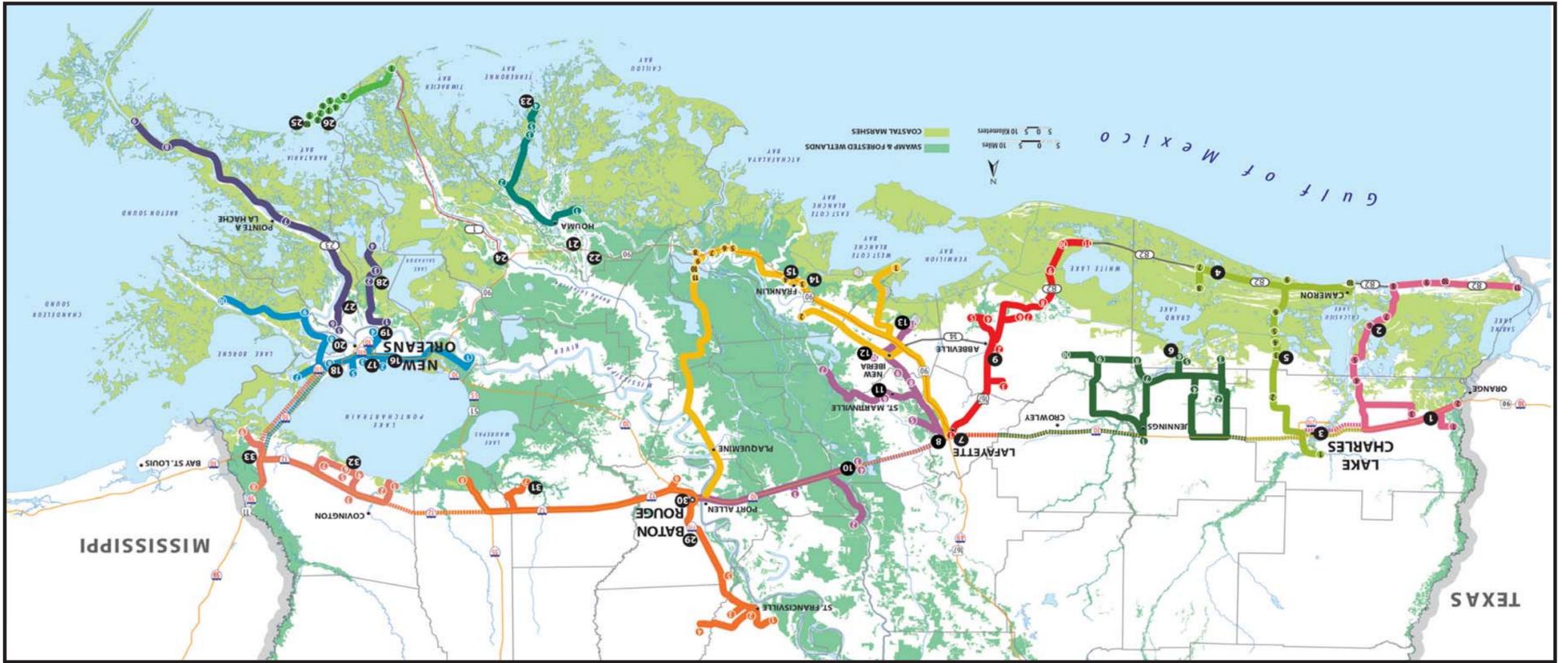




This calendar is a product of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program.

For more information or a copy of an America's Wetland Birding Trail brochure, contact any of these locations.

1. L-10 Eastbound Welcome Center 337-589-7774
2. Sabine National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center 337-762-3816
3. Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitor Bureau Visitor Center 337-436-9588
4. Rockefeller State Wildlife Refuge 337-538-2276
5. Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center 337-774-5923
6. Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters 337-598-2216
7. Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission 337-232-3737
8. Acadiana Park Nature Station 337-291-8448
9. Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission Visitor Center 337-898-6600
10. Atchafalaya Welcome Center 337-228-1094
11. Lake Fausse Pointe State Park Visitor Center 888-677-7200
12. Iberia Parish Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitors Center 888-942-3742
13. Tabasco® Pepper Sauce Factory 337-365-8173
14. Cajun Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitor Center-Franklin 985-537-5800
15. Cajun Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitor Center-Patterson 985-787-2559
16. Louis Armstrong International Airport at the Audubon Nature Institute Display Kenner, LA 70062 504-566-5011
17. New Orleans Metropolitan Convention & Visitors Bureau 504-566-5011
18. Audubon Louisiana Nature Center 504-861-2537
19. Audubon Aquarium of the Americas 800-774-7394
20. Audubon Zoo 866-487-2966
21. Houma Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Visitor Center 985-868-2732
22. Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center 985-448-1375
23. LUMCOM 985-851-2800
24. Lafourche Parish Tourist Commission Visitor Center 985-537-5800
25. Grand Isle State Park Visitor Center 985-787-2559
26. Grand Isle Tourist Information 985-787-2997
27. Plaquemines Tourism Center 504-394-0018
28. Barataria Preserve Visitors Center Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve 504-589-2330
29. BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo 225-775-3877
30. State Capitol Welcome Center 225-342-7317
31. Triclaw State Park Nature Center 888-981-2020
32. Fontainebleau State Park Entrance Station 888-677-3668
33. I-10 Sidell Welcome Center 985-646-6451

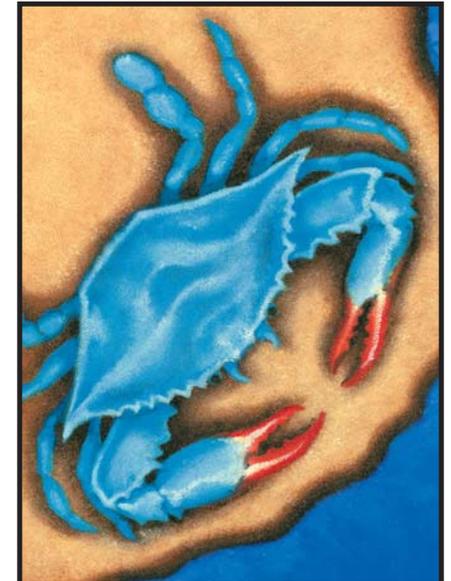
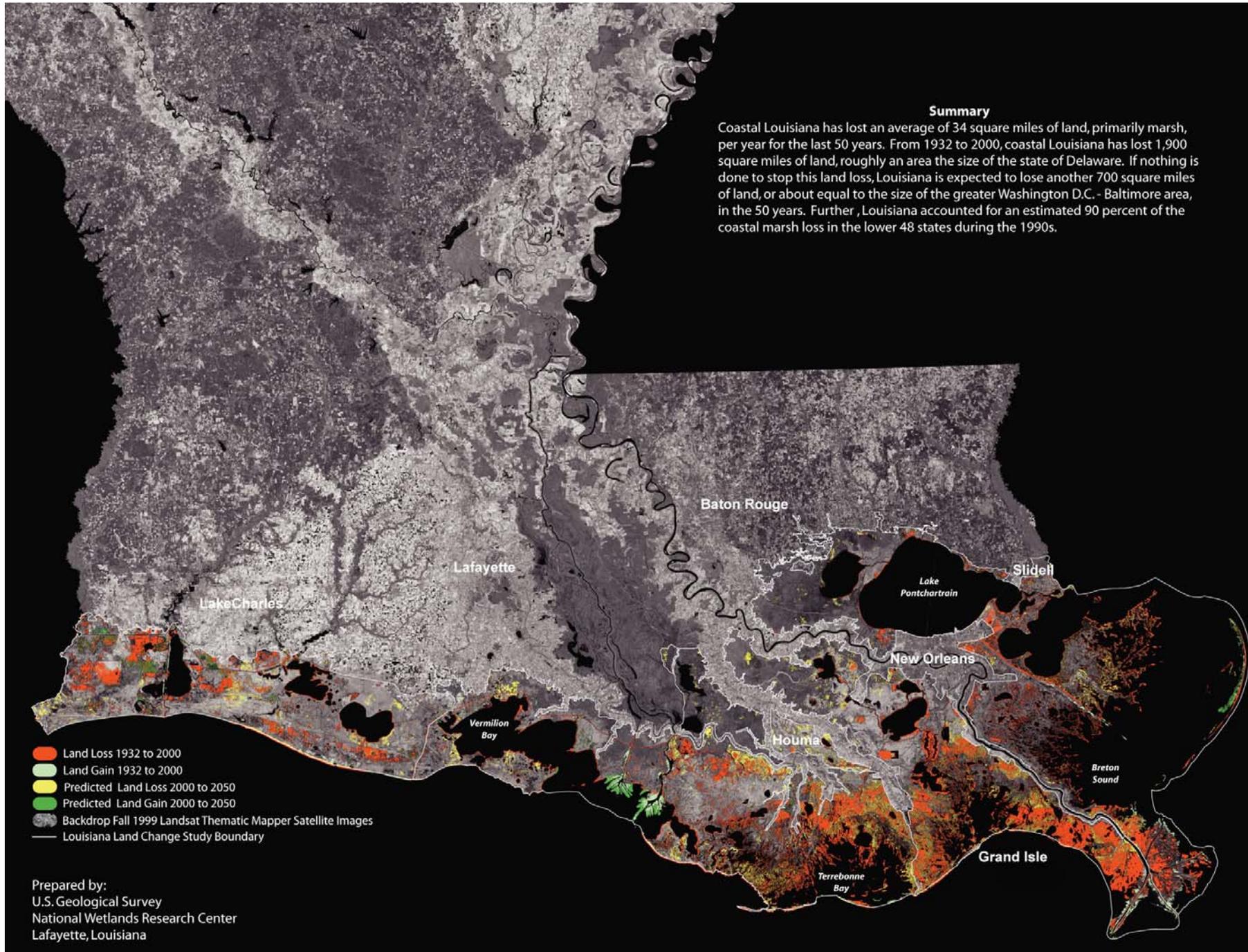


America's Wetland Birding Trail



Coastal Louisiana: America's Avian Port of Call





BTNEP

BARATARIA-TERREBONNE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

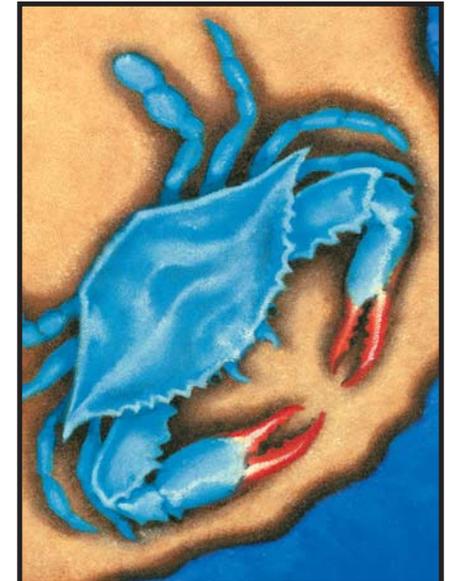
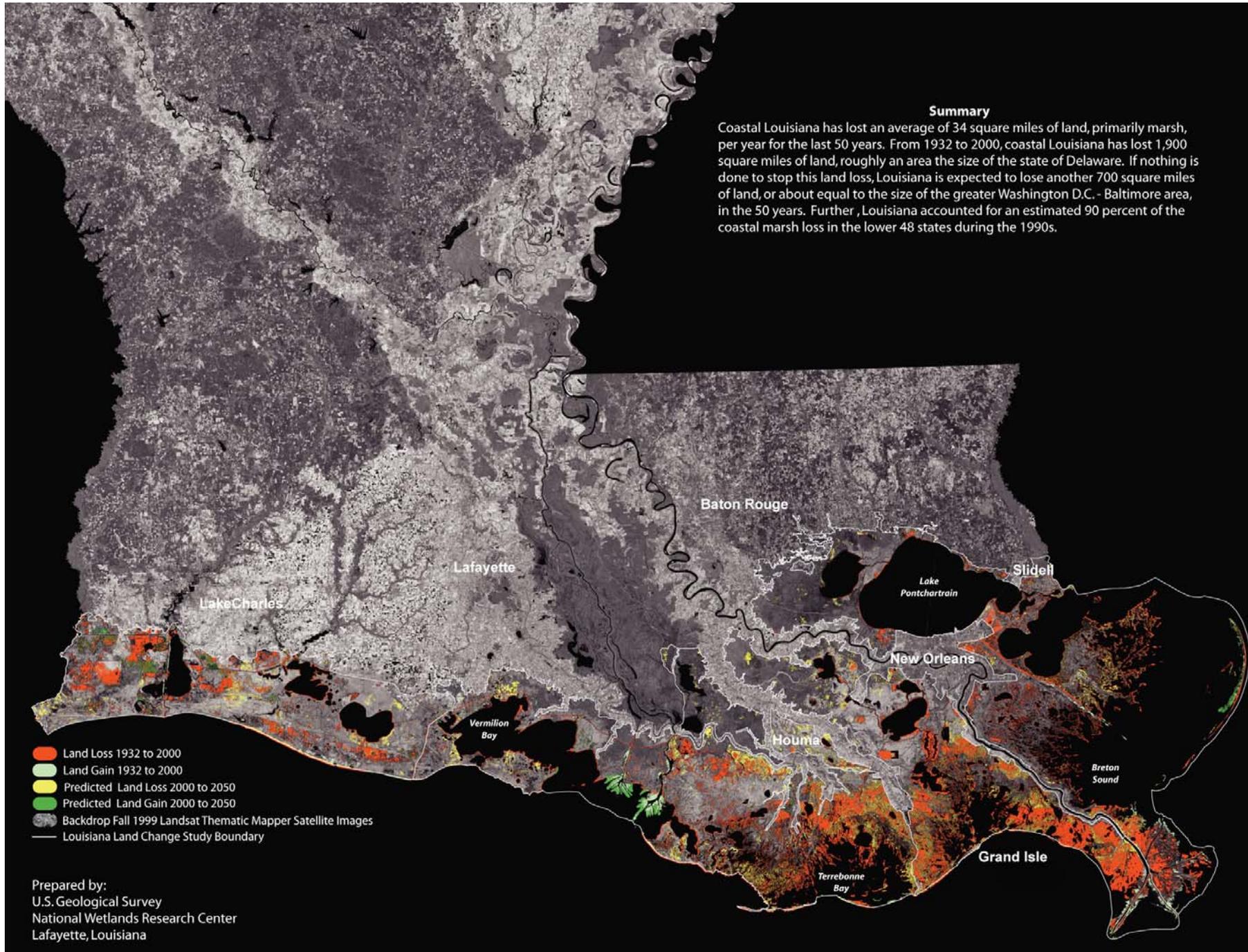
The collage on the front cover represents photographs from David Cagnolatti, Charlie Hohorst, John Hartgerink and Wylire Barrow.

The printing of this document was partially funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium under Grant #CE-006660-04. The contents of this document do not necessarily represent views of neither the United States Environmental Protection Agency nor the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. The mention of trade names or commercial products does not in any way constitute an endorsement or recommendation of use.

The public document was published at a total cost of \$15,250.00. Twenty thousand copies of the document were published in this first printing at a cost of \$15,250.00.

This document was published by the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, NSU Campus, P.O. Box 2663, Thibodaux, LA, 70310, to provide the public with environmental information under the authority of La. R.S. 30:2001. This material was printed in accordance with standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to La. R. S. 43:31.

Louisiana's Land Loss Crisis: In The Aftermath Of Hurricane Katrina



BTNEP

BARATARIA-TERREBONNE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

The collage on the front cover represents photographs from David Cagnolatti, Charlie Hohorst, John Hartgerink and Wylire Barrow.

The printing of this document was partially funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium under Grant #CE-006660-04. The contents of this document do not necessarily represent views of neither the United States Environmental Protection Agency nor the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. The mention of trade names or commercial products does not in any way constitute an endorsement or recommendation of use.

The public document was published at a total cost of \$15,250.00. Twenty thousand copies of the document were published in this first printing at a cost of \$15,250.00.

This document was published by the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, NSU Campus, P.O. Box 2663, Thibodaux, LA, 70310, to provide the public with environmental information under the authority of La. R.S. 30:2001. This material was printed in accordance with standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to La. R. S. 43:31.

Louisiana's Land Loss Crisis: In The Aftermath Of Hurricane Katrina



Lesser Yellowlegs
Photographer: Nancy Camel
Cameron Prairie NWR, south of Lake Charles, LA

DECEMBER

American Birding Association 2007 Convention

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
					I Red-winged Blackbirds coalesce into huge flocks	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Throughout winter, hackberry fruits are consumed by many species of temperate migrants	12	13	14	15 Boat-tailed Grackles form massive flocks along the coast	16
17	18	19 Christmas Bird Count season begins	20	21	22 Winter Begins	23
24 31	25 Christmas Day	26 Cedar Wax-wings become locally common throughout Louisiana this month	27	28	29	30

We invite you to come to Louisiana in April 2007 and participate in the annual American Birding Association (ABA) Convention. The 2007 event will be held in Lafayette, Louisiana, from April 23-30, which is the peak of bird migration through our beautiful state. Bird watching field trips will include visits to oak groves known locally as cheniers, coastal mudflats, rice fields, and bottomland hardwood forests. ABA members will be looking for migrants heading north and breeding specialty birds of the area including Swallow-tailed Kite, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Bachman's Sparrow. ABA field trips will also visit bayous and swamp forests holding vast colonies of nesting wading birds including many species of egrets and herons.

In addition to field trips and opportunities for birding purchases through ABA Sales, there will be a variety of workshops and demonstrations, nationally known speakers, major optics companies, publishers, and international tour companies. ABA welcomes all birders as members.

For more info on the ABA Convention go to:

www.americanbirding.org

The ABA:

- aims to inspire all people to enjoy and protect wild birds.
- supports birders through publications, conferences, workshops, tours, partnerships, and networks.
- education programs promote birding skills, ornithological knowledge, and the development of a conservation ethic.
- encourages birders to apply their skills to help conserve birds and their habitats, and represent the interests of birders in planning and legislative arenas.



Red Knot
Photographer: Joseph Turner
Grand Isle, LA

NOVEMBER

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			I Southbound Black-throated Green Warblers can still be located in coastal portions of the State	2	3	4
5 Winter International Shorebird Survey period begins	6 Major migration period begins for most waterfowl	7	8	9	10	11 Veteran's Day
12	13	14	15	16 State-rare wintering Harris' Sparrows arrive in northwestern Louisiana this month	17	18
19	20	21 Large numbers of American Goldfinch arrive to overwinter in Louisiana	22	23 Thanksgiving Day	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 Northern Gannets begin arriving offshore of Louisiana		

Temperate Migrants Winter in Louisiana

Each fall, millions of ducks and geese travel the Mississippi and Red River Valleys southward to overwinter in the State's coastal marshes and swamps. The productivity of these habitats is immense, largely the result of influence of nutrients carried by the mighty Mississippi. The nutrients and fresh water form the basis that drives the incredible food chain of this region that in turn provides for the birds that can be found here.

Along with millions of waterfowl that call Louisiana their winter home come the many different species of temperate migrants including songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds. These birds spend time foraging among the vast swamps and marshes of the "Pelican State," building energy reserves in preparation of the upcoming nesting season.

In part because of the tremendous numbers of waterfowl, Louisiana has long been known as the "Sportsman's Paradise." More and more people, however, are visiting Louisiana to experience our unique culture, fabulous food, spectacular history, and incredible birding.

To find out more information about birding coastal Louisiana, visit <http://www.louisianatravel.com>, <http://www.americaswetland.com>, or <http://birds.btnep.org>.

Pine Warbler
Photographer: David Cagnolatti
Tickfaw State Park near
Livingston, LA



Indigo Bunting
Photographer: David Cagnolatti
Bayou Manchac, south of Baton Rouge, LA

OCTOBER

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
I	2	3	4	5 Swamp Sparrows begin arriving in the State	6	7
8	9 Columbus Day	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, and other Nearctic raptors begin building up in south Louisiana	19	20	21
22 Peak migration of Nearctic/ Neotropical land birds across the State	23	24	25 Mallards, teal, pintail, shovelers, and other waterfowl begin to arrive in high numbers	26	27	28 Monarch Butterflies reach peak migration densities in south Louisiana
29 Daylight Savings Time Ends	30	31 Halloween				

Louisiana's Migratory Crossroads

Louisiana's geographic position and diverse habitats make it an important crossroads on the routes of many North American migrant birds, particularly along the State's southern coast. The vast natural marshes, swamps, and bottomland hardwoods all play host to hundreds of millions of migrating birds each year.

Louisiana is a brief rest stop for some birds and a final destination for others. During spring, songbirds, raptors, waterfowl, waders, and shorebirds cross or circle the Gulf of Mexico and make their way through Louisiana's barrier islands, coastal marshes, maritime woodlands, agricultural lands, and interior forests. Some of those migrants linger in Louisiana during the summer to nest and raise young. In fall, summer residents are joined by hordes of birds returning from the north, funneling south and westward along Louisiana's coast on return trips to their wintering grounds in Central and South America.

For more information about the importance of coastal Louisiana's habitats to migratory birds, go to <http://birds.btneq.org> or <http://losbird.org>



Purple Gallinule
Photographer: Brian Miller
Lacassine NWR, west of Lake Arthur, LA

SEPTEMBER

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
					I	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6	7 Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture shorebird surveys take place this month	8	9 Locally rare Mourning Warbler and Bell's Vireo reach peak migration densities in the cheniers
10	11	12 Canada Warblers reach peak migration densities along the Louisiana coast	13	14 Peregrine Falcons use platforms in southward fall migration	15	16 Peak staging/migration of tree ducks in marshes and rice fields
17	18 Southern Bald Eagles move in, searching for swamp nest sites	19	20 Flycatcher migration peaks in southern Louisiana	21	22	23 Autumn Begins
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

The Lord God Bird: In Search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

Even people who don't bird are now aware of the unbelievable news out of Arkansas – confirmed sightings of a species once thought extinct: the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Although unprecedented efforts are underway in Arkansas to find other individuals and protect habitats, new efforts may also be underway in Louisiana to actually continue abandoned searches of the past.

Once the heart of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's range, Louisiana's cypress swamps and in particular its bottomland hardwoods provided common sightings of this magnificent bird. By the late 1930's, the privately owned "Singer Woods tract" in Madison Parish was thought to be the last refuge for this species. A largely intact old-growth stand, the Singer Woods were considered for status as a national refuge; however, even the effort of several governors from nearby states failed to persuade the owner to sell the land to the Federal Government. Soon thereafter, the old growth forest was cut and the biologist following these birds lost track of them as they disappeared.

Now we believe that young from this small population of birds or young of other populations must have survived largely unnoticed until now. Or have they really gone unnoticed? Since the 1940's, reported sightings of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers continued to surface periodically. During the late 1990's, a graduate student from Louisiana State University believed he saw a pair of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in southeast Louisiana. The search was on! But after a couple months of sometimes intensive efforts to try and verify the initial claim, it was abandoned. If investigators would have continued for another 12 months, would they have been successful? Who knows, but some speculate about the Arkansas find and what that now means for Louisiana.

For more information about the search for the ivory-billed woodpecker in Louisiana, go to <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/IBW.html>



Brown Pelican
Photographer: Charles Bush
Dulac, LA

AUGUST

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
		I	2	3 Chimney Swift counts conducted this month	4	5
6	7	8	9 Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture shorebird surveys take place this month	10	11	12
13	14 Cloudless Sulphur butterflies migrate into Louisiana	15	16	17	18 Early migrants such as Yellow Warbler and Least Flycatcher begin appearing	19
20	21 Prickly Ash fruits ripen for fall-migrating flycatchers and vireos	22	23	24 Neotropical migrants feed on leaf roller eruptions in sweet acacia trees	25	26 Alligator eggs begin hatching
27 Family groups of Swallow-tailed Kites soar over Pearl, Atchafalaya, and Sabine River basins	28	29	30	31		

The Brown Pelican: The State Bird of Louisiana

“A wonderful bird is the pelican; his bill can hold more than his belican...” So begins a well-known limerick by Dixon Lanier Merritt that is not far from the truth. The pouch, suspended from the lower half of the pelican’s long, straight bill really can hold up to three times more than the stomach.

Brown Pelicans have few natural enemies. The biggest threat to pelican survival comes from humans, although hurricanes, flooding, and other natural disasters sometimes destroy ground nests. Human impact on the Louisiana State Bird during the last two centuries was dramatic. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, pelicans were hunted for their feathers, which adorned women’s clothing, particularly hats. During food shortages following World War I, fishermen claimed pelicans were decimating the commercial fishery resource and slaughtered them by the thousands.

Extirpated from Louisiana in the early 1960’s because of DDT contamination, it was looking as if a new State Bird would have to be designated. With the banning of DDT in 1972 and the reintroduction efforts of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries between 1968 and 1980, however, the Brown Pelican has been able to again fly over the open waters and marshes of south Louisiana. Recent estimates suggest that 159,095 young Brown Pelicans hatched along the Louisiana coast between 1971 and 2000. Today, Louisiana’s Brown Pelicans occur throughout their historical range, and the reintroduction program is one of many success stories in Louisiana’s conservation efforts.

For more information about Brown Pelicans in Louisiana, go to <http://www.lacoast.gov/articles/bps>



Tricolored Heron
Photographer: Charles Bush
Lake Martin, Cypress Island, LA

JULY

Audubon's Louisiana Years

Some know the story of John James Audubon while many others are familiar with his work as his paintings adorn homes and businesses worldwide. But did you know that Audubon spent time in Louisiana?

Born in 1785, Audubon spent his childhood and adolescent years growing up in France. At age 18, he arrived in the United States, spending nearly all of his adult life trekking through the forests and fields of the eastern United States in pursuit of his passion: painting the birds of North America.

Throughout the early 1800's, Audubon, while seeking to provide for his wife and two sons, made several failed attempts as an entrepreneur. By 1821, Audubon, now nearly penniless, moved to St. Francisville, Louisiana to work at the Oakley Plantation. There, he obtained a job teaching the daughter of rich plantation owners the social graces required of a young lady of her time and station. This left Audubon's afternoons free to scour the local woods to paint birds common to Louisiana.

Soon after, his wife Lucy moved to nearby Bayou Sara where she found a teaching job. There she stayed with her sons until 1830, while Audubon began searching earnestly along the east coast of the United States and overseas looking for publishers for his work. The Audubons departed Louisiana on New Year's Day, 1830, never to return to what the artist termed "a place where nature seems to have paused, as she passed over the earth, and opening her stores, to have strewed with unsparing hand the diversified seeds from which have sprung all the beauty and splendid forms which I should in vain attempt to describe."

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
						I Purple Martins shift to secondary staging areas in preparation for fall migration
2	3 North America's earliest fall neotropical migrant, the Louisiana Water-thrush, appears in Louisiana	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8
9	10 Fledgling Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice form gregarious "packs"	11	12	13 Migratory Bird Treaty Act signed into law on this day in 1918	14	15 Fall International Shorebird Survey period begins
16	17 Black-bellied Whistling-Duck broods appear	18	19	20	21	22 Shorebirds begin southern migration throughout the State
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Great Egret
Photographer: Ted Torres
Lake Martin, Cypress Island, LA

JUNE

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
				I Northbound migrant White-rumped Sandpipers passing through Louisiana	2	3
4 Red-spotted Purple butterflies peak in southern Louisiana	5	6	7 Breeding Bird Surveys con- ducted across Louisiana by dedicated volunteers	8	9	10 First broods of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds fledge
11	12	13	14	15	16 Alligators begin building nests and laying eggs	17
18 Father's Day	19 Families of King Rails and common Moorhens present throughout coastal Louisiana	20	21 Summer Begins	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Long-legged Waders

In spring each year, beginning in March and lasting through May and into June, thousands of wading birds gather into nesting rookeries throughout coastal Louisiana. Cloaked in breeding plumage and steeped in courtship rituals, the birds begin building crude nests from sticks, lay their eggs, and then fledge the next generation of young. These rituals are played out each year in many places within easy reach of birders wishing to get a glimpse of this spectacular event.

Hundreds of rookeries are known statewide, some of which are huge in terms of sheer numbers and species of birds. They include Great Blue Herons, Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Green Herons, Black-crowned Night Herons, Great Egrets, Cattle Egrets, Snowy Egrets, and Roseate Spoonbills, sometimes all in one colony.

Lake Martin, southeast of Lafayette, Louisiana, features one of the State's most accessible and largest nesting colonies. Bald Cypress and Buttonbush along the lake edge teem with thousands of birds. Alligators, too, are a common sight.

Although specific numbers are lacking, it is thought that Louisiana supports globally significant numbers of several species of colonial-nesting waterbirds, making Louisiana a prime destination for visitors interested in seeing and photographing these waterbirds.

For more information on wading birds in Louisiana, go to <http://birds.btnep.org>



Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Photographer: Bill Goulet
Westlake, LA

MAY

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
	I	2	3	4	5 Acadian Flycatchers, our latest neotropical migrant, return to Louisiana	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17	18	19	20 Brown Pelican nesting in full swing
21	22	23 Roseate Spoonbills, herons, egrets, & ibises nesting in wetland habitats across the State	24	25 Lacey Act signed into law on this day in 1900. The act aimed to re-store bird species populations	26	27 Breeding Bird Surveys conducted across Louisiana by dedicated volunteers
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31 Young Red-cockaded Woodpeckers leave cavity nests			

A Birding Mecca

Grand Isle is Louisiana's biggest and only inhabited barrier island. It is also the only barrier island large enough to support "chenier" forests. "Chenier" is a French word meaning live oak forest. The chenier forests, back barrier marshes, and sandy beaches make Grand Isle one of the premier birding places in North America.

Because of the variety of habitats found on Grand Isle, a visitor can see a wide variety of songbirds, colonial-nesting waterbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors on any given day with a minimal amount of effort.

The island's Hackberry, Live Oak, and Red Mulberry forests are particularly important to many species of colorful songbirds including tanagers, buntings, grosbeaks, warblers, vireos, and many others. These forests are especially important during spring, when migrating birds encounter inclement weather over the Gulf of Mexico. Exhausted, birds land at the first place they see, which are often the chenier forests of Grand Isle.

To find out more information about birding coastal Louisiana, visit <http://www.louisianatravel.com>, <http://www.americaswetland.com>, or <http://birds.btnep.org>.



Painted Bunting
Photographer: Bill Goulet
Cameron Parish

APRIL

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
						I April Fool's Day
2 Daylight Savings Time Begins	3 Wilson Plovers begin nesting along the Louisiana coast	4	5	6	7	8 Tennessee Warblers aggressively defend flowering Honey Locust trees driving away other songbirds
9 Palm Sunday	10	11	12	13 Osprey begin nesting in south Louisiana	14 Good Friday	15 Peak blooming for Louisiana Irises
16 Easter	17	18 Wild Turkey hens begin nesting	19	20 First broods of Northern Cardinals, Brown Thrashers, and other year-round songbirds fledge from nests	21	22 Male alligators start to bellow in Louisiana marshes
23 30	24	25	26 Neotropical songbird migration peaks on the Louisiana coast	27	28	29

The First Land They See

In spring, late winter cold fronts can still push through the State out into the Gulf of Mexico. Storms and north winds associated with these fronts can collide with millions of migrating birds heading north over the gulf from Mexico, and Central and South America. Exhausted birds must land at the first suitable high ground they encounter to rest, feed, and drink. Several times each spring the conditions are especially severe for migrant birds and the majority of individual migrants are forced to land along the coast. On those days, birders may observe literally dozens of species of warblers, vireos, thrushes, tanagers, grosbeaks, and other migrant songbirds.

This amazing phenomenon is called a "fallout."

Birders who are lucky or savvy enough to witness such an event will be amazed at the numbers of birds they see. Trees and shrubs can be teeming with colorful birds, while other birds search for food amongst the leaf litter of the forest floor. Nearly every species of Neotropical migratory landbird breeding in the eastern United States may be seen moving through Louisiana's coastal forested habitats during a major fallout.

A Red Mulberry tree with ripe fruits may be filled with a kaleidoscope mix of birds, including blood-red Summer Tanagers, velvety-red Scarlet Tanagers, orange Baltimore Orioles, burnt-orange Orchard Orioles, deep-blue Indigo Buntings, and multi-hued Painted Buntings. Intent on feeding and drinking, fallout birds often seem unconcerned with the attention of birders, and allow close study.

For more information on fallouts, go to <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/publications/birdscope/Summer1999/birdcast99133.html>



Chestnut-sided Warbler
Photographer: Brian Miller
Hollyman-Sheely Bird Sanctuary, LA

MARCH

Cheniers – One of Louisiana's Unique Habitats

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			I Ash Wednesday	2	3 Wood Duck broods begin to appear	4
5	6	7 Northern Parulas return to bottomland hardwood forests	8	9	10 Mottled Ducks begin nesting	11
12 Returning Blue-winged Teal mass in the coastal zone	13	14 Clean and hang hummingbird feeders	15 Spring International Shorebird Survey Period begins	16 Eastern Bluebirds begin building nests	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 Early arriving Neotropical migrants begin appearing along the Louisiana coast
19	20 Spring Begins	21	22	23	24 Shorebirds frequent nearby rice fields	25
26	27 More than 20 species of songbirds begin feeding on Live Oak catkins	28	29	30 Hummingbirds begin visiting tubular red flowers of Red Buckeye	31	

Across Louisiana's coastline, remnants of maritime live oak/hackberry forests, cloaked in a wash of Spanish moss and resurrection fern, struggle to resist the ravages of erosion, subsidence, and overuse caused by nature and humankind. Known locally as chenier, (pronounced Shan-year) these valuable habitats are critical for the millions of migratory birds that depend on them. Each spring, birds making the long perilous journey across the gulf rely on the cheniers to rest, forage, and find water. Likewise, in the fall, cheniers are the last refueling stop before making their journey south again, back across the gulf to the wintering grounds in the tropics.

Many coastal and inland communities along with state, federal, and non-profit organizations are working together to protect the existing forests and to replant areas that have been lost. On Grand Isle alone, over 18 acres of chenier forest have been protected and made open to the public for those wishing to bird or study the flora of the area.

The cheniers at "Peveto Woods", in Cameron Parish, Pecan Island in Vermilion Parish, and the "Grilleta Tract" on Grand Isle in Jefferson Parish offer tremendous birding opportunities, particularly in spring.

For more information about chenier habitats and their importance to migratory birds, go to <http://birds.btnep.org> or <http://www.braudubon.org/sanctuaries.asp>



Fulvous Whistling Duck
Photographer: Erik Johnson
Cameron, LA

FEBRUARY

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
			1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4
5	6	7 Clean and repair Eastern Bluebird boxes	8	9 Blooming Yellowtop fills the swamps with golden color	10	11
12 Wintering (Temperate) migrants begin migration northward	13 Wood Ducks begin nesting	14 Valentine's Day	15	16 American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrows and others feast on American Elm samaras	17 In 1938, James Tanner found an Ivory-billed Woodpecker nest with one chick. It fledged March 19th.	18
19	20 President's Day Yellow-throated Warblers return to the swamps	21	22	23	24 Great Blue Herons begin nesting	25
26 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks return to Louisiana	27	28 Mardi Gras				

A Long List of Visitors

Over 450 different species of birds have been found in Louisiana. Of that number, nearly half regularly migrate to or through Louisiana as they move from their nesting grounds in eastern North America and their wintering grounds in South and Central America.

Forested habitat in coastal areas harbor songbirds, raptors, and other land birds making their way to and from tropical wintering areas. Up to 80,000 migrant birds cross each mile of Louisiana coastline each day during the peak of spring migration providing for an unparalleled birding experience. These coastal woodlands provide critical resting and feeding habitat for millions of migrant birds after they have completed their arduous journey across the Gulf of Mexico.

Coastal wetlands, beaches, and barrier islands also provide important stopover habitat for migrant birds. Together, Louisiana's coastal wetlands, woodlands, and beaches support hundreds of millions of migrating birds each year, including waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds, and wading birds. Whether the birds are transients, summer residents, or winter residents, Louisiana's habitats are critical to their health.

For more information about Louisiana's birds, go to <http://losbird.org>



Merlin
Photographer: Bill Bergen
Grand Isle, LA

JANUARY

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
I New Year's Day	2	3	4	5 Spectacular flights of ducks and geese seen each evening at Lacassine NWR	6	7
8	9	10 Great Egrets initiate nesting activities	11	12 Plant native trees and shrubs this month	13	14
15 Clean and repair Purple Martin and Wood Duck nest boxes	16 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday	17	18	19	20 Red Maple blooms decorate the swamps	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 First Purple Martins appear in south Louisiana
29	30	31				

Louisiana's 2006 Birdwatching Dates to Remember

Eagle Expo 2006

February 3-4, 2006, Morgan City
contact info 985 395-4905

Audubon Country Birdfest

March 31, April 1-2, 2006, St. Francisville
contact info 225 721-0476

The Great Louisiana Birdfest

April 5-9, 2006, Mandeville
contact info 985 626-1238

Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration

April 21-23, 2006, Grand Isle
contact info 877 693-6700

Southwest Louisiana Migration Sensation

Lake Arthur
contact info 377 774-5923

Neotropical Songbird Tour Atchafalaya Basin

Sherburne Wildlife Management Area
contact info 337 394-7508

Wood Stork Week

late July, 2006, Sherburne Wildlife Management Area
contact info 337 948-0255

Feliciana Hummingbird Celebration

July 29-30, 2006, St. Francisville
contact info 225 721-0476

Folsom Hummingbird Festival

September 9, 2006, Folsom
contact info 985 796-9309

Lafayette Hummingbird Day

September 16, 2006, Lafayette
contact info 337 993-2473

Wings Over the Wetlands

October 6-7, 2006, Lafitte
contact info 800 689-4797

For more information about these events, please visit
<http://birdlouisiana.com>

Louisiana's Avian Experience

Birding the northern Gulf of Mexico region, in particular the coast of Louisiana, offers a birder with the opportunity to witness events found few other places on the planet. Combine this with Louisiana's unique culture, friendly people, and fantastic foods, and you'll probably agree that no other place heightens the senses so. Louisiana's tourism motto "Visit Louisiana: Leave Different" is not just a motto; it's reality.



Joseph Turner



Joseph Turner

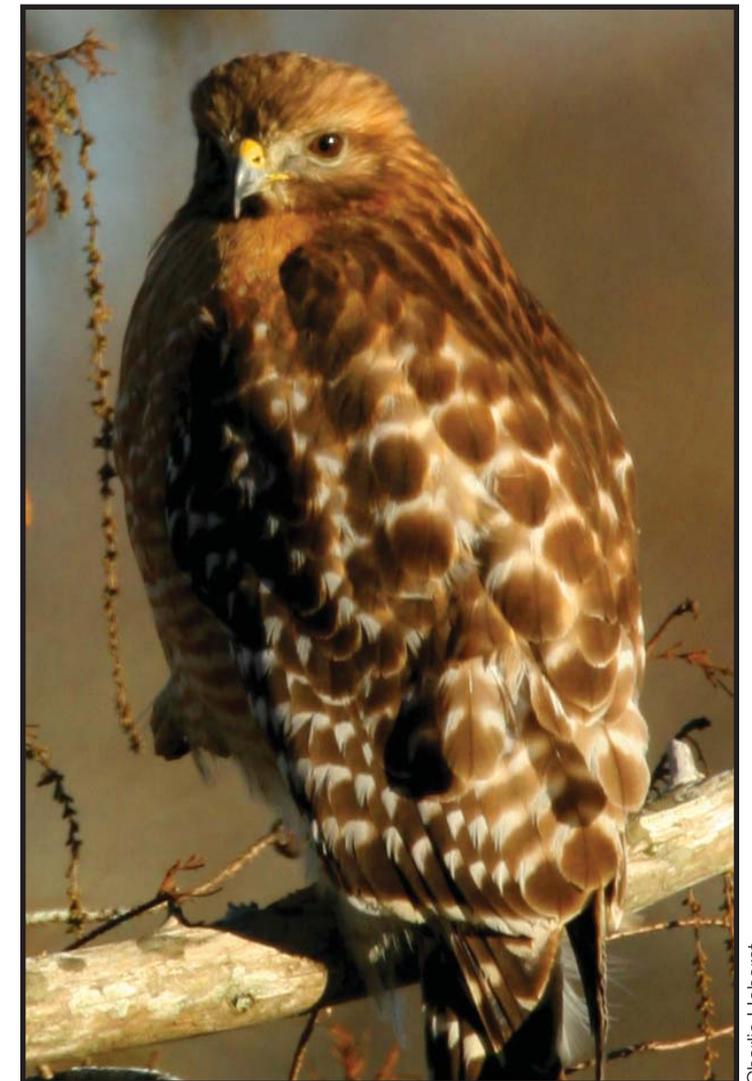
The Marvels of Spring Migration

Spring is definitely the finest time for a birder to be along the Louisiana coast. Migration, when in full swing, means millions upon millions of colorful Neotropical songbirds crossing our coastline every day. "Fallout" days, when bad weather causes an entire stream of birds crossing the gulf to settle directly into our coastal woodlands, offer a phenomenally spectacular birding opportunity. But songbirds are not "the only game in town." Migrating shorebirds and wading birds join year-round residents, as well as late-departing temperate migrants to make spring in Louisiana indeed a time to remember.

Following is an excerpt from the book by Brian Miller and William Fontenot, *Birds of the Gulf Coast*, that attest to the fascination of spring migration.

...Ah, spring on the Gulf Coast. To describe the bird population at that time of year, the term "Grand Central Station" comes to mind, but in reality that term may be a bit too confining. Beginning in midwinter, Purple Martins

initiate their northward trek from the tropics, reaching the U. S. Gulf Coast as early as late January. About one month later, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Barn Swallows, and Northern Parula and Yellow-throated Warblers follow suit. By mid-March, the avian trickle begins widening into a flow – at about the same time that local year-round Gulf Coast species (Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy Woodpeckers; Carolina Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; Brown Thrasher; and Northern Mockingbird, to mention a few) begin their courtship, breeding, and nesting rituals. By late April, the migratory faucet has opened up into a flood, with millions of flycatchers, vireos, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, orioles, buntings, and sparrows either crossing or circumnavigating the Gulf of Mexico on a daily basis. At the same time, many of the Gulf Coast's winter visitors, such as Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned Hawks; American Kestrels; Cedar Waxwings; Ruby-crowned Kinglets; American Robins; American Goldfinches; and Swamp, Song, Savannah, and White-throated Sparrows, are still soaking up food and warmth in preparation for their own treks back to northern breeding grounds...



Charlie Hobarst

The Heat and Passion of Summer

Not to be confused with each other, “heat and passion” mean two different things here. The experience of birding in Louisiana during summer would have to be confined to early morning and late afternoon hours as the combining of temperature and humidity make things rather inhospitable during midday. However, much unique avian activity remains to be witnessed during the summer season.

As migration wanes in the closing days of May, those migrants that stay and nest in Louisiana are already getting down to business setting up territories, building nests, laying eggs, and preparing for the parental duties of feeding tirelessly hungry mouths. Common migrants which nest in Louisiana include Prothonotary Warbler, Painted Bunting, Orchard Oriole, Summer Tanager, Great-crested Flycatcher, and others.

The most spectacular sights along coastal Louisiana during summer includes the wading bird rookeries located along the immediate coast and inland within Bald Cypress/Tupelo Gum Swamps. A number of these rookeries are easily accessible including Lake Martin near Lafayette and Miller’s Lake near Ville Platte. Both are large rookeries involving thousands of birds, including Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, White-faced Ibis, Tricolored Heron, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, and others. These fascinating occurrences allow for close study and provide photographers and birders alike with exceptional opportunities. Again, Miller and Fontenot describe it best.

Autumn: The Welcome Seasonal Change

Fall migration is characterized by the mass entrance of many species of migratory waterfowl into the wetlands of Louisiana’s coastal zone. Along with the waterfowl come the hordes of other temperate migrants including Yellow-rumped Warbler, Purple Finch, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Woodcock, American White Pelican, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, to name a few. Temperate migrants include those that spend their winters along the gulf coast and breeding seasons in the northern United States and Canada. Nearly 100 species of temperate migrants spend their winters in the Bald Cypress/Tupelo Gum swamps, bottomland hardwoods, and mixed upland forests of Louisiana. With these temperate migrants come the millions of Neotropical migrants headed back to their wintering grounds in Central and South America. For most, fall migration represents an incredible demanding and perilous journey, the navigating of some 2,000 or more miles to the tropics. Unknown to many, some individuals of species considered to be Neotropical migrants will spend their winters along the northern Gulf of Mexico making it difficult to define whether a species is a temperate migrant or Neotropical migrant. It is unknown why some individuals of Neotropical migrants stop short of what seems to be their intended destinations while those considered temperate migrants continue south into Mexico. Possibly these individuals are young birds who are not escorted by their parents. Others may be older birds who could not meet the tremendous energy demands of crossing the Gulf of Mexico.

In reality, fall migration for some species begins as early as July. As daylight hours diminish, conditions are again set for the same phenomenon played out for centuries. Yellow Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Blue-winged

Teal leave their breeding grounds, heading south much earlier than other migrants. Arriving in August, these birds are common along the edges of agricultural fields and crawfish ponds that follow the wooded ridges of southern Louisiana. As cool fronts begin to move into the region in September, millions of other species begin their southward journey, following the same path as earlier migrants.

Peak fall migration occurs in October. With the passage of each cool front, many species of migrants funnel in, concentrating along the northern gulf coast, which serves as a jumping off point for southward-bound birds. Prior to their departure, these birds continuously forage to build up their fat reserves. Because they are only focused on feeding, these birds are often moving quietly through the forest canopies and grasslands making birding more difficult. However, as successive cool fronts drive more birds south, wave after wave of migrants move through the area, resulting in outstanding birding opportunities.



...The massive rookeries of colonial-nesting wading birds (herons, egrets, ibises, etc.) and sea birds (gulls, terns, skimmers) rank among the most spectacular avian events to occur each summer along the Gulf Coast. At times, the array of sights and sounds associated with even a modest-sized rookery can overwhelm the uninitiated. Generally, wading birds set up rookeries within more protected or isolated swamps throughout the region. Most often, these sites are based along dense aquatic shrub borders filled with button bush or mangrove at the edges of large stands of mature bald cypress and tupelo gum trees. To discourage the efforts of egg-stealing raccoons and opossums, the birds seem to prefer confining their rookery sites to shrub thickets situated over permanent standing water – preferably water infested with alligators. Although the birds may lose an occasional nestling to the alligators below, the real nest mortality danger lies with mammalian predators, which are greatly discouraged by the presence of the alligators....



David Cagnolatti



David Cagnolatti



David Cagnolatti

Winter: Time of Plenty for the Avian World

The relatively moderate temperatures of winter along the Louisiana coast mean a time of plenty for the avian world. Temporarily released from the demands of breeding, birds typically default to gregarious behavior. Massive flocks of waterfowl, blackbirds, shorebirds, and songbirds such as American Robin and American Goldfinch feed and roost along Louisiana's coastal plain.

Joining the temperate visitors are the popular winter "vagrants" from the southwestern United States and Mexico. During this time, an amazing number of western hummingbird species show up in the gardens of south Louisiana residents. Rufous, Black-chinned, Buff-bellied, Anna's, Broad-tailed, Calliope, Allen's, Broad-billed and Blue-throated Hummingbirds arrive in increasing numbers. Conjecture abounds as to the reasons behind this relatively new phenomenon. Are these genetic deviants as some suggest, or are they simply shifting their winter ranges in response to global climatic changes? In any case, most folks

welcome the new arrivals with great anticipation each year. Some winter "hummingbird gardens" may hold as many as 20 or more birds of several species.

Whether it be hummingbird, merganser, warbler, hawk, plover, or sparrow, all are on a mission – to rest and fatten up in preparation for spring migration and the ensuing breeding season.

Go ahead and read on. Learn of the importance and uniqueness of some of Louisiana's rarest habitats and the vastness of others. And if you are moved by breathtaking and perhaps humbling experiences, visit the Louisiana coast to witness for yourself - our migration phenomenon.



David Cagnolatti