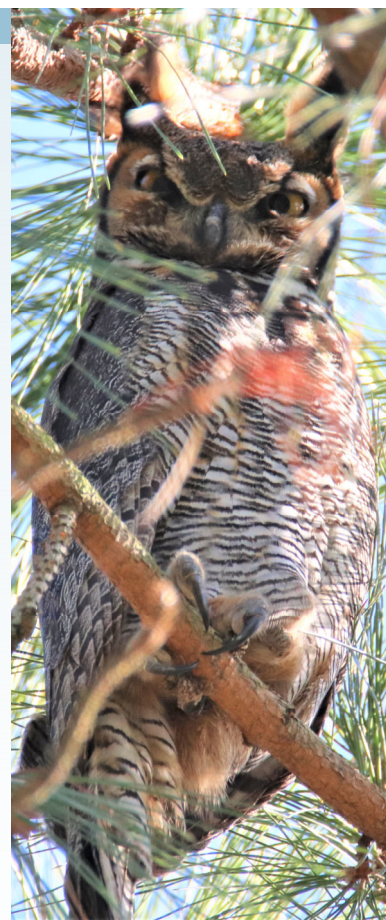




THE UNIVERSITY of
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Issue 1



Urban Bird Habitat and Environmental Education at the University of New Orleans Newsletter

Funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Urban Bird Treaty Program via the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation—Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program 2021

Project Description

This project was established to create an urban birding trail at the University of New Orleans (UNO); initiate regular campus bird counts; plant 120 native trees and shrubs along the trail route; launch UNO participation in trash cleanup events; and provide 375 hands-on, expert-led environmental educational experiences to UNO TRiO Upward Bound students. These efforts will enhance bird habitat along a key migration corridor running through one of the nation’s most deforested cities; expand community tree canopy; improve public open spaces; avert waste from local waterways and improve awareness of the impacts of litter; and engage the community (especially its underserved youths) in nature appreciation, environmental protection, habitat restoration, and citizen science.

Why the University of New Orleans?

Located at the Mississippi Flyway’s southern gateway, New Orleans is a key stopover for migrating birds. However, the city struggles with deforestation and pollution, and its widespread poverty, struggling schools, and lack of a robust community environmental ethic threaten to perpetuate these problems. With its 195-acre campus on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain and rich connections with diverse and underserved students, the University of New Orleans (UNO) has unique potential to help by having areas available to repopulate with bird friendly plants and along with local partners, provide expert-led, hands-on environmental educational experiences to local students, empowering them to become lovers and stewards of the natural environment in their community and beyond.

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Special points of interest

- 66 trees planted
- 100 eBird checklists submitted
- Over 141 volunteers
- 572 volunteer hours
- 311 environmental educational experiences



Partners

During the proposal writing stage of this grant, several partners were identified to contribute to the goals of the project. These groups include Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences Coastal Education Program (UNO), TRiO Upward Bound (UNO), the Orleans Audubon Society, Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater New Orleans, Pontchartrain Conservancy, Office of Research (UNO), the Urban Entrepreneurship & Policy Institute, and the Native Plant Initiative of Greater New Orleans. To date, several additional groups have engaged in the projects programming. These include Civic Studio; Audubon Aquarium of the Americas; Audubon Nature Institute; College Beyond; New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, and Rodent Control Board; and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



Dr. Jennifer Coulson (Orleans Audubon Society) presented a Great Horned Owl and Harris Hawks to Trio Upward Bound Students. March 7, 2022

“A bird does not sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song.” - Maya Angelou



Habitat Management

The first tree planting event took place on January 29, 2022. The plantings took place in the northwest corner of UNO’s main campus, around the woodlot to the east of the Fine Arts Building. Over 70 volunteers participated. 58 trees were planted in January, with an additional 8 added in April. Trees planted include:

- 2 x Nuttall oak (15 gal.)
- 3 x winterberry holly (10 gal.)
- 5 x eastern redcedar (10 gal.)
- 3 x Mexican plum (7 gal.)
- 3 x yaupon holly (7 gal.)
- 3 x possumhaw (3 gal.)
- 3 x American hornbeam (3 gal.)
- 3 x swamp cyrilla (3 gal.)
- 3 x sweet bay magnolia (3 gal.)
- 6 x winged sumac (3 gal.)
- 5 x American beautyberry (3 gal.)
- 5 x Virginia willow (3 gal.)
- 3 x wax myrtle (3 gal.)
- 5 x arrowwood viburnum (3 gal.)
- 6 x Mrs. Schiller’s Delight viburnum (3 gal.)
- 3 x fringe tree (3 gal.)
- 5 x pokeberry (1 gal.)



TRiO Upward Bound Students participate in a tree planting event on January 29, 2022

Habitat Restoration

Thus far, our project efforts have concentrated on the 3-acre woodlot parcel adjacent to the Fine Arts building near the northwest corner of campus. We have held two workdays to remove invasive species from this parcel, using a combination of hand pulling and mechanical removal. We also identified valuable native species. Because the optimal planting season in New Orleans is during the cool winter months, we have paused our efforts until temperatures cool, at which time we will resume plantings in the second 1-acre parcel near the Liberal Arts building.

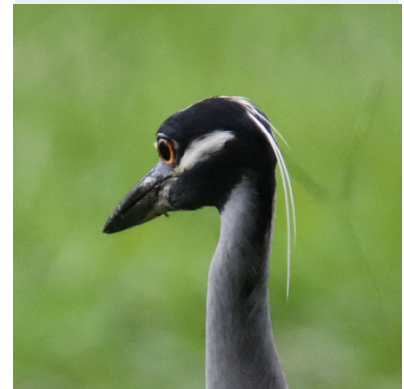


Clean up crew! November 6, 2021

Birds of UNO



White Ibis - May 26, 2022



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron - May 24, 2022



Mississippi Kite - May 12, 2022



Site Monitoring

Each week during the academic semester, project team members have conducted campus bird counts to monitor local bird populations. Data from these counts have been recorded on the “University of New Orleans—Main Campus” eBird hotspot. Alongside these organized weekly counts, project team members and members of the local birding community have contributed additional observations for a total of 100 complete checklists, as of May 1, 2022. A total of 257 people have participated in these bird counts for over 116 hours of observation time. Of these checklists, 66 have been submitted by parties including project team members, and 34 have been submitted by members of the local birding community including several individuals who have been intimately involved with our efforts.



Bird watching during Earth Day April 22, 2022

Educational Outreach

This project has provided 311 environmental educational experiences to TRiO Upward Bound students, connecting these youths with a variety of expert community partners and providing them with crucial opportunities to appreciate nature and participate in conservation. Activities included so far:

- November 13, 2021 Marine Debris: A Global Issue with Local Solutions with Pontchartrain Conservancy
- November 20, 2021 Canoeing and Environmental Exploration at UNO Shea Penland Coastal Education and Research Facility with Dinah Maygarden, Liz Sigler and John Bishop
- December 4, 2021 “Seeds & Beats” Wildflower Meadow Maintenance and Landscape Architecture Class with Civic Studio
- January 29, 2022 Tree planting event on UNO campus
- March 5, 2022 Live Raptor Demonstration: Dr. Jennifer Coulson, Orleans Audubon Society
- March 12, 2022 Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge trail walk with Dinah Maygarden and John Bishop
- April 30, 2022 UNO Nature Walk, Introduction to nature apps: Merlin, Seek with Liz Sigler and Dinah Maygarden
- June 9, 2022 Owl Pellet Dissection with Dinah Maygarden Liz Sigler and Bret Forester and Bates
- June 13, 2022 Watersheds: Connecting our Nation’s Waterways with Pontchartrain Conservancy
- June 16, 2022 Birds and Their Bills: Wendy Rihner, Orleans Audubon Society
- June 23, 2022 Investigating the origin of Birds and dinosaurs: Dinah Maygarden Liz Sigler and Bret Forester Bates
- June 30, 2022 Investigating the origin of Birds and dinosaurs cont. and Bird Wings with Dinah Maygarden Liz Sigler and Bret Forester Bates
- July 7, 2022 Dr. J. Drew Lanham zoom; Q&A with the students

Volunteer Participation

To date, this project has drawn on contributions from the University of New Orleans; Orleans Audubon; Pontchartrain Conservancy; Native Plant Initiative of Greater New Orleans; Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater New Orleans; Civic Studio; Audubon Aquarium of the Americas; Audubon Nature Institute; College Beyond; New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, and Rodent Control Board; and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. These 11 organizations represent more than double the number of partners we had projected in our proposal, and we hope to continue expanding our network further in the coming months. The 141 volunteers who have contributed a total of 572 hours to our project demonstrate great local enthusiasm for this type of work, heralding a bright future for UNO-led environmental projects going forward.



“If birds can glide for long periods of time, then... why can’t I?” - Orville Wright

Upcoming Events

Our project team is looking forward to Fall/Spring programming and is currently organizing activities.

Fine Arts Woodlot activity schedule:

Saturday, October 29, 2022: Woodlot maintenance day (November 12, 2022 back up day)

Saturday, December 3, 2022: Planting event

Saturday, January 28, 2022: Planting event

All activities will take place around the Fine Arts woodlot (east of the Fine Arts Building)

TIME: 9:00 am—noon

Please bring water, snacks, gloves, pointy tipped shovel (if you can), and wear long pants, closed-toed shoes, and socks.

Directions: From Leon C. Simon, enter campus and proceed to the corner of Founders Road and Levee Road. Parking will be available in the gravel lots surrounding the woodlot.

Fall Weekly Bird Walks

Wednesdays: Noon to 1:00 pm: meet at the east side of the Administration Building (library side)

Contact Us

birding@uno.edu

Email us if you are interested in these activities and would like email updates.



University of New Orleans

The University of New Orleans is a comprehensive urban research university committed to providing educational excellence to a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body. The University is one of the region's foremost public resources, offering a variety of world-class, research-based programs, advancing shared knowledge and adding to the region's industry, culture and economy. The University of New Orleans, as a global community asset, serves national and international students and enhances the quality of life in New Orleans, the state, the nation, and the world, by participating in a broad array of research, service learning, cultural and academic activities

Meet the Team

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Dinah Maygarden, M. Ed.
Research Associate, Education Program Director (Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences)

Lynette Bates, MTh
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Bret Forester Bates, Student Worker
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Photo Credits

Page 1 Great Horned Owl (Liz Sigler)
Page 2 top photo (Liz Sigler), bottom photo (Lynette Bates)
Page 3 top photo (Lynette Bates), bottom photo (John Bishop), Bird photos (Liz Sigler)
Page 4 Left side photos (Liz Sigler); Earth Day (Esther Clowney)
Pages 5 and 6 (Liz Sigler)



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