

TALE FEATHERS

St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122-0227
www.stlouisaudubon.org director@stlouisaudubon.org (314) 599-7390

Calendar

BEGINNER BIRD WALK FIELD TRIPS

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER AT 5595 GRAND DRIVE

FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

WALK FROM 830 AM TO 10 AM, MEET AT 815 AM

For info contact Chris at birding@forestparkforever.org.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

SATURDAY APRIL 14TH AT 8A

HONEYSUCKLE WORKDAY

CREVE COEUR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK

SATURDAY APRIL 14TH FROM 9A TO 1P

[HTTP://STLOUISAUDUBON.ORG/CALENDAR/CONTENT/HONEYSUCKLE-FLIER.PHP](http://stlouisaudubon.org/calendar/content/honeysuckle-flier.php)

2012 AWARDS DINNER—PAGE 5

ORLANDO GARDENS IN WEBSTER GROVES

SATURDAY APRIL 14TH AT 6 PM

MARK H.X. GLENSHAW, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

LINCOLN COUNTY MISSOURI DRIVING TOUR

WEDNESDAY APRIL 18TH AT 8A

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

MALLARD LAKE & LITTLE CREVE COEUR LAKE

SATURDAY APRIL 21ST AT 8A

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

FOREST PARK & TOWER GROVE PARK

SATURDAY APRIL 28TH AT 730A

EARTH DAY AT THE GARDEN

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

SATURDAY APRIL 28TH FROM 10A TO 3P

[WWW.MOBOT.ORG](http://www.mobot.org)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

TOWER GROVE PARK

WEDNESDAY MAY 5TH AT 730A

WINGS OF SPRING BIRD FESTIVAL

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS IN WEST ALTON, MO

SATURDAY MAY 12TH FROM 8A TO 330P

[HTTP://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/2827](http://riverlands.audubon.org/events/2827)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

SHAW NATURE RESERVE

SATURDAY MAY 19TH AT 730A

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Purple Martins at the Park

By Karen Meyer

Editors Note: This is the first of two articles on local projects funded by the Cathleen Creley Memorial Fund, an endowment fund of the St. Louis Audubon Society.

One of the most popular recreational trails in St. Louis County is at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park in Maryland Heights. People walk, run, rollerblade, and bike on the paved trail, enjoying views of Creve Coeur Lake, Mallard Lake, bottomland forests, marshlands, and open fields. It's not surprising that certain areas along the trail might be suitable habitat for Purple Martins. Not only are they highly social birds that are interesting to watch, but they also thrive in close proximity to people.

Most Purple Martins winter in the Amazon River Basin area of Brazil and migrate to North America in the spring to breed. Native Americans sought their company by hanging gourds to attract these birds even before Europeans came to America. East of the Rockies, for more than 100 years, Purple Martins have been dependent on humans to supply nest boxes. While it's estimated that some one million martin houses exist in the U.S., populations in some areas are experiencing long-term declines.

So why do we want to take care of these birds? Maybe

See Purple Martins on Page 4

Board Meetings

Open to All. 2nd Tuesday of Every Month at 7 pm. Powder Valley Nature Center at 11715 Cragwold.

Board recruitment is an ongoing process and requires your interest and our need. If you have thought of serving in such a way, stop by or call one of us.

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Newsletter

TaleFeathers is published monthly. For submissions, comments or corrections, contact Mitch Leachman as noted above.

Habitat Work Continues

On March 3rd, 24 volunteers came out to Creve Coeur Park to continue the upland forest restoration project we began last year. Efforts were focused along a narrow finger of the bluff, and the team very efficiently cleared over a half-acre of Asian bush honeysuckle—much of which was small and could be pulled up by the roots. The workday was supported by a TogetherGreen grant from National Audubon and part of a larger project funded by the Missouri Department of Conservation which aims to restore the entire upland forest in the Park to its natural state, absent the invasive honeysuckle. The final spring workday will be April 14th (<http://stlouisaudubon.org/calendar/content/honeysuckle-flier.php>), and the final planting will be this fall.

On March 24th, 220 volunteers participated in the Creve Coeur Park side of the Confluence Trash Bash, a regional watershed cleanup. Park efforts were coordinated by the St. Louis Audubon Society and involved 11 different sites in and around the Park. After just a half-day's work, 620 tires, 1,000 pounds of scrap metal and over 3 tons of trash were removed from area creeks, lakes and drainage areas. Just some of the groups represented included the Cub Scouts, Grace Church, Harrah's Casino, Maryville University and Missouri American Water. Site-specific support was again provided by TogetherGreen and a generous grant from REI. The entire Trash Bash was supported by dozens of sponsors, but led by the Confluence Partnership, the Metropolitan Sewer District of St. Louis and Trailnet. For pictures, visit the Audubon Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Louis-Audubon-Society/116967501667135?ref=ts>. We hope to see you next year! ♦



Left: Junior Trash Bash volunteer at one of the 9 remote sites. Right: Eric Feltz gives a little extra to remove some honeysuckle by the roots. STL Audubon Photos

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

I am very pleased to announce that a partnership agreement has been finalized with the Missouri Dept of Conservation for our Bring Conservation Home program! A renewable, two-year agreement has been signed that will provide financial and technical support to the program. Outreach materials have already been delivered for use by Habitat Advisors and delivery to homeowners, and a press release is underway that will highlight the partnership. Department officials noted Bring Conservation Home is exactly the type of intense habitat restoration and education effort needed in for our developed cities and towns.

Also, a Native Landscaping Workshop for Homeowners, our first partner event, was held March 31st with over 120 participants. The event was coordinated by MDC, Shaw Nature Reserve, STL Audubon and the St. Louis Chapter of Wild Ones. Additional support was provided by Grow Native, the Horticulture Co-op of St. Louis and the Missouri Prairie Foundation. This was a great example of the broad community partnership envisioned with Bring Conservation Home.

With 28 Habitat Advisors trained, we are definitely open for business! 35 homeowners have already entered the program and many of them were referrals—the best type of advertising. Additional exposure will come through partnerships under development, spring events like Earth Day festivals, and direct outreach to area hobby groups such as garden clubs.

If you have longed for your own wildlife sanctuary, but struggled with where to start, just go to our website at <http://stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/>. For as little as \$25, we'll come to your home and provide personal, detailed advice and answer your questions. Spring is here, and it's time to plant for wildlife! ♦



Field Trips, Etc.

April 14th to Castlewood State Park: Bernie Favara leads this half day trip that includes moderate hiking and is good for beginners. Meet at 8 a.m. in the lot just after the park office on Kiefer Creek Rd.

April 18th Lincoln County Driving Tour: John Solodar leads this half-plus day trip that meets at 8 am near Elsberry. From I-70 in St. Charles, take Hwy 79 north thru Winfield & Foley (watch your speed) to MO P, just north of Elsberry, at Prairie Slough CA sign. Turn right for ½ mile to first lot on left.

April 21st to Mallard Lake: Mary Dueren leads this half day trip at 8 am from the Creve Coeur Lakehouse south lot at 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Rd, south of Hwy 364 and east of the Maryland Heights Expressway. Check the STL County website for construction updates. Beginner trip with walking.

April 28th to Forest Park/Tower Grove Park: Bob Bailey & Dave Garcia lead this half day trip that

includes moderate hiking and is good for beginners. Meet at 7:30 am in the lot of the Kennedy Memorial Forest off Wells Drive, just west of the Zoo.

May 5th at Tower Grove Park: Pat Lueders leads this half day trip at 7:30 am. From I-44, take Kingshighway south to Magnolia. Turn left and proceed to entrance on right. Right again on Northwest Dr and follow to Gaddy Bird Garden on right. Meet at Garden entrance.

May 19th to Shaw Nature Reserve: Connie Alwood leads this all day trip that includes moderate hiking over some rough terrain and is good for beginners. Meet at 7:30 am in the lot inside the main entrance. Take I-44 west to Hwy 100 (Gray Summit exit). Cross the highway and turn right. Entrance is on the left.

All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required, unless noted—consult our website for details. For questions, contact Mike Grant at mikecurlw@att.net.

Purple Martins at the Park

Continued from Page 1

it's not enough that they are entertaining to watch and listen. They also perform a service by eating lots of insects, which they do in flight. Even drinking is done on the wing. Many people are under the assumption that Purple Martins dine on mosquitoes. They do eat a large variety of flying insects, but feed only during the day and too high in the sky to encounter mosquitoes. Martin breeding success can be greatly reduced when wet and cool weather sets in for an extended period, causing insect activity to be suspended. However, such situations usually lead to a second nesting attempt, helping to maintain overall survival.

With the hope of enticing these colony nesters to a field near Mallard Lake, six volunteers gathered to set up two new Purple Martin houses on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in March. John Miller, a local expert on the species, has been a great resource for the project. He assisted in site and house selection and provided a bit of bedding materials inside the nest boxes. For now, we need to watch the skies and begin checking the houses to see if the birds will find the new real estate we've provided.

The Creve Coeur Lakehouse restaurant is close by the martin houses; patrons can enjoy food and beverage and wonderful relaxing views of sky, water and birds. Others in the vicinity may be playing volleyball, sunning, reading, or playing Frisbee with their dogs and friends. If you find yourself on the trail, take at least a few minutes to search the skies near the Lakehouse; this may be the spot to take a deserved and entertaining rest.

Thanks to the St. Louis County Parks–Creve Coeur Park employees for their support of the project and firm installation of the martin house poles. Many thanks also to those who helped assemble and raise the houses—Mitch Leachman, Bill Loynd (owner of the Creve Coeur Lakehouse), Glenn Meyer, John Miller and Mervis William. The fun is just beginning, and we couldn't make this happen without our faithful group of monitoring volunteers including Mary Duren, Trina King, Karen Meyer, Bryan Prather and Anne Rankin–Horton.

See the May TaleFeathers for another project made possible by the Cathleen Creley Memorial Fund. ◆



*Karen Meyer deposits starter bedding material.
John Miller observes. STL Audubon Photo*



*One of two completed houses. Each can hold eight Purple Martin nests.
Predator guards were installed later. John Miller Photo*

St. Louis Audubon Society
2012 Awards Dinner

Saturday, April 14th

MARK H.X. GLENSHAW, NATURALIST



St. Louis Audubon is pleased to announce that the 2012 Awards Dinner will feature Mark H.X. Glenshaw as the keynote speaker. The dinner will be hosted at Orlando Gardens at 8352 Watson Road in Webster Groves on Saturday, April 14th.

Mark Glenshaw is an award-winning naturalist who has closely observed and documented the lives of a mated pair of Great Horned Owls in Forest Park in St. Louis, Missouri since December 2005. During this time, he has observed and documented a vast range of behaviors including hunting, mating, nest-site selection and rearing of young. He shares his work on his blog, forestparkowls.blogspot.com.

His work has been featured in *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *St. Louis Magazine*, and *Show-Me Missouri*. He leads owl prowls and gives talks for interested individuals and small groups as well as

for formal events and groups such as The St. Louis Bioblitz, Wonders of Wildlife-St. Louis, Missouri Department of Conservation and Washington University in St. Louis. He was awarded the Citizen Scientist Award for the 2006 St. Louis Bioblitz by the Academy of Science-St. Louis.

Mark’s talk will cover how he found these owls, basic facts about the species, and the different behaviors he has been able to see and document with photos and videos to illustrate these behaviors. He will conclude by discussing how people want to connect more with nature and ways that naturalists, birders and other nature experts can help.

- 6:00 p.m.—Registration / Open Bar
- 6:15 p.m.—Business Meeting
- 7:00 p.m.—Dinner Service and Award Presentations
- 8:15 p.m.—Keynote Presentation by Mark Glenshaw

Tickets are \$35 per person. Reservations are required—please use the form below.

Orlando Gardens is at 8352 Watson Road in the General Grant Shopping Center in Webster Groves, about one-half mile west of Laclede Station Road and one mile from I-44 and the Elm Avenue exit. ♦

Saturday, April 14th, 2012 Awards Dinner Registration Form

Registration required. Call Mitch at (314) 599-7390 or e-mail director@stlouisaudubon.org to pay at the door or register and pay online via PayPal at http://stlouisaudubon.org/news/content/awards_2012.php.

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Name(s)	Fee	No. Total Enclosed

High School Student Young Environmentalist Awards

St. Louis Audubon is pleased to announce that two St. Louis area high school students have been named 2012 scholarship winners. Blaine Clark, Seckman High School in Imperial, MO has become an avid bird watcher and volunteers at Wild Bird Rehabilitation. He will be attending a workshop at the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine this June—*Coastal Maine Bird Studies for Teens*.

Jamie Hudson, McCluer North High School, is planning a career in biology and would like to create a foundation with a goal to educate children about our increasingly threatened fragile ecosystems. We are proud to support these two young people whose personal goals match the conservation and education vision of the St. Louis Audubon Society. ◆

COMMUNITY CLOUD FOREST CONSERVATION

Saturday, April 21st at 4 p.m. at Manchester United Methodist Church
129 Woods Mill Road, Manchester, MO 63011

Rob Cahill, Community Cloud Forest Conservation co-director, will present a rich introduction to the central highland cloud forest of Guatemala, with special emphasis on the Resplendent Quetzal.

CCFC works to alleviate poverty and protect forests through agroecology, reforestation, environmental education and eco-tourism in 40 remote, rural Q'eqchi' Maya communities that border the cloud forest. The future of these cloud forests rests in the hands of the people that live along the forest edge. He will discuss recent projects, in collaboration with Heifer Project International, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Cahills have lived and worked for ten years in the Guatemala's central highlands on conservation, community development, food security and education projects.

As co-director of Community Cloud Forest Conservation, Rob works to protect the cloud forests of Guatemala's central highlands. Rob also serves as coeditor/referee for eBird Guatemala, a program of National Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Rob is an enthusiastic birdwatcher. He has connected his passion for birds with his love of languages through the study of Q'eqchi' Maya avian nomenclature and Q'eqchi' ethnoornithology. For questions, contact Jo at (636) 587-3103. ◆

CREVE COEUR PARK BIOBLITZ

If you've been looking for a family-friendly way to uniquely experience the outdoors, mark your calendar for the Creve Coeur Park BioBlitz on Saturday morning, May 26th. The Academy of Science of St. Louis and the St. Louis Audubon Society are collaborating to produce the event with support from the National Audubon TogetherGreen program, REI, St. Louis County Parks and many others. You can sign up for one or more teams, led by experts in the field, to help observe and identify amphibians, birds, butterflies, plants, reptiles and more. Registration is required but currently only open for team leaders. Check back soon at http://academyofsciencestl.org/initiatives/bioblitz/creve_coeur_park/. Be a citizen scientist and help us record the plants and animals of the region's biggest municipal park. Bring your camera and binoculars and dress for the weather. Questions call Karen at (314) 602-7318. Hope to see you there! ◆

Horseshoe Lake Report

by Mike Grant

On a foggy Saturday morning, March 17th, about two dozen birders assembled at Horseshoe Lake State Park in Illinois for the annual “see how many ducks we can get” trip. It was so foggy at the start that we couldn’t even see the lake from the parking lot, let alone waterfowl on the lake. So we walked in hopes of picking up Eurasian Tree Sparrows (ETS) for the 6 new birders there, but the ones that had been seen earlier had departed. We had many Common Grackles and American Robins. An Eastern Bluebird was fly-catching from a nearby tree and a dark Red-Tailed Hawk was spotted. A Northern Flicker that had been calling perched for observation. As the fog lifted we were able to see many Ruddy Ducks, many American Coots, a few Pied-billed Grebes and Northern Shovelers and a Horned Grebe or two.

We carpoled onto the causeway to Walker Island and stopped to scope—one distant American White Pelican, a pair of Hooded Mergansers and some Gadwall. We added a Great Blue Heron and then proceeded along the lake to the far end. Two pelicans were seen flying into the middle of the lake and we then noticed that they settled in with a group of Double-crested Cormorants. We stopped for ETS after we heard their chatter and also added Carolina Wren.

Leaving the lake we tried for the Mountain Bluebird that wintered on Bischoff Rd but were unable to locate it. We did find several more Eastern Bluebirds, an Eastern Meadowlark, and an American Kestrel. Another interesting find was a dead Coot on the road that provided a good look at those strange, green feet.

We then went to the boat ramp and set up scopes. Both Blue-winged and Green-winged Teals were found and then an adult Bald Eagle snagged a coot and landed in a tree to have lunch. We also saw a muskrat near the opening to its den. As we left the boat ramp a Northern Mockingbird flew in.

Some of us then regrouped at Columbia Bottom CA in Missouri. Along the gravel road was a large mixed flock of blackbirds. In the pools we found Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, a Least Sandpiper, many Pectoral Sandpipers, Wilson’s Snipe, and quite a few Rusty Blackbirds. A Northern Harrier scattered the shorebirds several times. We also had a few Tree Swallows there. Driving out to try to beat the storm I saw one Hooded Merganser and a Northern Flicker in the burned area. I want to thank all the participants and especially those who helped lead the trip. ◆



American Coot (left) and Greater Yellowlegs. Al Smith photos.

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

E-Mail or Phone (if desired):

Make checks payable to:
St. Louis Audubon Society

Mail Checks to:
St. Louis Audubon Society
P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, MO 63122-0227

4/12

St. Louis Audubon Society Chapter-Supporting Membership Form

Mission: *to create a community connection to nature through education and conservation.*

Your Chapter-Supporting membership runs concurrently with your National Audubon membership, if you choose to maintain the latter. To continue to receive the *Audubon* magazine, you must maintain your National membership.

\$20
 \$30
 \$50**
 \$100
 Other _____

** Memberships of \$50, or above, will receive a copy of Dr. Stephen Kress' *North American Birdfeeder Guide*, a \$15 value, as our gift. This 220 page book covers feeding and observing tips and includes common species profiles.

100% of your dues stay in St. Louis supporting our local efforts. All our programs are free. Thank you very much!

If already a Chapter-Supporting member, you need do nothing but accept our thanks!

**Memberships are Tax Deductible
Less the \$15 Cost of the Book**

St. Louis Audubon Society
P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, MO 63122-0227



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