

ORGANIZATION ROLE

Wildlife Ecologist

PROJECT ROLE / FOCUS AREAS

Statistical Ecology

Marine Field Logistics

ArcGIS Pro

Coastal Restoration

Fauna and Flora Identification

R Programming

EDUCATION

MS Biology, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2025

BS Natural Resource Ecology & Management, Louisiana State University, 2013

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The Waterbird Society (Member)

Louisiana Ornithological Society (Member)

Orleans Audubon Society (Member)

BONNIE SLATON, MS

Wildlife Ecologist

Bonnie Slaton, Wildlife Ecologist, supports The Water Institute's Coastal Ecology Department in the monitoring and management support for a range of wildlife resources including birds, marine mammals, fish, and amphibians. Specifically, she provides targeted data collection, data synthesis, and works with Institute data and database managers and front-end developers in developing data access and delivery for resource managers and researchers. Her support allows the Institute to better understand the complex ecological systems of coastal Louisiana and the northern Gulf.

Bonnie received her Master of Science in Biology from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her research focused on the responses of Brown Pelican nesting ecology and habitat on barrier islands to major hurricane events. Within her studies, she gained expertise in coastal restoration, ornithology, statistical ecology, marine ecology, and GIS. Her professional career as a marine ecologist includes extensive field and research experience across Louisiana's coastal ecosystems. Over the last fifteen years, Slaton has contributed to multi-year field research surveys of avian nesting colonies and migratory birds, benthic invertebrates, vegetation and marine fisheries in coastal Louisiana. In addition to field research, Slaton has authored technical reports, presented her research at conferences, and has extensive experience in science outreach and communication efforts. Bonnie is also a member of the Louisiana Ornithological Society, The Waterbird Society, and the Orleans Audubon Society.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2024: Benthic Surveyor, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program/ LUMCON

2023-2024: Avian Surveyor, SEG Environmental, LLC

2021-2023: Avian Surveyor, Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

2015-2021: Marine Fisheries Biologist III, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

2013-2014: Intern, The Water Institute

SELECTED PROJECTS

Gulfwide Colonial Waterbird Monitoring. *Deepwater Horizon Regionwide and Louisiana Trustee Implementation Groups. (Ongoing).* In collaboration with state and federal partners, The Institute developed the “Guidance for Coastal Ecosystem Restoration and Monitoring to Create or Improve Bird-Nesting Habitat” which outlines habitat needs, engineering and design considerations, and data gaps for restoration of bird habitats. This program also developed avianmonitoring.com, a geospatially enabled online portal that enables users to explore colonial waterbird survey data and imagery collected across the northern Gulf since 2010.

NOAA Ecosystem Monitoring of Barataria and Terrebonne Basins. *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, U.S. Geological Survey, Louisiana State University, University of Louisiana Lafayette, University of California Santa Cruz, Dynamic Solutions (2019–present).* Research Associate. Over a period of five years, the Water Institute and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have worked collaboratively to evaluate and develop ecological monitoring plans for Terrebonne and Barataria Basins as well as NOAA’s large-scale marsh creation project (BA-0207). Collaborative work is ongoing to develop, implement, and evaluate data collection plans targeting nekton and lower trophic level organisms. Work is expected to continue over the next five years while fostering collaboration across multiple state, federal, and academic partners.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

1. Slaton B. August 2025. Graduate Thesis: Responses of Brown Pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis) Nesting Ecology and Habitat to a Major Hurricane. https://www.lacoast.gov/reports/project/Slaton_Final_Thesis_Approved.pdf
2. Slaton B. 2012. Distribution of Seaside Sparrow (Ammodramus maritimus) During the Breeding and Nonbreeding Seasons, Undergraduate Thesis. Presentation at Louisiana State University Honors College Research Colloquium, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.