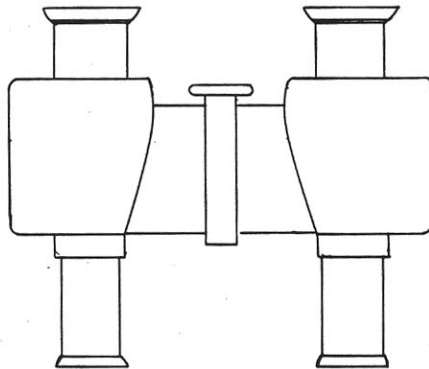




Louisiana State University
Agricultural Center
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service



**LOUISIANA
SEA GRANT**
College Program



LOUISIANA BIRDING

Coastal Louisiana plays host to a major portion of North America's waterfowl population during the winter. But that is just part of the picture. There are literally millions of other feathered friends that live or visit Louisiana during the year. Louisiana ranks in the top 10 states for bird species richness with over 400 different species on record. These include many residents which spend their entire life cycle here and a larger number of migrants that pass through only at certain times.

The coastal region of the Pelican State offers some of the best bird watching opportunities anywhere. With the diversity, quality and expanse of different habitats, the challenge exists to find as many species as possible. Beaches at Grand Isle and along Cameron Parish offer the chance to see many kinds of gulls, terns, sea birds and shore birds. Waterfowl of every kind can be seen in the marshes from St. Bernard to Terrebonne to Cameron. The cheniers or "islands in the marsh" in southwestern Louisiana afford a resting stop for migrants heading to or from their wintering homes across the Gulf. The swamps around Lake Maurepas and the Atchafalaya Basin attract many other bird species as do the rice fields to the south of Lafayette.

Bird watching or "Birding" is fast becoming one of the most popular wildlife related pastimes. What starts as casual observations of pigeons in Jackson Square, seagulls over Barataria Bay or Snowy Egrets at Avery Island, soon leads to greater awareness of the many kinds of birds. Curiosity is aroused by the aerial acrobatics of Purple Martins, the dive bombing feeding behavior of the Belted Kingfisher or the broken wing act of a Killdeer.

Birding can be enjoyed by anyone, anytime and anywhere. A pair of binoculars and a pictorial field guide are helpful during birding expeditions. Time of day, season of the year, weather and habitat type will influence the kinds of birds out and about. But whether you spend the whole weekend, a Saturday morning or just happen to notice an unusual bird

in your backyard, birding can be a lot of fun.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE BOOKS

There are a number of field guides available which can help you identify the birds you see. Some of the favorite birding books include: "Audubon Society Field Guide To North American Birds," "National Geographic Society Field Guide To The Birds of North America," and "A Field Guide To The Birds Of Eastern and Central America" by Roger Troy Peterson. These references provide color pictures and indicate distinguishing characteristics of any kind of bird you would possibly see in Louisiana. A brief text on each bird gives a further description as well as habitat, breeding and other interesting facts. These references are available at most local bookstores.

Another noteworthy book is "Louisiana Birds" by the renowned Louisiana ornithologist George Lowery, Jr. Though not meant as a field identification guide, it does provide excellent pictures and descriptions. What is most interesting are the stories and accounts of each species as studied and experienced by the late Dr. Lowery during his lifetime of research and field work.

HOW MANY OF THESE HAVE YOU SEEN

Brown Pelican	Greater Yellowlegs	Carolina Wren
Great Blue Heron	Common Snipe	Gray Catbird
Glossy Ibis	Forster's Tern	Eastern Bluebird
Mottled Duck	Black Skimmer	Loggerhead Shrike
Wood Duck	Barred Owl	Myrtle Warbler
Northern Pintail	Common Flicker	Eastern Meadowlark
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Kingbird	Boat-tailed Grackle
Clapper Rail	Barn Swallow	Fox Sparrow
Purple Gallinule	American Woodcock	Piliated Woodpecker
Wilson's Plover	Herring Gull	Eastern Phoebe
Pied-billed Grebe	Mourning Dove	Blue Jay
Cattle Egret	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Brown Thrasher
Louisiana Heron	Common Nighthawk	Indigo Bunting

A "Field Check-List of Louisiana Birds" is available from the Louisiana Ornithological Society, LSU Museum of Zoology, Baton Rouge, LA 70803. Programs on bird watching are available in some areas sponsored by local chapters of the National Audubon Society.