Shreveport Society for Nature Study

BIRD STUDY GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting – April 14, 2009
THE SPORT OF KINGS
BY Francine Forrester, Master Falconer

APRIL PROGRAM

When: Tuesday, April 14, 2009, 6:00 p.m.
Where: LSU in Shreveport Museum of Life Sciences
Speaker: Come and learn about the “Sport of Kings” falconry. Listen to a master falconer explain how she catches, trains and hunts with these amazing birds of prey. See one of her hawks up close and personal.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

APRIL

LOS SPRING MEETING – GRAND ISLE
Friday, April 17- Sunday, April 19

MAY

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY at Red River National Wildlife Refuge
Saturday, May 2; 8:00am – 3:00pm
Trip Leader – Nancy Menasco – 868-3255 (H); nmcpa@aol.com
Red River Refuge Alliance Website:
www.redriverrefugealliance.org

NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT (NAMC)
Saturday, May 9
Compiler – Hubert Hervey, 925-9249 (H)
hawkeyehub@att.net

WILD BIRD CENTER EVENTS
BEGINNER BIRD WALKS
Saturday, April 18 and May 9

BIRD STUDY GROUP PHONE NUMBERS AND MORE
Meetings...........................................Second Tuesday of each month, September through June, 6:00 p.m.
Information & Bird Alert by Phone………………………………………………………………………..(318) 797-5338
Internet Webpage……………………………………………………………………………………http://www.birdstudygroup.org
Bird Alert by email………To be placed on the list to send & receive emails, email birdalert@birdstudygroup.org
BSG Email…………………………………………………………………………………………………..lhardy@lsus.edu
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UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS
By John Dillon

All field trips will DEPART from the listed meeting place at the time posted. Be early at the meeting place for orientation information and carpooling. BSG Membership is not a requirement for participation in any field trip, but it is encouraged.

What to bring: binoculars, field guide, scope (if possible), snacks/drinks for yourself and pen/paper if you’d like to keep your own records of sightings.

APRIL

LOS SPRING MEETING – GRAND ISLE
Friday, April 17- Sunday, April 19

Information and registration forms for the annual spring meeting are or will be available at the LOS website at http://losbird.org/meeting.htm. LOS will hold its spring meeting in conjunction with the Grand Isle Migratory Bird Festival, which runs from April 16-19. You are encouraged to visit the festival website at http://grandisle.btnep.org/. Make your room reservations as soon as possible because they’re going fast. For a list of possible accommodations, visit the Grand Isle website at http://grandisle.btnep.org/. The Grand Isle Tourist Commission says to inquire about discounts for birders.

The Friday and Saturday night meetings will be held at the Grand Isle Community Center. The Friday night program is “The Albatross: International Conservation Challenge” presented by Robert Doughty. Refreshments will be served. The Saturday night program is “The Louisiana Coast: Worth Seeing, Worth Saving, Worth Celebrating” by Gay Gomez. The presentation will feature highlights from Gay’s recently-published book, The Louisiana Coast: Guide to an American Wetland. The Saturday night banquet will be catered by the ladies of Grand Isle. Meeting cost is $10 per person and the banquet is $20 per person.

Membership in LOS is not required to participate in any of the LOS meetings, but you are encouraged to join to support the activities of our state society. Annual dues are $20 for a regular membership and $25 for a family membership. LOS is for birders of all levels, amateur or professional. Three meetings are held each year with programs on Friday and Saturday nights, organized field trips on Saturday and, for the winter meeting, also on Sunday, and a banquet on Saturday night.

The spring meeting is usually held the last weekend in April; the fall meeting is the last weekend in October; and the winter meeting is held in different locations around the state, usually the last weekend in January. Baton Rouge Audubon Society will host the January 2010 winter meeting.

MAY

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY at Red River National Wildlife Refuge
Saturday, May 2; 8:00am – 3:00pm
Trip Leader – Nancy Menasco – 868-3255 (H); nmcpa@aol.com
Red River Refuge Alliance Website: www.redriverrefugealliance.org
Celebrate IMBD at the refuge! Doughnuts, shade-grown coffee, hot tea, and hot chocolate will be served in the morning beginning at 8:00 a.m. There will be bird walks, refuge tours, and activities for children. Bring your camera and get a head start on the 2009 Red River National Wildlife Refuge Photo Contest. Bird Walk with Dennis Forshee of the Wild Bird Center begins at 8:30 a.m. Children accompanied by an adult are welcome.

Directions to the refuge: From the intersection of the US 71 (Barksdale Boulevard) and Jimmie Davis Highway (LA 511) in Bossier City, go south about one-half mile on US 71 and turn right (west) on Sunflower Road. Proceed to the end of the road; the gravel/dirt road through the gate across the cattle gap leads into the refuge. The Headquarters Unit is usually closed to the public except for special events, such as the IMBD Celebration.

NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT (NAMC)
Saturday, May 9
Compiler – Hubert Hervey, 925-9249 (H) hawkeyehub@att.net
Please contact Hubert prior to the event for forms and instructions. You bird where you want for as long as you want, but be sure to keep separate records for each
parish and location you bird. Participants will meet at Larry Raymond’s house after birding to eat and to call the list. Larry and his wife will provide the food. The address is 6675 North Park Circle.

Take LA 1 North to LA 538 (Old Mooringsport Road). Turn west between the MacDonalds and Exxon Station. Continue approximately 2.5 miles on LA 538 past Northwood High School, Fire District 1 Station, Donnie Bickham School and Wasson Road to North Park Drive. Turn left between the brick entrance on North Park Drive. Go 0.1 mile and turn left again on North Park Circle. The house is the 7th house on the left just as you come out of the curve. Alternately, take LA 173 (Shreveport Blanchard Highway) to LA 538 (Old Mooringsport Road). Turn east on LA 538 and continue 0.9 miles to North Park Drive. Turn right between the brick entrance and continue as above.

WILD BIRD CENTER EVENTS
BEGINNER BIRD WALKS
The Wild Bird Center conducts field trips the first and third Saturday of every month, weather permitting. Meet at Wild Bird Center in the University Place Shopping Center (Target Shopping Center) at the corner of Youree Drive and East 70th Street. Destinations vary according to local sightings and may include local parks, country roads or a private backyard. Loaner binoculars are available. Be sure to bring a field guide.

For more information on any Wild Bird Center event, please call Dennis or Janice Forshee at the Wild Bird Center, 318-797-BIRD (2473).

The BSG Goes to Barksdale
By John Dillon

For the first time in ten years, the BSG held a field trip to the 22,000 acre East Reserve at Barksdale Air Force Base. The trip is quite well attended, but we called it short due to cold, windy weather. Those who decided to tough out the 40 degree weather and 15-20 mph winds were Linda Adrion, John Dillon, Jacque Falkenstine, Mary Ellen Lewis, Carolyn Phillips, Larry Raymond, Rosemary Seidler, Jean and Jeff Trahan, and Mark Wilson. Our BAFB contact was Carol Shelton, wife of retired airman, Jim Shelton.

From 7:15 AM to 10:30 AM, we tallied a list of 40 species (see total list at bottom). For those who have never been to the East Reserve before, there is an extensive amount of mature hardwood forest. You can literally drive for 4 or 5 miles and not see a single pine tree. Unfortunately, the best habitats were closed for the day due to turkey season.

We began the morning on the far east end of the reserve and worked our way west back to Flag Lake. Initially, we had few birds at the small Harmon Lake which is surrounded by mixed pine and hardwoods. The highlight birds there were the only Brown Creeper for the day, a Northern Parula, and a soaring adult Bald Eagle, spotted by new birder, Carolyn Phillips.

After birding similar habitat and seeing all similar species, we stopped at a gas well on the side of the road that was adjacent to mature hardwood habitat. There, we picked up Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Black-and-white Warbler and added another Northern Parula.

Our next stop was at a flooded slough where we picked up Eastern Phoebe, White-eyed Vireo and two Orange-crowned Warblers. The warblers were chasing each other, and several of us were able to catch a rare glimpse of the orange crown.

Finally, we stopped at Flag Lake, the largest lake at BAFB. We gained an additional Bald Eagle, another White-eyed Vireo, and another Northern Parula. New birds included a pair of Snowy Egrets, a few dozen Tree Swallows, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, and a singing Yellow-throated Warbler first heard by Larry Raymond.

Complete Trip List:
Wood Duck
Pied-billed Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Cattle Egret
Turkey Vulture
Bald Eagle
Red-tailed Hawk
Killdeer
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Tree Swallow
A Garganey is Cameron Parish
By Jay Huner

I was birding in the northern part of Cameron Parish Saturday, 29 March 2009 around 3:50 PM CDST when I stopped to look at dowitchers in a newly flooded, but not planted ricefield along Arceneaux Road. The site was about 0.1 mile south of its intersection with Pine Pasture Road on the right - east side - of the road. There were three teal with the dowitchers, I noticed that one was different and subsequently determined that it was a Garganey. I later learned that the species had never been reported in Louisiana but the few reports from the southern region came at this time of year with a mass northward movement of Blue-winged Teal. I was thinking Garganey but simply do not know why. The bird was gone. I pulled up about 10 yards and parked in a turn out at a gate. That's when I checked the index and found Garganey on the Blue-winged Teal page. I just never anticipated finding an odd-ball teal.

My camera was at home. Without a camera, I clearly made a very basic mistake by diving for my field guide rather than watching the bird for as long as possible and the trying to see where it went when it flushed. I opened to the Green-winged Teal page with Baikal Teal. I was thinking Garganey but simply do not know why. The bird was gone. I pulled up about 10 yards and parked in a turn out at a gate. That's when I checked the index and found Garganey on the Blue-winged Teal page. I just never anticipated finding an odd-ball teal.

I was focusing on the adjacent dowitcher flock looking for other shorebirds figuring a phalarope might be present considering water depth - up on the dowitchers' sides. I just happened to look at the three teal. I thought drake Green-winged Teal based on head color at first but saw no green and the white stripe just imprinted in my mind. Green-winged Teal don't have white stripes from their foreheads onto their necks. That's about the time I dove for the field guide without getting more details on the body. There should be a color difference between the crown and the face. I may have noticed it but the white stripe is what I focused on.

Audubon Sponsors the Nature of Agritourism Workshop in Southeastern Arkansas
By Jay Huner

DeWitt, Arkansas was the venue for the 8-12 February 2009 Nature of Agritourism Workshop organized by Ms. Kathy Radomski, Director of Business and Industry Training at Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas. Agritourism has varied definitions but generally refers to nature tourism associated with agricultural and forestry properties, especially those in private ownership. Birding, as a source of income in public and private situations, was strongly emphasized.

Approximately 30 participants hailed from Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri. Well informed instructors came from Arkansas, Mississippi, and Texas. A discussion of the topics and their presenters follows. Participants and instructors were housed in private hunting lodges associated with Arkansas County's intensive waterfowl and deer hunting industry. Lodge managers and owners are evaluating ways to extend their offerings to cover periods outside the fall-winter hunting seasons. Field trips were made to various lodges ranging...
from high end to modest, the White River National Wildlife Refuge of Ivory-billed Woodpecker fame and the Stuttgart, Arkansas community museum. Participants learned about topics such as how Texas has been so successful with its Nature Tourism industry, wildlife management, liability, hospitality, marketing, understanding birders, interpretation, photography, Dutch oven cooking, youth involvement, asset mapping, business and financial planning, technical resources, and partnerships.

I found presentations made by Dr. Dan Scheiman, Audubon Arkansas, of special interest because of my personal interest in birding and associated ecotourism activities. Only about a quarter of the presenters and participants were birders. So, Dan’s presentations explaining birding and birders were especially good follow ups to earlier presentations by Shelly Plante who provided examples of commercial agritourism ventures in southern Texas that incorporated birding as an integral component of their offerings to visitors. Shelly is Nature Tourism Coordinator for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the agency that was responsible for developing the concept of birding trails in the USA. Dan pointed out that identifying birding resources on personal property as well as easily accessible nearby resources was very important to provide accurate information for potential visitors (clients).

Lodges involved in the workshop included Fowl Play Lodge, Five Oaks Lodge, and Bayou Lagrue Lodge. A tour of the impoundments at the Five Oaks Lodge permitted viewing numerous waterfowl in the company’s numerous working wetland impoundments. Dominant duck was Northern Shoveler but Gadwall, Mallard, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck and Bufflehead along with Greater White-fronted and Snow Goose were present. There wasn’t much time to bird in riparian areas but a flock of over 400 Rusty Blackbirds, a species showing an alarming decline in numbers, treated birders to good views in a sloppy wet impoundment, typical habitat for the species. The presence of the rustys gave Dr. Dan an opportunity to discuss wildlife conservation of non-game species in such managed working wetland systems to the non-bird oriented participants.

While the elusive Ivory-billed Woodpecker is a draw for the DeWitt area, other specialty birds include wintering Smith’s Longspurs, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and Yellow Rail. In fact, one lecture by Ms. Pat Peacock dealt with the origins and development of the World Championship Duck Calling Contest in Stuttgart, Arkansas. Pat was a genial presenter and a past woman’s world duck calling champion. This tied into Dan’s presentation the following morning because the Stuttgart Airport is home to wintering Smith’s Longspurs. The airport manager works with birders and several groups including one from Connecticut come to Stuttgart each winter to hunt longspurs with cameras, scopes, and binoculars rather than Mallards and Wood Ducks with shotguns.

One point emphasized over and over again was that residents of an area become complacent about their everyday worlds. As a result, they do not realize that they have interesting stories and intriguing vistas to share with visitors. Harvesting ricefields and viewing rails exposes visitors to habitat, potentially new birds including Yellow Rail, and a new way of life. The uniqueness of one’s surroundings was highlighted with seminars on storytelling and interpretation by Matt Conner, White River NWR Ranger. His various presentations included a wetland habitat version of the Jeopardy Game following his wetland seminar and a Dutch oven cooking short course.

Individuals or firms considering becoming involved in agritourism need to remember the principal of three, three and a bed. This refers to three activities, three meals and a place to spend the night. This is the same thing most hosts have to consider when entertaining visitors and tourism, in the end, is all about entertaining visitors.

Agritourism is a form of business and needs to be treated as such. That is why topics like insurance, business plans, and marketing have to be addressed. All were made most interesting by the various presenters. The bulletins, guides, and printed materials provided to participants cover basically all aspects of developing successful agritourism ventures. Persons interested in learning more about agritourism and the workshop may contact Ms. Kathy Radomski at: Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas, P. O. Box 427, DeWitt, Arkansas 72042 dhatch@agcenter.lsu.edu / 870 946-3506

Dr. Dora Ann Hatch is a rural development specialist with the LSU Agricultural Center and can provide assistance to Louisiana residents in developing agritourism ventures. Dr. Hatch participated in the Arkansas workshop. She has published a bulletin entitled “A New Agricultural Business Enterprise – Agritourism,” Publication AC-5, October 2008, LSU Agricultural Center, Baton Rouge, LA. Any Parish (County) Agent with the LSU Cooperative Extension Service can secure copies of Dr. Hatch’s publication for readers. Dr. Hatch is stationed in Homer, Louisiana and may be contacted at 318 927-9654 ext. 229; dhatch@agcenter.lsu.edu.
The workshop was made possible by grants from the Southern SARE (US Department of Agriculture), and the Lower Mississippi Delta Region Initiative (National Park Service), and partnerships with Audubon Arkansas and the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. Those contemplating organizing similar workshops elsewhere might consider seeking funding through multiple agencies as did the Arkansas organizers of the DeWitt workshop.

Note: For birders reading this report, I managed to find over 70 birds during the workshop despite having little time to actually doing any birding. Nope, I did not manage to get to the Stuttgart Airport for Smith’s Longspur but did add about 15 new birds to my Arkansas list, now at 100, and a Barn Owl was a new 2009 Year Bird.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
March 10, 2009, 6:30 p.m.
Museum of Life Sciences at LSUS

Program -- Mac Hardy made the presentation “The Secret Lives of Animals--Exposed.” He showed photos of animals taken while using motion actuated cameras during research attempts to find ring-tailed cats in this area.

Treasurer’s Report – Jean Trahan reported that as of February 28, 2009, the club had $5,363.44 cash in the bank, $295.39 at the post office for mailing newsletters, and $402.30 at the LSUS printing office for printing newsletters. The total assets are then $6,061.13.

Bird Records – Mac Hardy reported that many records were submitted this last month and that we should keep up the good work and continue to submit records.

Programs -- Francine Forester will speak at the next meeting about hawks.

Science Fair – Linda Adrion judged projects at the regional science fair related to birds. She declared a winner who will make a presentation at a future meeting.

Hospitality—Amanda Lewis reported that Mac Hardy provided refreshments for this meeting. She said that we need someone to volunteer to provide refreshments at the next meeting.

Board – Jim Ingold reported that there are seven positions to be filled on the board for next year.

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Bird Talk—Jim Ingold reported a Bald Eagle recently seen over LSUS property. ME Lewis said that she had her first hummingbird at her house last Sunday. Nancy Menasco recently saw two Bald Eagles at the Red River NWR, Headquarters. Amanda Lewis spotted two Red-breasted Mergansers at Bickham Dickson Park. John Dillon took photos of a Louisiana Waterthrush that he saw yesterday.

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Treasurer’s Report
Shreveport Society for Nature Study, BSG
For the year ending June 2009
February 28, 2009

Statement of Financial Position

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BIRD REPORT – compiled April 6, 2009

Use the bird report to see what other birders have been seeing and where to go find the bird you want to see. Observers are abbreviated by the first and last initials. Dates and locations of observations are summarized under the observer’s initials. Sightings are arranged by species. Following each species is a line of data in the following format: date, initials of the observer, number of birds observed, initials of another observer, number of birds they observed, etc. For the number of birds observed, a 1 is used for both 1 bird and for numbers not reported by the observer. For example: 01/12/99 BB 2 means that on January 12, 1999, BB saw two birds. Then by looking on the observer list, located after the sightings, you can determine that BB is Bob Birder and on 1/12/99 he was birding C. Bickham Dickson Park.

Report bird records for the newsletter to Mac Hardy by the 15th of each month. All bird records reported here are observations of the observers and are therefore the responsibility of the observer.

Wood Duck -- 03/02/2009 RL 2
Ring-necked Duck -- 03/04/2009 RL 8
Lesser Scaup -- 03/04/2009 RL 15
Double-crested Cormorant -- 03/04/2009 RL 130
Great Blue Heron -- 03/02/2009 RL 1; 03/04/2009 RL 1
Black Vulture -- 03/04/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 5
Turkey Vulture -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/04/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 8
Sharp-shinned Hawk -- 03/04/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 1
Cooper’s Hawk -- 03/02/2009 RL 1
Red-shouldered Hawk -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 2
Broad-winged Hawk -- 03/26/2009 RS 1
Red-tailed Hawk -- 03/02/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 2
American Coot -- 03/04/2009 RL 120
Sandhill Crane -- 03/02/2009 RL 32
Ring-billed Gull -- 03/04/2009 RL 52
Rock Pigeon -- 03/04/2009 RL 8
Mourning Dove -- 03/02/2009 RL 8; 03/04/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 3
Greater Roadrunner -- 03/30/2009 RS 2
Barred Owl -- 03/02/2009 RL 4
Ruby-throated Hummingbird -- 03/26/2009 RS 2
Red-bellied Woodpecker -- 03/02/2009 RL 4; 03/26/2009 RS 4
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker -- 03/02/2009 RL 1
Downy Woodpecker -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 3
Hairy Woodpecker -- 03/02/2009 RL 1
Northern Flicker -- 03/02/2009 RL 3; 03/04/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 2
Pileated Woodpecker -- 03/02/2009 RL 2
Eastern Phoebe -- 03/02/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 2
White-eyed Vireo -- 03/26/2009 RS 17
Yellow-throated Vireo -- 03/26/2009 RS 1
Red-eyed Vireo -- 03/26/2009 RS 2
Blue Jay -- 03/02/2009 RL 6; 03/26/2009 RS 9
American Crow -- 03/02/2009 RL 4; 03/04/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 16
Fish Crow -- 03/02/2009 RL 3; 03/04/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 2
Purple Martin -- 03/04/2009 RL 3; 03/26/2009 RS 4
Carolina Chickadee -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 11
Tufted Titmouse -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 26
White-breasted Nuthatch -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 1
Carolina Wren -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet -- 03/02/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 2
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher -- 03/02/2009 RL 5
Eastern Bluebird -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/04/2009 RL 12; 03/26/2009 RS 7
American Robin -- 03/04/2009 RL 6
Northern Mockingbird -- 03/04/2009 RL 4; 03/26/2009 RS 10
Brown Thrasher -- 03/02/2009 RL 3; 03/26/2009 RS 2
European Starling -- 03/04/2009 RL 3; 03/26/2009 RS 7
Cedar Waxwing -- 03/26/2009 RS 8
Orange-crowned Warbler -- 03/26/2009 RS 1
Northern Parula -- 03/26/2009 RS 2
Yellow-rumped Warbler -- 03/26/2009 RS 4
Pine Warbler -- 03/02/2009 RL 2; 03/26/2009 RS 58
Black-and-white Warbler -- 03/26/2009 RS 8
Common Yellowthroat -- 03/26/2009 RS 2
Hooded Warbler -- 03/26/2009 RS 3
Eastern Towhee -- 03/26/2009 RS 3
Chipping Sparrow -- 03/02/2009 RL 3; 03/26/2009 RS 32
Field Sparrow -- 03/02/2009 RL 10
Song Sparrow -- 03/26/2009 RS 2
Swamp Sparrow -- 03/26/2009 RS 3
White-throated Sparrow -- 03/02/2009 RL 7; 03/04/2009 RL 8; 03/26/2009 RS 31
Dark-eyed Junco -- 03/02/2009 RL 17; 03/26/2009 RS 15
Northern Cardinal -- 03/02/2009 RL 10; 03/04/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 38
Dickcissel -- 03/04/2009 RL 1
Red-winged Blackbird -- 03/04/2009 RL 18
Common Grackle -- 03/02/2009 RL 8; 03/04/2009 RL 42; 03/26/2009 RS 2
Brown-headed Cowbird -- 03/02/2009 RL 2
House Finch -- 03/26/2009 RS 3
American Goldfinch -- 03/02/2009 RL 1; 03/26/2009 RS 15

TOTALS: NUMBER of 988 of 67 species.
OBSERVERS

RL -- Robert Lance: 03/02/2009 South end of Crouch Rd; 03/04/2009 Cypress-Black Bayou Shoreline
RS -- Rosemary Seidler: 03/26/2009 State Line Road; 03/30/2009 I-49 near Stonewall exit
Printed 107 of the 239,896 records.

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