installments detailing the cultural and scientific importance of monitoring our local bird communities.

Intrigued, the teenager stood over the dead Armadillo. "How long have you lived in Louisiana?" I inquired. "Sixteen years, my whole life." He could sense my amazement, "and you have never seen an Armadillo, dead or alive?" Sheepishly, he looked at his shoes, "well, I don't leave Baton Rouge much." Further inspection of the carcass was interrupted by our leaders - LSU graduate students - beckoning us to begin the Henslow's Sparrow survey. A few minutes later we found ourselves immersed in field biology: identifying birds, capturing, marking, recording body-condition and safely releasing Henslow's Sparrows. "I can feel its heart beating" the young volunteer excitedly observed as he prepared a bird for release. In a Louisiana forest two rare species, one human and the other avian, enriched each other's



existence: an inner-city teenager exited about nature, helping monitor a declining songbird species.

Preventing future degradation of our bird populations requires a new, interested and dedicated generation of bird lovers. Unfortunately, two factors may hinder the establishment of Baton Rouge's next generation of bird advocates: the inability to access natural areas and the failure to create formative associations between oneself and nature. Unfamiliarity with nature can foster an apathetic and uninformed conservation ethic often referred to as 'nature deficit disorder.' Recognizing a critical need to provide our community with quality environmental outreach opportunities, Baton Rouge Audubon Society, Louisiana State University and Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of Eastern Baton Rouge (BREC) initiated the first year-round bird banding project in some of the last vestiges of mature Bald-Cypress Swamp in Baton Rouge called the Bluebonnet Bird Monitoring Project (BBMP).

Since March 2010, BBMP has worked with partners to provide unique environmental education

opportunities for young people in Baton Rouge. For example, a visiting group of kids typically receive a brief lecture addressing the importance of preserving habitat for the migrants which annually cross the world's oceans, winter in exotic locations and breed in our backyards. Next, visitors come face-to-face with wild birds and observe professionally trained biologists collecting important demographic data. The data collected by BBMP is used to monitor the health of resident and migrant bird populations in Baton Rouge. Visitors leave the station understanding the importance of monitoring bird populations through all phases of the avian life-cycle. BBMP strives to connect kids with birds and the natural areas required for the birds' persistence. Within the first year of operations BBMP has brought over 150 kids to experience bird banding in Baton Rouge. By working with partners BBMP continues to work towards educating the next generation of conservation ambassadors in Baton Rouge. For more information please visit our website at: <http://www.braudubon.org/bluebonnet-swamp-bird-monitoring.php>.



RAPID RESPONSE TO THE DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL

Audubon staff, both nationally and in Louisiana, poured tremendous energy into Audubon's BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster response - an unprecedented response for an unprecedented threat to birds and habitats.

Many people wanted to help the birds affected by the oil spill, and Audubon staff identified opportunities for non-governmental organization and volunteer involvement in the official disaster response (no easy task in a climate of chaos and mistrust), and, in partnership with national outreach staff, mobilized hundreds of volunteers across southern Louisiana to assist with the bird rescue and rehabilitation effort and other needs. Thousands of volunteers are now available to begin to transition from immediate crisis response into a more sustained effort that will include long-term monitoring of the bird populations and habitats across the Gulf Coast, as well as habitat restoration and protection efforts.

Audubon advocated for birds, other wildlife, and the habitats on which they depend, throughout the oil spill. Staff from Texas to Florida were in the field, assessing oil damage and the wildlife rescue and habitat protection and cleanup efforts, and working with federal and state agencies on recommendations for improving those efforts and reducing the impacts on birds and on our fragile coastal environments. Local and national staff also provided credible information to the press to help the public understand new threats from the oil spill, as well as to transform our nation's understanding of the vital role Louisiana's seafood, transportation, and oil and gas industries play in our national economy. Expert opinion from these scientists aired on NBC Nightly News, CNN, and NPR's All Things Considered, as well as in the New York Times, USA Today, and many other media outlets.

(Continued on page 9)

WHOOPING CRANES COMING BACK TO LOUISIANA

by Jane Patterson

(information paraphrased from
LA Wildlife and Fisheries
website: www.wlf.louisiana.gov)

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will attempt to establish a non-migratory flock of Whooping Cranes in southwestern Louisiana. The proposal is to reintroduce the endangered whooping crane into habitat in its historic range on the state-owned White Lake Wetland Conservation Area in Vermilion Parish, Louisiana.

The species was on the verge of extinction in the 1940s and even today has only about 395 individuals in the wild (550 worldwide). A small non-migratory population exists in the eastern U.S. The only self-sustaining wild population of Whooping Cranes migrates between Canada and Texas and remains vulnerable to extinction from continued loss of habitat or natural or man-made catastrophes. Multiple efforts are underway to reduce this risk by increasing populations in the wild, including ongoing efforts to establish a migratory population in the eastern United States.

USFWS proposes the new, reintroduced, non-migratory population of Whooping Cranes be designated as a non-essential, experimental population (NEP) under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. This proposed designation and its implementing regulation are developed to be

the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

There are approximately 1.3 million acres of marsh, open water, and chenier habitat in southwestern coastal Louisiana. The cranes would be reintroduced to the White Lake area and are not expected to be affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Whooping Cranes historically occurred in Louisiana in both a resident, non-migratory flock and a migratory flock that wintered in Louisiana. The proposed release area is the location where Whooping Cranes were historically documented raising young in Louisiana. Studies have been done to document that food sources are readily available for this new crane population.



Scar Baby, the Whooping Crane

Photo by Richard Gibbons

more compatible with routine human activities in the reintroduction area. The designation allows for take of Whooping Cranes when such take is accidental and incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, including agriculture practices, recreation, and hunting. The intentional take (including killing or harm) of any NEP-designated whooping crane would still be a violation of federal law punishable under

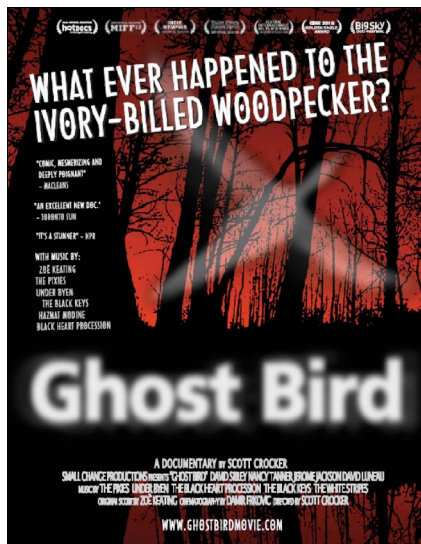
If this proposal is approved, the reintroduction effort could begin during early 2011.

To allow adequate time to conduct this review, USFWS requests that information be received on or before October 18, 2010. For more information, contact Carrie Salyers at 337-538-2276 or csalyers@wlf.la.gov or Bill Brooks at 904-731-3136 or

Billy_Brooks@fws.gov

"Ghost Bird" Premiere November 4th!

Baton Rouge Audubon Society will be premiering "Ghost Bird", the critically acclaimed documentary which tells the story of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's miraculous rediscovery in 2005. The bird's resurrection was heralded around the world as proof that conservation efforts on behalf of threatened species were making the critical difference between life and death. While the fate of Ivory-bills remains uncertain, there is no question the vital role local conservation efforts play in reversing the planet's extinction crisis. Please join us at the Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center at 7pm Thursday, November 4th, for the premiere Baton Rouge screening of "Ghost Bird".



OAS/Crescent Bird Club Joint Banquet

Bird Diversity in Lowland Amazonian Forests-Can it be Saved?

Speaker: Erik Johnson

Date: Tuesday, October 19

Time: 6:30-7:00 p.m. social and cash bar,
7:00 p.m. banquet, 8:00 p.m. program

Place: The Imperial Room of Five Happiness Restaurant,
3605 S. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans, LA 70118

Cost: \$28.00 per person

Reservations: Mail a check payable to "Orleans Audubon Society" to Michael Crago, OAS Treasurer, 801 Rue Dauphine, Ste. 304, Metairie, LA 70005 and please include names, addresses and telephone numbers for each person's reservation. Reservations must be received by October 14th.

Menu: Egg roll and chicken wing appetizers, entrees include Mandarin Chicken, Shrimp with Honey Roasted Pecans, General's Chicken, Beef with Black Mushroom, Snow Peas and Bamboo Shoots, Triple Dragon in Hot Garlic Sauce, combination fried rice, fortune and almond cookies, soft drink or iced tea.

Yellow Rails and Rice Festival

(excerpted from festival website by Jane Patterson)

Building on the success of last year's festival, *Yellow Rails and Rice Festival 2010* is scheduled to begin Thursday, 4 November 2010, and will run through Sunday, 7 November 2010.

The festival is designed with fun in mind. Its primary goal is to provide participants a unique venue to view Yellow Rails while at the same time bringing birders and farmers together to realize the value to birds of the area's "working wetlands." The festival schedule is casual and participants can attend all events or come and go at their leisure. We will have leaders at field sites to help spot birds and provide information. We will also offer local field trips, and two trips farther afield to the pineywoods and Cameron Parish coast. Based in Jennings, participants will be positioned in the heart of Cajun Country in Louisiana's SW prairie region, an area known for great birding, local cuisine, and a rich history and culture.

Visit the website at http://snowyegretenterprises.com/Snowy_Egret_Enterprises/YRARF_2010.html to register

View video from last year's event at: <http://vimeo.com/7408572>



Baton Rouge Audubon Society

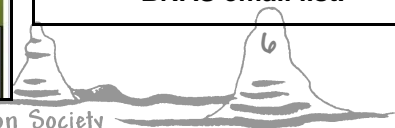
Home JOIN BRAS Where To Bird Calendar Field Trips Programs Newsletters Links SHOP



The Baton Rouge Audubon website has had a facelift!
Visit today to see what's new! www.braudubon.org

BRAS EMAIL LIST

If you would like to be informed of upcoming Baton Rouge Audubon events via email, send a request to Jane Patterson at Education@braudubon.org and you'll be added to the BRAS email list.



Wildlife Observation Platform Planned for Sherburne

by Jane Patterson

On October 9, BRAS Members are invited to come to Sherburne Wildlife Mgt Area South Farm to help complete the construction of a wildlife observation platform. The Army Corps of Engineers is funding this great project. They will begin the construction soon, but would like to give the public an opportunity to be involved by asking volunteers to help with the completion of the decking, screening, and railing on the day of the event.

The ACoE and LA Wildlife & Fisheries asked for input from the birding community for this platform, and it promises to be a great resource to

birders who visit South Farm. The platform will be centrally located in the compound, and will offer 360 degree views. It will be on a dead-end levee, and no ATV traffic is allowed on this particular levee. The overall dimensions of the platform are 15'x15'. It will be two story, with ramp access to the lower level and stairs to the upper. The lower level will be 3 feet above the crown of the levee and the upper level will be 13 feet above the crown of the levee. The side railings will be trimmed with lattice to provide air flow and screening. There will be stainless steel (or aluminum) railings for the stairs as well as the ramp to assist users in addition to the regular wooden side railing. There will be

perimeter ledges (shelves) and some benches (with backs) on both levels -- this will enable users to sit while facing out and use the ledges for stability of binoculars, scopes, and cameras.

We're very excited about this project! Sherburne South Farm is perhaps the best overall birding site within a 30 minute drive of Baton Rouge. It is on the eastern edge of the Atchafalaya Basin and has large water impoundments which attract wading birds, shorebirds, and water fowl. For those of you who may not be familiar with it, it is located off the Ramah-Maringouin exit (135) on I-10. Travel the levee road about 1.5 miles north and you'll see a sign pointing over the levee to the parking area. Only off-road and foot traffic is allowed in the compound. As with other LDWF-managed properties, you must have a hunting/fishing or WildLA stamp to enter and complete a self-clearing permit.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the platform building, please contact Jane Patterson at 225-278-0667 or via email at Education@braudubon.org.



What Our Friends Are Doing

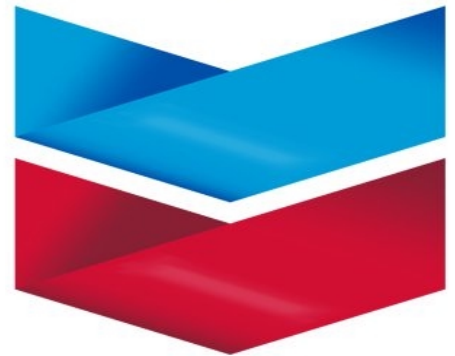
Louisiana Ornithological Society Fall meeting
Oct 29-30, 2010
Cameron/Creole

Friday evening @ First Baptist Church
6-7 pm - Registration, snacks
7-8 pm - Evening program featuring Melanie Driscoll
"National Audubon Society's Response to the Gulf Oil Spill"

Saturday
7 am - Field Trips in Cameron Parish
6 pm - registration
6:30-7:30 pm - Gumbo dinner
7:30 pm - Evening program featuring Randy Lactot of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation: *"Quest for a Louisiana State Seashore"*

Baton Rouge Audubon thanks

Chevron



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Christening of Audubon's mini-dredge, The "John James"

(Continued from page 1)

was thrown out and we let things flow. We set up a picnic table on the porch overlooking the boat slip, partially under the sun awning we had installed, and brought mimosas outside.

After everyone had a chance to visit, look around the grounds, and sip on a mimosa, Paul started the christening ceremony. Les, Brenda and John joined Karen on the deck of the mini-dredge. Paul stayed on shore facing the bow of the dredge, and conducted the christening ceremony. The crew onboard repeated the words after him. Ahmet took the pictures.

The christening ceremony was written by Karen, read by Paul, and was as follows:

"We are here today to celebrate the creativity in thought and design between Javeler and National Audubon Society, expressed here in the form of this mini-dredge."

"For thousands of years, we have gone to sea. We have crafted vessels to carry us, to lighten our burden, and to help us in our endeavors; and we have called them by name. Today, we come to name this vessel and send her out to do good works."

While Karen poured dirt and seeds into the water, Paul continued: ***"Mighty and enduring, mother Earth, Father Sky, and Lord of All; grant us permission to use your providence -- the rich, nurturing substance of your existence -- to promote the diversity and abundance you crave. Grant this vessel the power and ability to create new land to display your gracious and generous bounty for all to celebrate and enjoy."***

"Most gracious Lord, we beseech you to consecrate this boat to righteous work in your name. Watch over her crew and bring them to a safe return. May your blessing be upon this vessel and all who come aboard, this day and forever. Amen"



Left to right: Karen Westphal, Paul Kemp, Les Cross, Brenda Cross, and John Cross

"We name this vessel in honor of one who nurtured love for nature and the great outdoors, and who is the namesake of our own organization."

Karen poured champagne over the bow as Paul and the others said: ***"We name this ship JOHN JAMES, -- may she bring good fortune and a safe, successful outcome to all endeavors for those who sail on her."***

Then Paul raised his glass and toasted ***"TO THE JOHN JAMES!"*** and everyone followed suit.

As the christening crew disembarked, Paul met them in front of the dredge. He then presented a plaque to Les Cross, representing Javeler Construction, Inc., to show our appreciation for their design, construction and donation. It read:

Certificate of Appreciation
Presented to
Javeler Construction Co., Inc
With Sincere Thanks for the donation of the "John James"
Given this 27th day of August, 2010
By Audubon
Signed: G. Paul Kemp, VP Louisiana Coastal Initiative and
Karen Westphal, Atchafalaya Program Director

We then brought more mimosas and the food outside to share. The menu included crawfish/mushroom quiche, fruit tray and pull-apart cinnamon bread.

The day continued with a boat tour onboard Audubon's "Blue Goose" down to the "pig-trap" to overlook some of the best marshland in Louisiana. The cruise was rewarded with an abundance of bird life and a rather large alligator. By request, the tour went by the Chenier au Tigre landing where Lambert has ancestral connections. After a brief pause at the headquarters for refreshments, the tour continued over to Deep Lake where we plan to do the first marsh restoration. Karen had helped Timmy extend the boardwalk the day before, so there was plenty of room for everyone to spread out and enjoy the view.

We returned to the headquarters, packed everything up, and both boats headed back to the Intracoastal City public dock. And so ended a wonderful day christening the new dredge, showing our appreciation to an important donor, and showing off what Rainey has to offer. If you weren't there, you missed a fun day - if you were there, thanks for participating and making it a great event!!

Now, let's make some marsh!

Karen A Westphal
National Audubon Society Gulf Coast Initiative
6160 Perkins Road, Suite 215
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
225-768-0921 phone

RAPID RESPONSE TO THE DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL

(Continued from page 5)

Science staff, led by Dr. Paul Kemp, Vice President of the Louisiana Coastal Initiative, provided scientific advice to state officials on proposed mitigation efforts, and designed and promoted a science-based solution to keep oil at bay by changing the management of the Old River Control Complex. Though the White House and the Corps of Engineers failed to act on the proposal, it did elevate the issue of Mississippi River management - an Audubon priority - to the national level, including coverage on CNN, an op-ed published on CNN.com and coverage by National Geographic and other science and news organizations. Staff also commented on myriad proposals, among them the sand berm proposal.

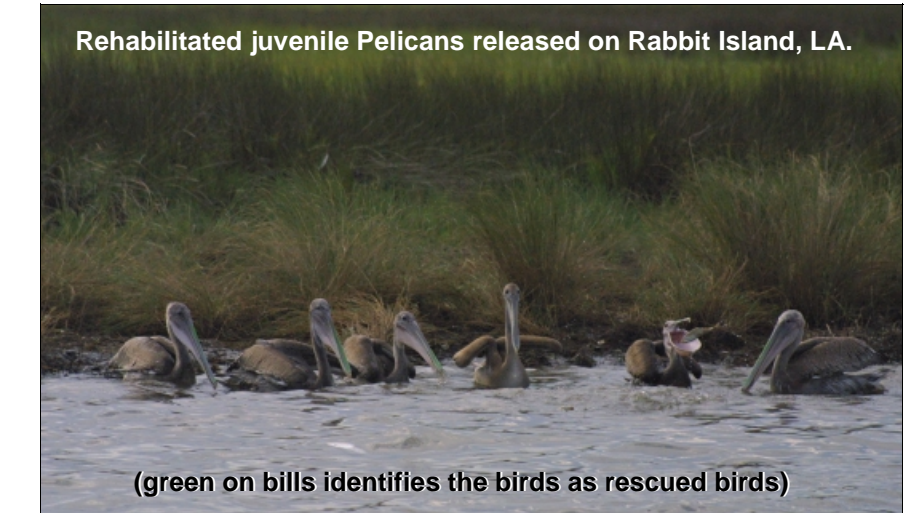
Melanie Driscoll, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon's Louisiana Coastal Initiative, testified on behalf of the "living resources of the Gulf" at a well-containment hearing held by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement. <http://gulfoilspill.audubon.org/newsroom/news-stories/2010/audubon-testifies-living-gulf-resources>

Timmy Vincent, our sanctuary manager, conducted daily monitoring of Audubon's own Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary, which experienced very light oiling, and worked with parish officials to integrate into the emergency planning efforts.

Since the oil has been stopped, the focus is shifting away from crisis response. It will be years until we know the full extent of the damage to the Gulf Coastal ecosystems and the wildlife they support. Implementation of Audubon's newly developed Gulf of Mexico conservation plan will move us from disaster response to long-term renewal and recovery in the months and years to come.

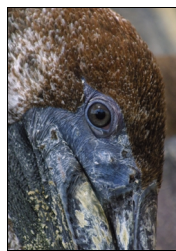
Working Collaboratively to Create a Vision for Coastal Restoration

Audubon, the Environmental Defense Fund and the National Wildlife Federation published *Common Ground: A Shared Vision for Restoring the Mississippi River Delta* in July. This white paper outlines Audubon's federal policy priorities for Mississippi River Delta restoration and calls on the federal government to take several specific steps,



including the establishment of short-term and long-term funding streams, the initiation of several large-scale restoration projects authorized by Congress in 2007, and the reorganization of governmental oversight and planning efforts in the region. The white paper attracted significant media attention, including coverage on NBC Nightly News the day of its release, and it will serve as an important tool for science, conservation, policy and communications staff as we continue our mission to engage the federal government and the American people in the restoration of one of America's greatest - and most abused - wetland ecosystems.

Restoration of Hope: Habitat Restoration Gains Momentum at Rainey Marsh



Audubon's Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary is the crown jewel in the National Audubon Society sanctuary system - her oldest and largest sanctuary. Yet this landscape of relatively intact marsh in the Chenier Plain Important Bird Area (IBA) has lost land in recent hurricanes, and is at risk from changes in hydrology, and, this summer, the threat of oil. Yet the nearly 26,000 acres of intermediate marsh provides home to populations of several bird species of conservation concern, including Seaside Sparrows and Clapper Rails, as well as abundant fish and other seafood species. Situated on the coast, receiving some sediment from the Atchafalaya River,

and out of the area of influence of the worst of the oil spill, Rainey has provided safe harbor for many birds during this season of stress and uncertainty.

Ongoing habitat stabilization and restoration efforts at Audubon's Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary are protecting thousands of acres of fragile coastal marsh habitat. Audubon continues leveraging its relationships and funds to effect conservation not only on Rainey itself but on neighboring lands, all part of the Chenier Plain Important Bird Area (IBA). Specific activities include the recent completion of repairs on five major water control structures on the property, which will help restore a more natural water flow regime to approximately 2,500 acres of coastal marsh; the contracting of levee repair work; the receipt of a small dredge, valued at \$100,000, which was designed and donated by a local business and will begin restoring storm-damaged marsh habitat this fall; a planning effort and the acquisition of funds with partners to pursue the "Christian Marsh" project, which will re-establish vegetated wetlands and slow wave fetch and erosion; and the securing of a \$730,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to conduct levee repair work that will help maintain and enhance existing brackish marsh to provide bird habitat and forage and to reduce saltwater intrusion. Coastal marsh habitat is in significant decline throughout Louisiana, but this work contributes to the health and resilience of Audubon's land and neighboring properties and also serves as a platform to engage other landowners throughout Louisiana.

Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Baton Rouge Audubon Society

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896

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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*.

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

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.