

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 e-mail birding@forestparkforever.org.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

DRESSER ISLAND CONSERVATION AREA
SATURDAY APRIL 13TH AT 630 AM

PEREGRINE FALCON PROGRAM—PAGE 4

STL COUNTY LIBRARY—TESSON FERRY BRANCH
THURSDAY APRIL 18TH AT 7P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

MALLARD LAKE & LITTLE CREVE COEUR LAKE
SATURDAY APRIL 20TH AT 8A

STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—PAGE 4

TREE PLANTING AT CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK
SATURDAY APRIL 20TH FROM 9A TO 1P

WINGS OF SPRING BIRD WALKS

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS AND OTHER LOCATIONS
SATURDAY APRIL 20TH TO SUNDAY MAY 12TH
[HTTP://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS](http://riverlands.audubon.org/events)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

FOREST PARK & TOWER GROVE PARK
SATURDAY APRIL 27TH AT 730A

EARTH DAY AT THE GARDEN—PAGE 7

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN
SATURDAY APRIL 27TH FROM 10A TO 3P
[WWW.MOBOT.ORG](http://www.mobot.org)

STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—PAGE 4

HABITAT RESTORATION AT CREVE COEUR PARK
SATURDAY MAY 4TH FROM 9A TO 1P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP

WETLAND WALK FOR ALL AGES
CHESTERFIELD VALLEY ATHLETIC COMPLEX—WEST TRAILHEAD
SATURDAY MAY 4TH FROM 8A TO 10A
FOR INFO AND TO REGISTER, CALL THE CHESTERFIELD PARKS
OFFICE AT (636) 812-9500

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

TOWER GROVE PARK
WEDNESDAY MAY 11TH AT 730A

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Congratulations!

One of the many ways in which the St. Louis Audubon Society works to further its conservation mission is through our scholarship programs. For many years we have awarded scholarships to graduate students doing research projects which will promote conservation of birds in particular and wildlife in general. Our recipient this year is Vincenzo Ellis, a PhD candidate at the University of Missouri–St. Louis who is doing valuable research on avian blood parasites. According to Dr. Robert Ricklefs, "*Vincenzo's research will likely yield new insights into the regulation of natural populations, including those of conservation concern.*" We are pleased to support Mr. Ellis' research which may prove to be very useful in evaluating the effects of parasites on certain bird populations.

A second scholarship which we have offered less regularly is our High School Student award, and this year we are pleased to announce two winners: Sean Simpson, a student at Lindbergh Senior High School who is planning to study biology in college and Anna Martin from O'Fallon Township HS whose academic interests include biology and medical sciences. We hope that Sean and Anna will keep their commitment to environmental awareness and that they will join other like-minded young people in supporting Audubon's mission: "To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the world's biological diversity." ♦

Submitted by Lynne Breakstone

Board Meetings

Open to All. 2nd Tuesday of Every Month at 7 pm at the Sunset Hills Community Center at 3915 S. Lindbergh Boulevard.

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.

Officers

Rixey Ruffin, President

(314) 504-9575

president@stlouisaudubon.org

Marty Smigell, VP Education

(314) 640-0897

Jean Favara, VP of Conservation

(314) 603-9462

conservation@stlouisaudubon.org

Chris Ferree, Secretary

(314) 412-2208

oaksavanna2000@yahoo.com

Linda Tossing, Treasurer

(314) 849-4260

stltossing@aol.com

Mitch Leachman, Executive Director

(314) 599-7390

director@stlouisaudubon.org

Newsletter

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



Watershed Cleanup Benefits Wildlife

On March 23rd, 235 people participated in the Confluence Trash Bash at the Creve Coeur Park location. The Trash Bash, a regional watershed cleanup, is coordinated by a diverse group of partners including MSD, Missouri American Water, Great Rivers Greenway, St. Louis County, the Sierra Club and many more. For the last four years, St. Louis Audubon has coordinated activities based out of Creve Coeur Park, one of three registration and distribution locations this year.

The volunteers working 8 sites from the Creve Coeur Park location managed to collect nearly 40 yards of trash, about 3,000 pounds of scrap metal and over 1,000 tires. Our waters and our wildlife are much better for it. A big THANK YOU to all the volunteers, especially the site leaders, registration team and co-coordinators ! ♦



Trash at Creve Coeur Park's Mallard Lake (top); one enthusiastic volunteer.

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

I was recently asked by the Chesterfield Citizens Committee for the Environment to provide a small piece for their newsletter about cats. In preparing this *TaleFeathers*, I thought it just as appropriate.

Spring is upon us and already we see courtship and nesting behavior from our native birds. Whether you provide bird feeders, water features or native plant habitat, please consider keeping your cat indoors; it will be good for the cat and great for the birds.

- Cats allowed outdoors risk attack by other cats, dogs and injury from cars and other vehicles.
- Cats allowed outdoors are much more likely to contract feline leukemia, distemper and other diseases.
- Cats allowed outdoors may bring ticks, mites, fleas and other pests into your home.
- Free-roaming cats will hunt birds and other small animals on instinct, regardless of appetite.
- Cats are stealth/ambush predators and can effectively hunt even when declawed.
- Collars with bells have little benefit as birds have no reason to associate the ringing with danger.
- A recent report by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute estimates **2.4 billion birds are killed in the U.S. annually** by free-roaming cats.

For the complete story about the Smithsonian report and other information about this issue:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/30/science/that-cuddly-kitty-of-yours-is-a-killer.html>

[http://www.humanesociety.org/news/magazines/2011/01-](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/magazines/2011/01-02/peaceable_backyard_kingdom_protect_cats_wildlife_01032011.html)

[02/peaceable_backyard_kingdom_protect_cats_wildlife_01032011.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/magazines/2011/01-02/peaceable_backyard_kingdom_protect_cats_wildlife_01032011.html)

<http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/stewardship.php>

<http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/index.html>

My furry life partner is Cheyenne; she is a 15-year old domestic shorthair cat that has never been allowed to wander freely outside. She frequently chatters, focused on a bird, rabbit or squirrel outside, clearly making plans for each of them—if only she was allowed to. The thing is I love the birds and other animals as much as I love my cat. That, simply, is why I will always keep them apart. I hope you will, too! ♦

Field Trips, Etc.

April 13th to Dresser Island Conservation Area: Sue Gustafson and Pat Lueders will lead this all day trip that starts at 6:30 am and will include quite a bit of walking. From Hwy 67 in West Alton, take Hwy 94 west 4.5 miles to right at Dresser Island Dr, a gravel road that ends at the parking lot.

April 20th 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 27th 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 11th 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.

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

The Peregrine Falcon: A Success Story

Thursday, April 18th at 7 pm

Jeffrey Meshach, Director of the World Bird Sanctuary, will present a brief history of the Peregrine Falcon, its struggle with the effects of the pervasive pesticide DDT and its amazing population recovery. He will highlight the Sanctuary's efforts in this process, including its critical role in re-establishing wild populations in the St. Louis region. Jeff may be able to bring a falcon with him to the program.



Al Smith Photo

While populations have been slowly building, the Peregrine Falcon is still listed as endangered in the state of Missouri. Historically, the birds nested on the bluffs of the region's big rivers. Today, they find the concrete ledges of tall buildings suitable for nesting with plenty of pigeons and other birds as prey. Diving at speeds up to 260 miles per hour, they are believed the fastest birds in the world.

A short business meeting, our Annual Meeting, will precede the program and will include the election of the board of directors. All are welcome to attend, but only members may vote.

The event begins at 7 pm at the Tesson Ferry Branch of the St. Louis County Library at 9920 Lin-Ferry Drive, St. Louis, MO 63123, just east of the intersection of Tesson Ferry and South Lindbergh. For questions, call (314) 599-7390. ◆

Habitat Restoration Projects

Saturday, April 20th at Castlewood State Park. Tree Planting.

All ages welcome. Help us celebrate Earth Day! Bring your favorite lopper or saw. The Park office is at 1401 Kiefer Creek Road in Ballwin. From I-270, take Big Bend or Manchester to Ries Road south to its end. Turn left. Office is just ahead on the right. We may meet elsewhere, so please register as noted below.

Saturday, May 4th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle Removal.

All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. Meet in the upper park—west of I-270 and north of Dorsett. Take I-270 Exit 17 for Dorsett Rd and go west about 1.5 miles. Enter Park on right, just before light at Marine and take Streetcar Drive north. Continue past park office, ball field and tennis court to gravel parking lot on right. Parking is somewhat limited, so please carpool if possible.

Volunteers are requested to register for all projects by providing their name, contact information and number attending at director@stlouisaudubon.org or (314) 599-7390.

All projects begin at 9 am (registration starts at 8:30 am). All are half-day and include lunch. Gloves and other supplies/materials are provided. For Audubon info, visit www.stlouisaudubon.org. ◆

North American Breeding Bird Survey

Each spring over 2500 skilled amateur birders and professional biologists volunteer to participate in the [North American Breeding Bird Survey \(BBS\)](#). Since 1965, these volunteers have contributed to one of the most widely used bird monitoring datasets in North America. In 2009, the Midwest Coordinated Bird Monitoring Partnership began a campaign to fill all vacant BBS routes in our region. Each year, the number of vacant routes has decreased, and I am confident that we will have a record year for filling routes in 2013.

To that end, I ask you to consider adopting a vacant route near you, adding a route if you already run one, and getting the word out to your friends and neighbors. I plan on running five routes in the western half of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to do my part!

As of the first day of spring, we have **75 vacant routes** in our [region](#). I have broken these out by state and provided a point of contact below:

[Illinois](#): 5 Vacant Routes—Matt Mckim—louder; email: mckimlou@illinois.edu; phone: 660-441-7509

[Missouri](#): 30 Vacant Routes—Janet Haslerig; email: janet.haslerig@mdc.mo.gov; phone: 573-522-4115 x3198

Requirements for participation are listed below:

1. Access to suitable transportation to complete a survey.
2. Good hearing and eyesight.
3. The ability to identify all breeding birds in the area by sight and sound. Knowledge of bird songs is extremely important, because most birds counted on these surveys are singing males.
4. New BBS participants must also successfully complete the [BBS Methodology Training Program](#) before their data will be used in any BBS analyses. The training program is available from the national BBS offices and the state, provincial, and territorial coordinators.

Thank you for participating in this program and helping me get the word out. It may be the first day of spring, but I have 50-60 inches of snow in my yard and great winter birds at the feeders. BBS season will be here before we know it!

As posted by Katie Koch of the Midwest Coordinated Bird Monitoring Partnership: <http://midwestbirdmonitoring.ning.com> ◆

Bird Monitoring Begins a New Season

It's hard to believe that Purple Martin scouts have already been seen in the area, seeking nesting sites. Spring migration is just weeks away, and we'll be into our 2nd season of Purple Martin house monitoring, and our 4th season of bluebird box monitoring. Each year has been a fun and educational. If you have some time to spare, we'd be happy to have you for our weekly monitoring opportunities at Creve Coeur Park. No experience necessary. Please contact Karen Meyer for info at kb2bird@sbcglobal.net or (314) 602-7318. ◆

March Birding Report Excerpts

By Mike Grant

Saturday March 16th at Horseshoe Lake State Park in Illinois. We had wind, ducks, and more wind. The wind seemed to have blown a few participants away as the number dropped from 12 to 4 before we left the park. It is hard to dress appropriately for that kind of wind chill when it was a balmy 73 the day before. The temperature dropped 11 degrees during the trip.

On, over or near the lake we had Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Ducks, Northern Shovelers, Gadwall, Blue & Green-winged Teal, Mallards, Pie Billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, a flock of White Pelicans so large and tight together that they looked like an island, two Eastern Phoebes, Northern Mockingbird. A Bonaparte's Gull flew by several times giving opportunity to study it. Near the meeting parking lot was a Red-tailed Hawk and a mixed flock of blackbirds and sparrows that contained Red-winged Blackbirds, Juncos, and Starlings.

At Columbia Bottom the four remaining participants waited out the Spotted Towhee and were rewarded. A Brown Thrasher was not far from the HQ building. Cormorants and Wood Ducks flew over.

At Riverlands, Teal Pond added Common, Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers. Ellis Bay brought many more Pelicans and Ruddy Ducks, GW Teal and Greater White-fronted Geese. Mike Thelen found the group the White-winged Scoters from the picnic pavilion lot and returning there later with more recent intelligence he found the Western Grebe. They had burned some of the fields along Riverlands Way and one field near the equipment compound had no less than 11 Red-tailed Hawks sitting on the ground or in short trees.

Saturday March 9th at Busch Conservation Area Owl & Woodcock Prowl. I can safely say it was the warmest evening in the history of this event, 70 deg at the time we met. Unfortunately, as many birders frequently say, "good weather, bad birds" prevailed—no owls.

The weather became quite overcast quickly, so we convened at the Blue Grosbeak Trail earlier than planned for the woodcocks, and they were peeting when we arrived around 6:15 pm. There were probably more than 10 woodcocks peeting and demonstrating in the area, but it was difficult to see the displays because of the overcast evening. All in the group heard the vocalizing and displays, and most saw the woodcocks flying and on the ground. With more light and less wind, more satisfying looks could have been had by the group, and this is a good location to return to in the next few weeks. ◆



American Woodcock (left—not taken on the March 9th trip); Spotted Towhee

Al Smith Photos

Spring is Here!

We thought this was a fine time to celebrate our common native songbirds, especially with their songs in the air. Go for a walk, do some gardening, checkout a field trip and all the while listen to the birds!



Clockwise from top left: Tufted Titmouse; Carolina Wren; Northern Cardinal; Eastern Meadowlark Woodcock

Al Smith Photos

Celebrate Earth Day All Around Town

Sunday, April 14th in Sunset Hills—Run and Festival

<http://www.sunset-hills.com/index.aspx?page=86>

Sunday, April 21st at the Muny grounds in Forest Park from 11 am to 6 pm

<http://www.stlouisearthday.org/events/festival/>

Saturday, April 27th at the Missouri Botanical Garden from 10 am to 3 pm

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/things-to-do/events/calendar.aspx>

Saturday, April 27th at the Chesterfield Amphitheater from 9 am to 2 pm

<http://www.chesterfield.mo.us/earth-day-event.html>

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

E-Mail or Phone (if desired):

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

4/13

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

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