



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 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.

Inside this issue

Visiting the Campus.....	2
Habitat Management	2
Habitat Restoration	3
Site Monitoring	4
Educational Outreach.....	4
Volunteer participation	5
Upcoming Events	5

Special points of interest

- 140 trees & 43 perennials planted
- 212 eBird checklists submitted
- Over 798 volunteers (some repeats)
- 1471 volunteer hours
- 476 environmental educational experiences

Visiting the Campus

Directions: From Leon C. Simon, enter campus, via Founders Road and proceed to the curve of Founders Road by the woodlot. Visitor parking signs are located on the north side of the woodlot in the gravel.



“Tame birds sing of freedom. Wild birds fly.” - John Lennon

Habitat Management

The second tree planting event took place on December 3, 2022 and the third on January 28, 2023. The plantings took place in the 1-acre parcel near the Liberal Arts Building. Over 70 volunteers participated. A total of 74 trees were planted and 43 perennials.

Trees planted include:

December 3, 2022

9 X Green Ash, Pin Oak (15 gal.)
 14 X Eastern Red Cedar,
 Swamp Tupelo, Spruce Pine (15 gal.)
 2 X Carpinus caroliniana
 7 X Eastern Redbud, Tulip Poplar (7 gal.)
 5 X Yaupon Holly 'Hodgkins Shadow' donated by Jefferson Feed (15 gal)
 17 X native perennials for Woodlot Island Plantings (1 gal.)
 26 X 4" Perennials for Woodlot edges (Blue Mistflower, Eupatorium serotine)
 Native Plant Seed for Broadcasting at Woodlot

January 28, 2023

36 each (3 gal):
 Winged Sumac,
 Bur Oak,
 Swamp Chestnut Oak,
 Mockernut Hickory,
 Cherry Laurel,
 Yaupon Holly
 and
 1 X Chalk Maple (7 gal.)





TRiO Upward Bound Students participate in a tree planting event on January 28, 2023.

Habitat Restoration

Efforts on the 3-acre woodlot parcel adjacent to the Fine Arts Building near the northwest corner of campus included three workdays to remove invasive species from this parcel and 2 planting days that added 66 new native trees and shrubs and 43 perennials to expand cover, increase species diversity, and provided additional nutrition to migratory and resident birds using the woodlot. Since we did not foresee the need to remove invasive species from the woodlot prior to planting, the level of restoration achieved at this site significantly exceeded our initial expectations. Efforts in the 1-acre parcel near the Liberal Arts Building included two planting days that added 74 trees to this area. This totaled to 140 tree/shrubs and 43 perennials in a 4-acre area.



Clean up crew! November 12, 2022

Birds of UNO



Bay Breasted Warbler - April 26, 2023



Blue-headed Vireo - November 9, 2022



Cedar Waxwings - February 8, 2023



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 212 complete checklists, from September 2021 through April 2023. A total of 655 people have participated in these bird counts for over 675 hours of observation time. Of these checklists, 97 have been submitted by parties including project team members during the workweek, and 115 have been submitted by members of the local birding community including several individuals who have been intimately involved with our efforts.



Educational Outreach

This project has provided, in total, 21 sessions of educational programming, including 3 tree planting sessions. These environmental educational experiences to TRiO Upward Bound students connected these youths with a variety of expert community partners and provided them with crucial opportunities to appreciate nature and participate in conservation.

Activities since the last report include:

- September 17, 2022 Orleans Audubon Society: Bird Banding Demonstration
- October 1, 2022 Ecosystems of the Basin with Pontchartrain Conservancy
- December 3, 2022 Tree planting event on UNO campus
- January 28, 2023 Tree planting event on UNO campus
- March 4, 2023 UNO CERF (Shea Penland Coastal Education and Research Facility): Water Quality and Plants for Birds
- March 18, 2023 Orleans Audubon Society: Native Plants Benefit
- April 1, 2023 UNO CERF (Shea Penland Coastal Education and Research Facility): Canoeing: Salinity, Geography and Plants
- April 15, 2023 UNO CERF (Shea Penland Coastal Education and Research Facility): Purple Martin activity



Volunteer Participation

To date, this project has drawn on contributions from the University of New Orleans; Orleans Audubon Society; 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; UNO TRiO Upward Bound; Master Gardeners of Greater New Orleans; Gently Resiliency District and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. These 14 organizations represent more than double the number of partners we had projected in our proposal. The 798 volunteers (some of whom were repeat volunteers) who contributed 1471 hours to our project demonstrate great local enthusiasm for this type of work, heralding a bright future for UNO-led environmental projects going forward.



“Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.” - Langston Hughes

Upcoming Events

Our project team is looking forward to Fall/Spring programming and is currently organizing activities. Events will be added to our webpage <https://www.uno.edu/birding> in the fall.

Fine Arts Woodlot activity schedule:

TDB October 2023: Woodlot maintenance day

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

Directions: From Leon C. Simon, enter campus, via Founders Road 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

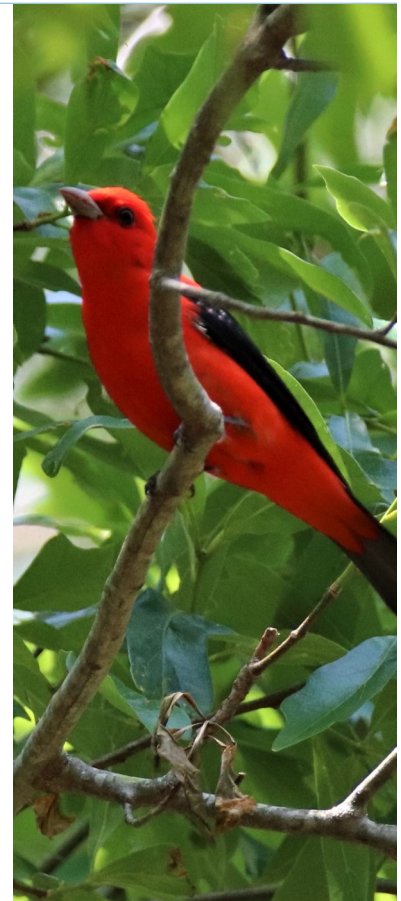
Wednesdays: Noon to 1:00 pm: meet at the east side of the Administration Building (library side)

Contact Us

birding@uno.edu

504-280-7153

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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Team members John Bishop and Liz Sigler