

NATURALIST NEWSLETTER

Louisiana Master Naturalist Greater New Orleans

Fall General Meeting Fun!

Join our General Meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2020. We will begin the business meeting at 6:30 p.m., followed by a special presentation from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. We will hear from Catherine Wheeler, Program and Outreach Coordinator of SOUL! [Click here to join the meeting.](#)

The following slate of officers and board members will be voted on at the General Membership meeting, as well.



The work of a Yellow-bellied sapsucker
Photo by: Kelly Guilbeau

Nominations for Officers

President: Janell Simpson

Vice President: Ann Butcher

Secretary: Joelle Finley

Treasurer: Michele Mire

Nominations for Vacant

Board Seats

Nicole Greene - 2022

Kristal Huggins - 2022

Dinah Maygarden - 2023

Michele Mire - 2023

Thank you to Jerry Feddersen and Rene Guas for serving as Vice-President and Treasurer, respectively. Thank you also to the following board members who are stepping aside: Sue Ellen Lyons, Elizabeth Manhart, Alahna Moore, and Erin Richardson. Your past volunteer service to the organization has been invaluable.

In This Issue:

- Board Elections
- Bradburn Award Winner Interview
- BioBlitz Report
- Fall Hummingbirds Seminar Review
- Future Seminars & Volunteer Events

Volunteer Events:

(Click event title for info and visit Track It Forward for more opportunities!)

November

- **7th** Mushrooms Northlake NC
- **11th** Nature Walk and Titivation
- **14th** Sankofa Trail Maintenance
- **14th** SOUL Tree Planting Gentilly

December

- **5th** Giant Salvinia Patrol Bayou St. John
- **5th** Snakes of LA Northlake NC

January

- **9th** Sankofa Trail Maintenance

Upcoming Seminars:

(Click title to join!)

Note: To provide security for our meetings, all attendees enter a waiting room and are only admitted when you are identified by the name on your account. Generic device names and phone numbers are not admitted to the seminar.

**November 11
Christmas Bird
Count**, Katie Percy,
Avian Biologist,
Audubon Louisiana

**November 18
RESTORE the
Mississippi River
Delta**, Faye
Matthews,
Mississippi River
Delta Restoration
Program, LMNGNO
Class of Fall '19

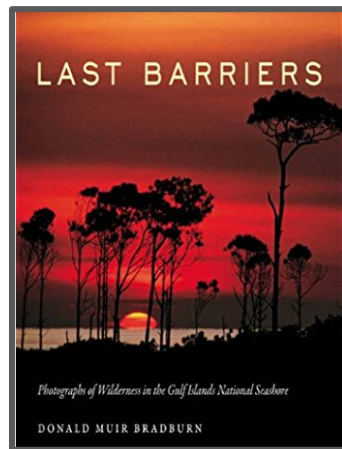
**December 2
How Can We Be
Good Wildlife
Neighbors?**, Tanee
Janusz

**January 6
Climate Change**,
Courtney Forbes

And the Award Goes to...

By: Dale Campo and Kelly Guilbeau

The Donald Muir Bradburn Outstanding Louisiana Master Naturalist Award winner is selected by each cohort to recognize the dedication, enthusiasm, and attitude of one of their peers. The well-deserved 2019 award was given to Dale Campo, and we sat down for a virtual chat to learn more about his experience during the workshops throughout the region.



Bradburn shared his award-winning photography with the world in books such as *Last Barriers: Photographs of Wilderness in the Gulf Islands National Seashore*.

What are memorable parts of your LMNGNO cohort experience?

During one outing I was able to observe and photograph a smallish snake at Bayou Sauvage NWR. At the next class I was trying to describe the snake to Dr. Bob and from my description we were able to narrow it down to two species. He was able to describe in minute detail how to differentiate the two. After pulling up the photograph I had taken and counting the scales on a line I was able to correctly identify the snake. Now that might seem like a little thing, but I LOVE details. Multiply that experience by several dozen and you can begin to understand what stands out to me!

How have you stayed involved with the LMN community?

After completing the class I have concentrated on volunteering at the Big Branch NWR and Bayou Sauvage NWR mostly in the area of Phenology. To some degree Phenology has become the perfect socially distanced activity to pursue during the “time of COVID-19”. My other interest is photography and I have donated a few wildlife shots to the Wildlife Refuge as well as the National Phenology Network for use in their internal and training publications.

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And the Award Goes to..., continued

What advice would you have for someone interested in becoming a naturalist?

Take full advantage of every opportunity offered during the training. There are experts in so many fields, making it so easy to get a glimpse into the science of our natural surroundings. Sample as many as possible. Really put effort into preparing for each outing. Then after you've seen what is available, you can begin to specialize in your favorite area to learn in more detail. It's like trying to "sip from the fire hose." There is just so much to absorb. Try to be ready and take advantage the experiences.

The Bradburn Award is based on nomination by your classmates. What does receiving this peer-nomination mean to you?

I am very honored to be chosen by my classmates. I hope that each and every one of my classmates and instructors knows that it was their support and patience that made it possible for me to exhibit the excitement and awe that led to me being chosen for the award. The only thing that would be better than winning the award is if it were a group award that the whole class could share in. If I did not say it enough during the class experience I'd like to give a great big THANK YOU! to all the instructors who volunteered their time and knowledge to our class. And thanks to the entire class of Fall 2019 for being so supportive.

Have you visited the new LMN store yet?



T-shirts, Hats, Go-Cups, Oh My!

Buy your favorite swag at our brand new online shop and shout it from the rooftops that you are a proud Louisiana Master Naturalist.

Visit lmngno.square.site today!

A Sunday Morning Bioblitz

By: Bill Van der Meer, Class of Spring 2020

On a grey and blustery September morning on the cusp of yet another tropical weather system, three teams of LMNGNO volunteers set out to take part in the “Home River Bioblitz 2020” project. Using the iNaturalist application, volunteers were tasked with observing and documenting as many plant and animal species as possible during a one hour period in what are known as riparian habitats. These habitats are unique plant and animal communities adjacent to watersheds such as bayous, streams, rivers, estuarine tidal outlets, etc. According to bioblitz tallies, the global effort consisted of 279 observers documenting a total of 1,816 species. Our teams worked three locations in the Greater New Orleans area and succeeded in sharing 205 tentative identifications with the iNaturalist worldwide community.

Thanks to all who volunteered for this event. They are:

Jean Lafitte National Park, Barataria Preserve, Bayou Coquille
Cathy Schieffelin (Team Leader), Maureen Missavage, Rebecca Stilling, Michelle Mire, and Sarah Tetlow

University of New Orleans, Coastal Education Research Facility, Chef Menteur Pass

Bill Van der Meer (Team Leader), Dinah Maygarden, Jazmin Castillo, Sue Marchal, Tanee Janusz, and Barbara Johnson

Northlake Nature Center, Bayou Castine

Jerry Feddersen (Team Leader), Byron Almquist, Donna Bertucci, Lana Dessauer, Lisa Swenson, and Bonnie Schmidt

Coordinating the event was Dr. Mary Mysing Gubala whose efforts were invaluable to its ultimate success. And thanks also to Dinah Maygarden for opening up the CERF bioswale for us.

BioBlitz in Action



Fall Back for Fall Hummingbirds

By: Donna Bertucci, LMNGNO Spring 2020 Class

I have attended the many Wednesday Zoom webinars hosted by LMNGNO, all of which were outstanding. One of my favorite presentations was “Fall Hummingbirds” by Ms. Jane Patterson, President of the *Baton Rouge Audubon Society*. Ms. Patterson provided us with many interesting details about the many species of hummingbirds.

The More Hummingbird Facts You Know...

- More than 330 different species of hummingbirds have been identified.
- Most live in Central and South America. Few hummingbird species live in the USA for all or part of each year.
- A hummingbird's life span is 3 - 7 years.
- Hummingbirds are territorial and chase away the competition.
- Hummingbirds are amazing flyers as they can flap their wings 50-70 times per second. They fly using a figure 8 shape and can move forward, backward, sideways, and hovering. They cannot walk but can perch and sit still.
- They have a flexible bill with a long tongue that draws up the nectar, giving them energy to catch small insects, spiders, and flies. Hummingbirds prefer tubular shaped flowers in all colors but will visit others – about a 1000 flowers per day. Some other plants that hummingbirds like are zinnias, trumpet creeper, Turk's cap and other flowers with high nectar contents. It is a great idea to share the plants with friends.



The world's smallest hummingbird, native to Cuba

The “Near Threatened” bee hummingbird, *Mellisuga helenae*, is the world's smallest bird and is native to Cuba. Its mass is 0.056 – 0.071 ounces and its length is 2 – 2.4 inches. The lifespan is about 7 years.

The giant hummingbird, *Patagona gigas*, is the largest of the hummingbird family, weighing 0.63 - 0.85 ounces and is 8 - 9 inches in length. These hummingbirds inhabit the higher altitude of the Andes Mountains in the summer and lower altitude in the winter.



The Giant hummingbird

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Hummingbird Videos Suggested by Donna

(Click title to watch!)

Secret of the Hummingbird's Tongue, PBS Nature (4:18)

How Do Hummingbirds Fly? Scientists Figure Out the Secrets (2:49)

Meet the Smallest Bird on Earth, PBS Nature (3:12)

Giant Hummingbird: The Biggest Bird of the Hummingbird Species, Hummingbird Spot (2:22)

Ruby-throated Hummingbird Facts (4:03)

The Hyper-Aggressive Rufous Hummingbird (3:48)

Hummingbirds, continued



An adult male Ruby-throated hummingbird



An adult male Rufous hummingbird

The Ruby-throated hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*, is the most common hummingbird seen east of the Mississippi River. The male has a “red” throat which, we learned, is not a pigment; it is a structure. The feathers are actually black but the color red is what is refracted to our eyes. In southeast Louisiana, we may see them in early March when mating begins.

The Rufous hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus*, migrates from southern Mexico to southern Alaska, almost 4,000 miles. Some of these birds winter in the Gulf South. The male rufous is red and gold in color and the female rufous is a green with a rust color on both sides of her body.

The best feeder is one that is easy to clean. Ms. Patterson recommended the *First Nature* 32-ounce feeder. Clean it with hot water. To make the 20% sucrose solution, use 1-part sugar and 4-parts water. It is best to hang it in the shade and change the solution every other day. During the winter, replace the 20% sucrose solution every 3 or 4 days. Ms. Paterson emphasized not to use the red dye as nature’s nectar is not red, it is clear. To deter bees, wasps and ants, use a feeder without yellow flowers. Also, do not use any sticky ointment as this may harm the birds.

After listening to Ms. Patterson’s presentation, I was so inspired that I went to a local discount store the next day and bought a *Pennington* hummingbird feeder with 6-stations of white flowers including an ant moat for about \$11. After one week, a female or an immature male ruby-throated hummingbird came to visit. I only see the one but am hoping for others to come visit me.