

# NATURALIST NEWSLETTER

Louisiana Master Naturalist Greater New Orleans

## Our Spring General Membership Meeting

Join us on Zoom for the quarterly general membership meeting on February 3, 2021. The business meeting will take place at 6:30 for the certification of new members, announcing the Bradburn recipients of the 2020 classes, and certificates of perfect attendance at the 2020 workshops. Certificates will be mailed to newly certified members. We will hand out name badges in person at a social event at City Park at a later date.

Our speaker for the meeting is Kaye London, member of the Spring 2016 class and recipient of the Donald Muir Bradburn award from her class. She will speak about the Endangered Species Act.

ZOOM LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86059461161>  
Meeting ID: 86059461161

**Note:** Attendees must use a named device to be admitted to Zoom meetings and seminars.

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***Iris fulva*** copper iris  
Photo by Bill Van der Meer

## Volunteer Opportunities:

Visit the "Events" calendar in **Track It Forward** for upcoming functions in your area

## And the Awards go to.....

### Donald Muir Bradburn Outstanding Louisiana Master Naturalist Award, Greater New Orleans

The late Dr. Donald Muir Bradburn (1924-2012) was a pathologist and life-long naturalist, most noted for his photography. LMNGNO wishes to honor the outstanding graduate of Spring and Fall 2020 classes whose enthusiasm, attitudes, dedication to learning, collegiality with classmates, and expansion of knowledge have been chosen solely by their respective classmates to deserve the honor of being named the Donald Muir Bradburn Louisiana Master Naturalist Award winner. The honorees are:

Seth M. Nehrbass, Class of Spring 2020

Gardner Goodall, Class of Fall 2020

### AmazonSmile Contributions:

If you order from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), you can donate to LMNGNO by going instead to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), designate your approved charitable organization to be LMNGNO, and from then on place your orders through [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). It will be a seamless switch – all your account records stay intact, including AmazonPrime if you use it.

With each order, 0.5% of your purchase amount will go into a fund for LMNGNO – **there is no extra charge for you, but a percentage of your personal Amazon purchases will be used to support natural history advocacy in Louisiana!**

## Seminars:

Wednesday seminars are now held on the first Wednesday of each month.. The topics and speakers for the next several months are:

### March 3

Chris Reid LSU: Creating your own field guide with a plant portfolio

### April 7

Andrew Barron (LMNGNO: Board Member and Workshop Educator) BTNEP: Watershed Water Quality

### May 5

James Beck: New Orleans Mosquito Control: Common Mosquitoes of Southeast Louisiana

### June 2

Franziska (Fran) Trautmann: Glass Half Full: Glass Recycling and Reuse

## New Life Members

Karl Becnel (Fall 2014)  
Tricia Leblanc (Fall 2019)  
Michele Mire (Fall 2019)  
Carol Rice (Fall 2018)

## Newly Certified Master Naturalists

The end of a truly insidious year was a long time coming, but the Spring and Fall 2020 classes are behind us. The pandemic brought untold physical and emotional hardship upon our communities, which made our own efforts to stay the course feel like a minor inconvenience. In fact for most if not all who were able to stick it out, there was a lot of joy derived by just being able to get out and into the forests and marshes. Thanks to some very creative adaptive strategies on the part of our chapter's leadership, teachers, volunteers and students alike, we made it happen. The LMNGNO is pleased to recognize those who have completed all of the course requirements and earned the coveted Louisiana Master Naturalist certification. Congratulations are in order.

### Spring 2019

*Maureen OBrien*

### Fall 2019

*Orr Adams*

*Tricia LeBlanc*

### Spring 2020

*Donna Bertucci*

*Seth Nehrbass*

*Bonnie Schmidt*

*Lisa Swenson*

*Braian Tome*

*Bill Van der Meer*

*Janna Wisiewski*

### Fall 2020

*Kelly Gilbeau*



Spring 2020 Class



Fall 2020 Class

*Photos by Ann Rogers*



## LMNGNO Fall 2019 Class Reunion

By: Nicole P Greene, LMNGNO Fall 2019 Class

A few weeks ago Jo Ann Dolan, Meg and Orr Adams, and I, as well as Sankofa Wetland Park Director, Tricia LeBlanc, met up at the Sankofa Trail on a Saturday. We were all so delighted to see each other that we decided to organize a class reunion. After much email correspondence, Jo Ann, Meg and I decided on a date, time and place. Meg generously offered the Volunteers' Center at City Park, and since we thought we should organize a Naturalist activity, Jo Ann set up a bioblitz, and Meg found a few prizes for the winners.

Sunday, November 15th, was a perfect fall day, and about twelve of our class showed up at 11 am. We sat around picnic tables, masked, of course, while conversation flowed. At about 12:15, a little behind schedule, we decided we should start the bioblitz. Several of us had only recently downloaded the iNaturalist app. We then discussed the day's project, compared notes, and helped each other.

Finally, realizing our lack of preparation, we decided to walk the trails of Nature's Notebook in Couturie Forest, to simply enjoy the day and the outdoors. Jeremy Miller and Michele Mire made the most observations, and got a glimpse of what he believed to be a red squirrel and took some wonderful photos.

We reassembled at about 1 pm to meet Janell Simpson and Carol Rice, who presented certificates along with pins and badges to recently qualified naturalists.

We continued to socialize where some of us shared titles of our recent Naturalist readings and shared suggestions for volunteer hours. We vowed to practice using iNaturalist; and most importantly, we decided to meet again before the end of 2020.



***Sciurus carolinensis***

eastern gray squirrel

*Photo by Jeremy Miller*

## Wakodahatchee Wetlands, A Birder's Paradise And More By: Bill Van der Meer

While wintering in south Florida, I often used to head west out of Delray Beach with camera gear in tow towards the Everglades and a wetland known as Wakodahatchee. With a footprint of fifty acres and a roughly three quarter mile long boardwalk the site contains an amazingly prolific and diverse ecosystem consisting of subtropical and tropical flora and fauna. With the seemingly endless expanse of housing subdivisions,



***Egretta tricolor***  
tricolor heron

malls, and golf courses racing behind me, the terrain opens up to more or less wide open farmland and palmetto scrub. Arriving early to get one of the few available parking spaces, I was greeted by a big red sun and a host of herons, storks, gallinules and raptors, all perched at their usual stations.

The scene of life is almost disney-like in character where robotic representations of animated look-alikes entertain the masses. But these beings were very real indeed and I'd come to regard them as friends because they posed so well. They were also close enough so that I was able to easily frame them with my 70-300mm lens where very little cropping and blow ups were necessary.

I suspect that over time they had lost their fear of *Homo sapiens* because they had become acquainted and had attained a comfort level by the borders separating them.

Where else can you witness a pair of great blue herons tending a clutch of chicks not forty feet away or be scolded by a red wing black bird some ten feet behind you? Hundreds of warblers in winter plumage fluttered in and out of the live oaks along the edges as a marsh hawk took in the big picture from his post.

Green Iguanas basked in the sun as pirates of the wetlands (gators) glided along and underneath. I eventually found my focus beginning to change the greater the frequency of my visits and the longer I stayed. Instead of merely looking for portraits of species, I began to appreciate their interaction with the habitat and with each other. Feeding, reproducing, roosting, preening, soaking and remaining acutely aware all comes into play.



***Agelaius phoeniceus***  
red-winged blackbird

## Wakodahatchee, continued

And there's no shortage of drama, most of which is the game between predators and prey. I had been watching one of my all time favorite birds, a green heron. She was clinging to a low hanging branch just off the boardwalk. I think that even the best of wood carvers would be hard pressed to replicate the color gradations and sharp patterns of a green heron.

But there she was, completely still and intent on the subsurface activity beneath her. Green herons are divers and fortunately for me I was more or less able to predict about when she was ready to take the plunge as she slowly stretched her head and neck towards a target. After several attempts and a high burst of exposures I got the money shot of her outstretched body in mid air with the tip of her beak just inches above the water's surface.

Opening in 1996, The Wakodahatchee Wetlands is a magnificent example of a water authority who recycles highly treated wastewater through a natural filtration process. The wetland acts as a percolation pond, returning billions of gallons of fresh water back into the water table.

In terms of species and sheer diversity, these south Florida wetlands have a lot in common with our Louisiana waters. Recalling this personal experience only reinforces what I've learned as a naturalist about patience, humility and a holistic viewpoint about how interconnected we are.



***Butorides virescens*** green heron  
Photos by Bill Van der Meer



### Wanted: Contributing Authors

Anyone interested in sharing information, photos or submitting an article for publication in the LMNGNO newsletter may contact Bill Van der Meer for more information and guidelines. Volunteer hours will apply.

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