

Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Summer 2021



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- 4 Conservation Leadership Corps
- 6 Gardening for Wildlife
- 7 In Memory of Clinton Mouser, LWF Treasurer
- 8 Business Alliance Partners
- 8 Sediment Diversions Poll
- 11 Academics Afield
- 11 CLC Alum Named Udall Scholar
- 12 Northern Bobwhite in Louisiana
- 13 LWF President's Cup
- 14 Legislative Report for 2021

Since 1940, Louisiana Wildlife Federation has been the voice for Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources.

Principles:

- Conserve Louisiana's natural resources with emphasis on wildlife and their habitat
- Advance sound, scientifically established resource management principles
- Engage outdoor enthusiasts through education and advocacy

This newsletter is printed biannually for members and supporters. Updates on LWF activities and events can be found on our website and social media pages:

-  lawildlifefed.org
-  [LouisianaWildlifeFederation](https://www.facebook.com/LouisianaWildlifeFederation)
-  [@louisianawildlifefederation](https://www.instagram.com/@louisianawildlifefederation)
-  [@LaWildlifeFed](https://twitter.com/@LaWildlifeFed)



LWF is an affiliate organization of National Wildlife Federation and together we form a powerful network for wildlife conservation locally and nationally.



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Rebecca Triche, Executive Director
Laura Gros, Office Manager
Stacy Ortego, Outreach Coordinator

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American Sportsmen Against Poachers (ASAP)
Baton Rouge Audubon Society
Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society
Bayou Vermilion Preservation Association
East Ascension Sportsman's League (EASL)
Friends of Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of Grand Isle
Friends of Red River National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Atchafalaya
Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists
- La. Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Louisiana Ornithological Society
Pontchartrain Conservancy
New Orleans Power Squadron
Orleans Audubon Society
Rapides Wildlife Association
Shreveport Society for Nature Study Bird Study Group
Toledo Bend Lake Association
Woodlands Conservancy

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Between the impacts of hurricanes in 2020, severe weather in 2021, and the ongoing COVID pandemic, I'm thinking a lot about how the health of wildlife and wildlife habitat in our state impacts the lives, livelihoods, and culture of the citizens of Louisiana. With the challenges of the last 18 months filled with sickness, isolation, and disruption to many of our social and civic experiences, it's more evident than ever that our relationship to the natural world can be restorative, enlivening, and valuable.



Volunteer organizations, including those in conservation, have faced challenges sustaining their operations and the public engagement they usually thrive in. My own local organization, Friends of the Red River National Wildlife Refuge, has canceled and rescheduled events and struggled to develop opportunities for the community to work together and to promote conservation in our communities. Despite these changes, I know the passion for enjoying nature and a strong conservation ethic will sustain people who continue to give their time and money to small and large organizations. I'm grateful for people like you who care about conservation.

LWF staff and leaders have continued to innovate by adapting and transitioning to virtual meetings and socially distanced ceremonies and programs wherever possible. LWF is focused on the future of conservation in Louisiana by fostering new conservation leaders through the Conservation Leadership Corps, a diverse group of young people to advocate for a wise use of resources and voice the interests of our diverse membership. With your support, LWF staff and members will continue to lead on issues affecting our natural resources and our right to enjoy them. Despite uncertainty, the health of the natural world and our ability to experience it, remains important to all of us. ■ - Zac Burson

NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In June I vacationed in Arkansas to meet up with family members and was so excited to experience something different (mountains!). We spent several days in and around Buffalo National River at Maumee South. The mostly untouched but accessible river was as beautiful and wild as I remembered from two summer vacations spent camping there as a kid. I'm grateful for past leaders who had the foresight to preserve this river system. Check out the national parks around Buffalo River for an amazing, pristine encounter with nature.



In Louisiana, Saline Bayou, located within the boundary of Kisatchie National Forest, is the only stream designated in the national scenic rivers system. Saline Bayou is also among the 59 natural and scenic rivers in the state program. Louisiana also has two designated historic and scenic rivers. All worthy of a beautiful and wild adventure, too.

As an avid traveler, COVID caution has made me think out of the box about traveling closer to home with outdoor elements being key. I hope you're letting nature restore your vitality and looking forward to Fall activities outdoors.

■ - Rebecca Triche



LWF COMPLETES THIRD YEAR OF CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CORPS PROGRAM

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

The Edgar Veillon Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC) is designed to educate college students about conservation policy, advocacy and leadership to foster tomorrow's conservation leaders in Louisiana. The program allows students the opportunity to engage with natural resource professionals from various sectors.

In the fall of 2020, LWF recruited students for its third cohort. LWF was thrilled to see the program gain so much attention and interest. A total of 91 students from colleges and universities across the state applied for the program resulting in a wonderfully diverse group from many different areas of study!

The following students successfully completed the program in 2021:

- Gabriel Bourgeois (LSU)
- Guadalupe Estrada Cordero (LSU)
- Kaylee Cormier (McNeese)
- Devin Durgin (UL-Lafayette)
- Aaron Enlund (UL-Lafayette)
- Marion "Trey" Gray (Tulane)
- Samuel Hinerfeld (Tulane)
- Kari Hoover (Tulane)
- Lauren Johnson (LSU)
- Rebekah Lepretre (McNeese)
- Lindsey Oxford (UL-Lafayette)
- Carlie Rojas (UNO)
- Ria Salway (LSU)
- Abby Slattery (LSU)
- Aundrea Smith (Dillard)
- Savanah Stokely (LSU)
- Aaron Taliaferro (La Tech)
- Marisa Terry (LSU)
- Tatianna Townsend (LSU)
- Sarah Vaz (Nicholls)
- Jessica Wright (UL-Monroe)

Training was provided by current and former natural resource professionals in the public, non-profit and private sectors. Students were presented with real-world issues and experience. This year's conservation focus was *Trash Pollution in Louisiana Waterways*. Through the integration of presentations, case studies, and collaborative activities, students increased their knowledge of conservation policy and practiced skills in leadership and advocacy.

The CLC program allows students the opportunity to meet and interact with natural resource professionals from federal and state agencies, nonprofits, academia, etc. In total, 20 speakers from the following organizations, agencies, and institutions gave talks or presentations to students:

- Andrew Barron, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program
- Dr. Mark Benfield, Louisiana State University
- Zac Burson, Louisiana Wildlife Federation
- Charles Caillouet, Louisiana Wildlife Federation
- Alex Carter, Louisiana Watershed Initiative
- Mike Daniels, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Chris Davis, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
- Dani Dilullo, Louisiana Sea Grant
- Greg Guidroz, Lafayette Consolidated Government Recycling Office
- Brianne Hendricks, Parish Proud
- Nathaniel Klumb, Paddle BR
- Lisa Mahoney, East Baton Rouge Parish Recycling Office
- Rick Moore, Keep St. Tammany Beautiful
- Niki Pace, Louisiana Sea Grant
- Larry Raymond, Louisiana Wildlife Federation/Shreveport Green
- Susan Russell, Keep Louisiana Beautiful
- Dr. Brady Skaggs, Pontchartrain Conservancy
- Jön Soul, Bayou to Bay
- Brad Spiegel, Louisiana Watershed Initiative

Students received a \$200 scholarship check along with a certificate of achievement and letter of commendation for successfully completing the program.

While this year was surely different from previous years due to moving all sessions online, our third year was very successful. The students were very engaged and eager to learn from this year's speakers. They also expressed interest in staying engaged with the CLC program and other advocacy work that LWF is involved in. We look forward to hosting a future event to bring the students together since we were not able to hold any in-person sessions this year.

LWF appreciates the support of the Stuller Family Foundation for its help in funding this year's program. In addition, LWF thanks our Conservation Education Committee for their volunteered time and guidance as well as all of our speakers for their participation. We look forward to the continued success and growth of the program.

This program is made possible from our generous donors. If you would like to help LWF fund programs like this, you can donate anytime at lawildlifefed.org/donate. ■

CREATE

A SUSTAINABLE GARDEN THAT HELPS WILDLIFE



FOOD



WATER



COVER



PLACES TO
RAISE YOUNG



SUSTAINABLE
PRACTICES

GARDENING BENEFITS WILDLIFE AND YOU

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

Many people have taken solace in nature lately. After more than a year of social distancing, nature offers a unique form of connection. As people found themselves with extra time at home, many have turned to gardening to relax or feel productive. In a time where we are so limited in our contact with each other, gardening provides connection with something real and tangible. The feel of the soil, the smell of the fresh air, the sound of birds chirping, the sight of bees, butterflies, and other critters all offer a connection to nature that so often gets taken for granted.

If you find yourself out in the garden (or have been interested in finally getting one started), why not make it one that is also friendly to wildlife?

LWF partners with the National Wildlife Federation on the Garden for Wildlife program. You can build a Certified Wildlife Habitat by providing food and water sources, shelter, places to raise young, and sustainable gardening practices. When you certify, you can also opt to add a co-branded LWF/NWF sign to show friends and neighbors that your garden is wildlife-friendly.

Providing space for wildlife benefits wildlife AND you! Studies show that tending gardens reduces stress and improves wellbeing. Gardening for wildlife also offers critical habitat for many declining populations of pollinators and other wildlife. So remember to stop and smell the roses!

To become certified, visit nwf.org/certify. We'd love to see your labor of love – and we may even feature it on our website or in a future newsletter! If you'd like to show off your wildlife garden, contact Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator, at stacy@lawildlifefed.org. Happy gardening! ■

TAKE THE CONSERVATION PLEDGE

"I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully to defend from waste the natural resources of my country – Its air, its soil and minerals, its forests, waters and wildlife." ■

HONORARY AND MEMORIAL GIFTS (THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021)

- In Honor of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Herschman by Sally Herschman
- In Honor of Nolan Anderson by Martha Anderson
- In Memory of Charlie Lamonte by Shelly & Dale Delaville
- In Memory of Robert McClure by Lynn Greenwell
- In Memory of Wilda Moreau by Lindsay & Leigh Liner
- In Memory of Scott Crane by Margie Heydari and Larry & Gloria McGuirt
- In Memory of Clint Mouser by New Orleans Power Squadron, Deborah Baudouin, and Lindsay Burrage ■

IN MEMORY OF CLINT MOUSER, LWF TREASURER

Long-time board member Clint Mouser passed in May and LWF lost a valued leader and friend. Many members knew him through his membership in Jefferson Rod and Gun Club or through New Orleans Power Squadron. Clint joined the LWF Board in 2000 and became treasurer in 2006 until 2021. Clint loved boating and fishing, teaching maritime safety, advocating for conservation and natural resource protection, and engaging with other outdoor enthusiasts. Early in his career he was a professional photographer and later retired from Chevron Chemical Company Oak Point Plant in Belle Chase and became a financial advisor. He will be sorely missed. We appreciate his wife, Virginia, for supporting Clint in his volunteer leadership for this organization and several of LWF's affiliate organizations over the years. ■ - *Rebecca Triche*



What Will Your Legacy Be?

Since 1940, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation has worked to protect Louisiana's wildlife, habitat, water resources and your right to enjoy this Sportsman's Paradise. Including LWF in your estate planning is one of the most important ways you can protect our abundant natural resources and public access for future generations.

The benefits of planned giving are available at any income level and you don't have to be wealthy to participate.

For more information, call Rebecca Triche at LWF at 225-344-6707 or email rebecca@lawildlifefed.org



BUSINESS ALLIANCE PARTNERS

PECAN **Longleaf Pine**
DRAX Biomass Crescent Midstream

LWF Business Alliance Partners help us strengthen the connection between Louisiana business leaders and our natural resources stewards. Corporate support has been and always will be essential for the promotion and protection of our sportsman’s paradise. Quality outdoor opportunities make Louisiana a desirable place to live and work, and adds to our economic well-being. Business Alliance members join other outdoor-oriented citizens who believe in constructive conservation and protection of our state’s natural resources. **We thank them for their support and belief in the mission of LWF.**



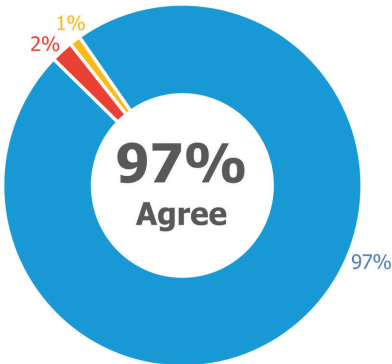
Photo credit: Thomas J. Graner

If you own a business or know a business that might be interested in joining our Business Alliance, please contact Rebecca Triche at 225-344-6707. ■

NEW POLL SHOWS OVER 80% OF COASTAL LOUISIANANS SUPPORT SEDIMENT DIVERSIONS

There is widespread, bipartisan support for action to address Louisiana’s urgent land loss crisis through sediment diversions and other science-based restoration efforts, according to a new poll of coastal Louisiana voters released by Global Strategy Group (GSG) and Environmental Defense Fund. These results are consistent with prior polls in recent years that also showed significant, widespread support for these projects across regions.

Even if we can't restore the coast to its previous footprint, do you think Louisiana should still work to maintain as much coastal land as possible?

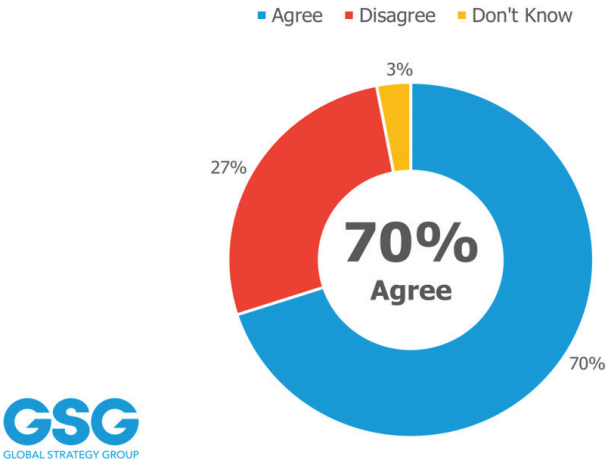


■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't Know



Coastal Louisianans are familiar with the problem of land loss and see it as an urgent issue that must be addressed now. Since the 1930s, Louisiana has lost nearly 2,000 square miles of its coastal land. Without the implementation of projects from the state’s Coastal Master Plan, the state could lose an additional 4,000 square miles in the next 50 years. An overwhelming 97% of Louisiana’s coastal voters agree that state officials should work to maintain as much of Louisiana’s coast as possible, even if it’s not possible to restore the original footprint.

Have stronger hurricanes and increased coastal flooding impacted you and your family?

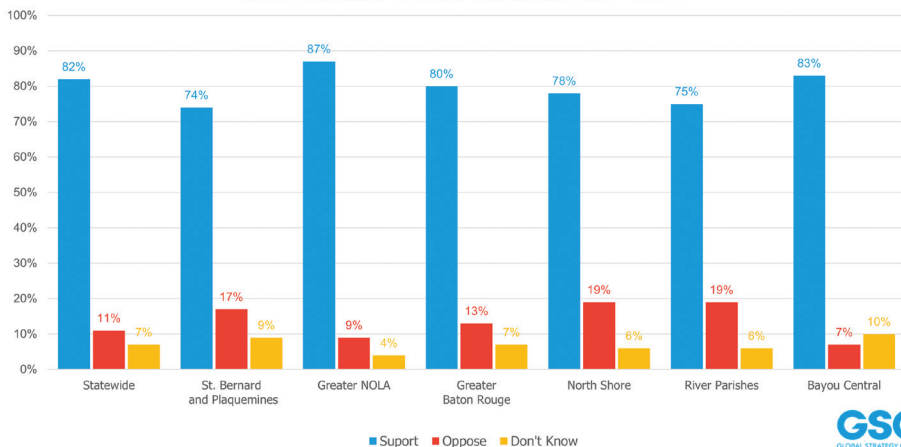


Louisiana voters are already feeling the impacts of hurricanes, extreme weather and climate change and are concerned about how these forces will impact the future of the state and their own families. An overwhelming 86% of voters indicate that stronger hurricanes and increased coastal flooding are already having a serious impact on Louisiana, with 70% reporting these forces are already impacting themselves and their families. The poll also found that 66% of voters believe climate change is already having a serious impact on Louisiana and acknowledge that if we fail to act now, it will continue to have a serious impact on future generations.

According to the poll, voters are widely in agreement about how the state should address its land loss crisis with 82% of coastal Louisiana voters supporting sediment diversions — large-scale coastal restoration projects that would reconnect the Mississippi River to wetlands to sustain them over time. Support for diversions is strong in every region and among every demographic, including 74% of voters in St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes. More than half (56%) of voters indicate they would view state and local elected officials who support these projects more favorably and only 7% would view elected officials who support these projects less favorably. Moreover, support for sediment diversions is incredibly robust, holding at 70% after voters are exposed to a balanced debate that includes the language actually being used by certain opponents of these projects.

“This poll makes clear that Louisianans are feeling the effects of flooding and land loss today and are deeply concerned about a future with fewer

Do you support or oppose sediment diversion projects to build and maintain coastal wetlands over time?



wetlands, more intense hurricanes and higher seas,” said Steve Cochran, Environmental Defense Fund Associate Vice President for Coastal Resilience and Campaign Director for Restore the Mississippi River Delta. “Voters in every region also show a great capacity to wade through the debates around sediment diversions, and strongly support these projects after considering all sides. Louisiana voters want elected officials to put the Mississippi River to work to restore and maintain as much of our coastal wetland buffer as possible, before it’s too late.”

Louisiana’s Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is advancing the Mid-Barataria and Mid-Breton Sediment Diversions —projects that will build and maintain tens of thousands of acres of land and habitat on either side of the river in Plaquemines Parish. Voters also see diversion projects as having a positive impact on the region’s ability to withstand hurricane storm surge and sea level rise, jobs and the economy, the area’s culture and way of life, as well as commercial fisheries in the long term.

The poll was conducted by Global Strategy Group (GSG) for Environmental Defense Fund on behalf of Restore the Mississippi River Delta to determine the familiarity, interest and support for major coastal issues facing Louisiana.

“This kind of cross-partisan consensus is virtually unheard of in today’s political climate. I’ve been polling on conservation issues for over a decade, and this is some of the broadest, most intense and most robust support for a policy I have ever seen. It is clear that coastal Louisiana voters are in broad agreement about the urgent need to protect Louisiana’s coast. Moreover, Louisiana’s leaders have a significant political mandate to act to protect Louisiana’s coastal wetlands now and in the future.”

— Andrew Baumann, Senior Vice President of Research for Global Strategy Group

You can see the full results of the poll by visiting mississippiriverdelta.org/category/press-releases. ■

LWF INTRODUCES ACADEMICS AFIELD TO RECRUIT, TRAIN NEW HUNTERS

Louisiana Wildlife Federation has established a new program to increase collegiate hunter participation in Louisiana by recruiting hunters, retaining them, and reactivating hunters with little experience. Academics Afield is being established at LSU in cooperation with the LSU School of Renewable Natural Resources. The program will recruit and introduce 10 sophomores and juniors on firearms safety, hunting opportunity, game biology/ecology, hunting tactics, all culminating in 4 mentored hunts.



Academics Afield focuses on a new generation of ethical hunters with a vested interest in conservation and sustainable harvest. The program seeks to build a community of skilled peers who enjoy hunting and become avid hunters and lifetime conservationists.

A report from North Carolina State University in the *Journal for Wildlife Management* offers encouraging survey results on the interest in hunting among college age students from diverse backgrounds. LWF's website has a link to the report in the article *The Next Generation of Hunters Could Look Different*.

Georgia Wildlife Federation created the program model for Academics Afield and is expanding the program via a grant from the Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Grant Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Elijah Wojohn, an LSU senior, is LWF's Academics Afield Coordinator. He can be reached at afield@lawildlifefed.org. ■

FORMER CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CORPS STUDENT NAMED UDALL SCHOLAR

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

In May 2021, Alexia “Lexie” LaGrone was one of 55 students in the country named as a Udall Scholar by the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation. Lexie is a senior at LSU and was recently an intern at The Water Institute of the Gulf. She was one of 416 applicants nominated by colleges and universities – and the only student from Louisiana to receive an award. The Udall Foundation awards scholarships to students for leadership, public service, and commitment to issues related to Native American nations or to the environment.



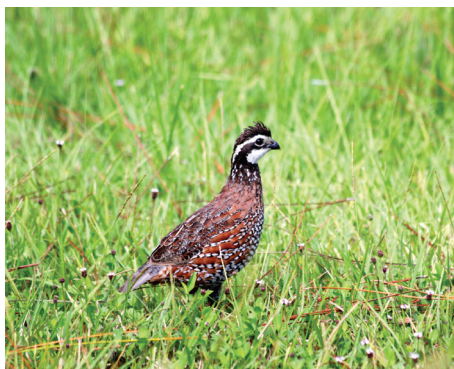
Lexie began LWF's Conservation Leadership Corps program in 2019 as a sophomore. We are excited to see her continued commitment to conservation. Lexie is a natural resource ecology and management major, and oceanography minor at LSU and plans to become an environmental lawyer. Congratulations, Lexie! ■

NORTHERN BOBWHITE IN LOUISIANA

Jay V. Huner, *Louisiana Ecrevisse*, Boyce, Louisiana

Some birds “call” their names. A prime example is the Northern Bobwhite whose call is, literally bob white, bob white. This species is iconic to the hunting community in the southeastern USA. These are beautiful birds and are often referred to as “bob whites”, “quail”, or, in some regions “partridges”.

The Northern Bobwhite are small, rotund birds. They are ruddy, barred and striped with short dark tails. The male has a conspicuous white throat and white eyebrow stripe. These areas are buff colored in females.



Northern Bobwhite by cuatrok77 (Flickr)

Once the subject of intense hunting effort in the eastern half of the USA, sharp population declines have significantly reduced hunting effort in most areas. I currently live in west central Louisiana where, once, any active hunter had one or two quail dogs. In fact, my father-in-law who lived in Pitkin had a pair of pointers when I first started dating my wife in the early 1960s. The population in Louisiana has declined by 75% since then.

The population decline of Northern Bobwhite has reached the point that the most recent Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries hunter survey showed that 800 hunters harvested only 2,500 birds annually. This population decline is primarily due to habitat degradation from past farming and intensive pine management. Reversing this downward trend is a long-term venture that requires the commitment and cooperation of numerous agencies, organizations, and most importantly, individual landowners to restore the ecosystems and habitat that are home to Northern Bobwhites and other species found there.

This species is a year-round resident of agricultural fields, grasslands, open pine, or pine-hardwood forests, and grass-brush rangelands. These habitats are found throughout Louisiana and Northern Bobwhites have not been extirpated from these locations. The numbers are so low, however, that they really aren't huntable in most areas.

Avid birders keep “year lists” of birds they find each year. Many now use the eBird website maintained by The Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology to locate Northern Bobwhites for their year lists. About the only places quail can't be found are coastal marshes and interior swamps. Some may be surprised to find the birds associated with sugar cane fields in southcentral and southwestern Louisiana. However, numbers are so low that it's not a guarantee that birders will find them on the first try.

Northern Bobwhites are communal birds that gather together in coveys, generally around a dozen birds, for the fall and winter. These break up in the spring and summer for breeding. Ground nests are often covered over with one entrance/exit. As many as 16 eggs may be laid and incubated by a pair. The

hatchlings leave the nest almost immediately and feed themselves while being cared for by their parents.

The members of a Northern Bobwhite covey gather together at night with their facing outwards. If disturbed by a predator, they explode outward in all directions.

Coveys forage together. They are very reluctant to fly. Hunters generally use pointer dogs to find these coveys. The birds tend to hold tight until hunters approach and flush the birds. The birds generally fly away some distance and call to each other to reassemble.

John James Audubon wrote an interesting report about harvesting Northern Bobwhites, or Virginia Partridges, as he called them. Men on horseback would search out large coveys and slowly drive them forward, running along the ground. Others would get ahead of the quail and set up a net trap with wings. The drivers would move the quail toward the trap. The birds would follow the leads into the trap and be harvested!

One can be optimistic that the multiple agency efforts to rebuild Northern Bobwhite populations in Louisiana to the point that they will become common game species once again. ■

ROBERT “BOB” STEWART AWARDED THE LWF PRESIDENT’S CUP IN 2020

At LWF’s August 2020 convention held virtually via Zoom, Marty Floyd presented LWF’s President’s Cup to Robert “Bob” Stewart for outstanding support of LWF and the president in 2019 – 2020.

Bob initiated a new education program for LWF in 2018, the Edgar Veillon Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC) and was chair of LWF’s Education Committee. He volunteered many hours to leading the development of CLC for the past two years by drafting meeting agendas, scheduling speakers, and mentoring a group of students each year. He worked closely with LWF’s Outreach Coordinator Stacy Ortego on all aspects of developing this program.



Bob also secured sponsors for EV-CLC and recruited new Business Alliance members for LWF.

He continued to serve on the LWF Executive Committee and has served on LWF’s Habitat Management, Fundraising, Forestry and Upland Wildlife, Avian Conservation, and Waterfowl Committees. He is a liaison to coastal restoration agencies for LWF, particularly in his continued participation on the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration and Conservation. We appreciate the professionalism and knowledge Bob Stewart brings to LWF! ■

LEGISLATIVE REPORT FOR 2021

By Rebecca Triche, Executive Director

Every year, LWF monitors the state legislature on behalf of our members for issues involving wildlife management, environmental protection, and outdoor recreation. There are usually dozens of bills that grab our attention but LWF does not take a position on all of these. I'm including highlights of bills LWF tracked that you may want to know more about and you can look up bills from the regular session of 2021 at legis.la.gov.

The bill to **restructure the fees and licenses at Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF)**, HB691 by Representative Bacala, was debated at length in its passage through committees in both the House and Senate. Some minor changes were made along the way. Overall it will simplify the license structure and stabilize the funding stream for LDWF to close much of the ongoing gap in revenue caused by decreased mineral royalties. Look for changes to licenses and fees to be effective in either 2022 or 2023. Agencies manage Louisiana's natural resources on behalf of the people and they need adequate resources to do this. Leaders at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries expressed their appreciation for LWF's public support of the fee restructure.



LWF has been in support of **creating a land trust** fund to conserve priority habitats in the state since 2007. This concept took an important step forward when the bill to establish an Outdoor Conservation Study Group, HCR55 by Representative Zeringue, was passed unanimously. The study group is expected to produce a report by February 1, 2022. Learn more about the purpose of this effort at louisianaforever.com.

Establishing an exclusion zone off the coast of Louisiana for **commercial menhaden fishing** was hotly debated in the session but the bill did not cross the finish line. HB535 by Representative Orgeron started out with an exclusion zone of a half mile and was reduced to a quarter by the Senate but the House rejected that amendment and the bill did not pass. However, funds were designated to conduct a bycatch study of menhaden fishing in zones of a quarter mile, half mile, and mile off Louisiana's coast and that helps in determining impacts on bycatch. LWF originally supported a one-mile exclusion zone but after listening to hours of testimony, we have stepped away from that position. User conflict is the main issue and recreational users should be heard about where along the coast this is occurring. A restriction on commercial

access in coastal waters is something the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission can regulate and that process offers more opportunity for people to express their opinion and track the debate. Stay tuned.

Protecting cypress trees and cypress forests for longevity was the focus of HB239 by Representative Riser that was approved by the legislature. It bans cypress tree harvest on state lands. While the intention is good and Louisiana lost so much old growth cypress habitat to logging decades ago, we could think of some examples of how this may impede overall habitat management on wildlife management areas and have unintended cost consequences.

Representative Hodges' bill, HB544, to extend **Comite River's exemption from "certain statutory requirements" as a designated natural and scenic river for another 5 years** was passed. Senator Lambert added Bayou Manchac to this bill to allow for clearing and snagging and dredging through August 1, 2026. LWF opposes exceptions made to the Scenic Rivers Act and provided comments about how dredging a river does not prevent flooding and destabilizes the river.

The **Annual State Integrated Coastal Master Plan for 2022** was passed and thanks to Senator Lambert for sponsoring it this year. Heads up: the next update to the coastal master plan is being drafted now and will be presented during the 2023 legislative session.

Illegal waste tire dumping is a problem in many areas of the state. SB97, sponsored by Senator Lambert, tightens regulations for transport and disposal, including increased penalties and fines, and this is effective August 1, 2021.

Remember the **nurdles** spill in the Mississippi River in August 2020? Representative Hilferty sponsored HCR37 requesting Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to implement measures to prevent the release and discharge of preproduction plastic from facilities into the waters of Louisiana. It's a great start in providing for a quick response should there be a future spill.

Are you seeing a decline in waterfowl hunting and less ducks in the past few years? Representative Coussan's HCR72 created a **waterfowl habitat study group** to look into habitat management, particularly in the southwest area of the state.

Representative Coussan also introduced HB72, which establishes a **voluntary "self-audit" program for industry** and this has been debated in some form before. It passed this year.

You can now buy a **wild dolphin license plate** and a portion of the funds are donated to Protect Wild Dolphins Alliance.

LWF does not usually focus on **municipal water and sewer** issues but we do track water policy overall. This may be of interest for those who enjoy safe public drinking water and working sewers. Senator Mills passed a bill to establish a statewide accountability system that assesses letter grades to community water systems monitored by Louisiana Department of Health. Representatives Zeringue and Schexnayder sponsored what became Act 410 that created the Louisiana Water Infrastructure Program to provide grants to community water systems and sewer systems from funds provided by the federal American Rescue Plan Act. The bill also provided for a program to expand broadband access in rural and disadvantaged areas of the state. ■



Louisiana Wildlife Federation
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Cover photo: Turkey by Tom Reichner

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This newsletter highlights key program activities and issues in the first half of 2021. You can catch up with LWF's latest activities via our website and social media.

 lawildlifefed.org

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 [@louisianawildlifefederation](https://www.instagram.com/louisianawildlifefederation)

 [@LaWildlifeFed](https://twitter.com/LaWildlifeFed)

“I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.”

– John Burroughs