

TALE FEATHERS

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Calendar

BEGINNER BIRD WALK FIELD TRIPS

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER AT 5595 GRAND DRIVE

FIRST SATURDAY OF MOST MONTHS

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

FOR INFO CONTACT AMY [BIRDING@FORESTPARKFOREVER.ORG](mailto:AMY@FORESTPARKFOREVER.ORG)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

DRESSER ISLAND CONSERVATION AREA

SATURDAY APRIL 12TH AT 730 AM

STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—PAGE 4

HONEYSUCKLE KILL AT CREVE COEUR LAKE PARK

SATURDAY APRIL 12TH FROM 9A TO 12P

TASTE OF INDIA PROGRAM—PAGE 5

GRAND GLAIZE BRANCH OF STL COUNTY LIBRARY

TUESDAY APRIL 15TH AT 7P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP

MALLARD LAKE & LITTLE CREVE COEUR LAKE

SATURDAY APRIL 19TH AT 8A

MARY DUEREN LEADS THIS MORNING WALK. MEET AT THE CREVE COEUR LAKEHOUSE PARKING LOT [HTTP://CCLAKEHOUSE.COM/](http://cclakehouse.com/)

STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—PAGE 4

TREE PLANTING AT CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

SATURDAY APRIL 19TH FROM 9A TO 12P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

FOREST PARK & TOWER GROVE PARK

SATURDAY APRIL 26TH AT 730A

BACK TO NATURE OPEN HOUSE—PAGE 7

QUEENY PARK

SATURDAY APRIL 26TH FROM 9A TO 2P

STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—PAGE 4

HONEYSUCKLE KILL AT MCKELVEY WOODS PARK

SATURDAY MAY 3RD FROM 9A TO 1P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

TOWER GROVE PARK

WEDNESDAY MAY 10TH AT 730A

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

SHAW NATURE RESERVE

SATURDAY MAY 17TH AT 730A

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Inspiration for Habitat

By Cori Westcott

As turtles begin to gather in the spring, so do naturalists gather in the St. Louis region for the annual workshop for native landscaping. It's like a spring jubilee of the enthusiastic supporters of the state's flora. It was fun to see expectant faces of homeowners I hadn't seen since I visited their landscapes during Bring Conservation Home surveys. In that respect, it was a series of happy reunions.

Doug Tallamy, the featured speaker and author of *Bringing Nature Home* wowed us with caterpillars that looked other worldly in their beauty and carried unique adaptations to their species. Of course, the other worldly quality is only there because I have not witnessed a creature remotely resembling one in my relatively new-to-Missouri-native landscape. And while we were swept into a desire to plant all things functionally supporting the food web, he challenged us to step once again from our comfort zone.

He suggested we do away with front yard/back yard attitudes and practice. Just as we try keeping the living room tidy to welcome guests when some of our other living quarters might be less than well, tidy, we've likened that standard to our home landscaping. We have evolved our standards of horticultural success from an aesthetic criteria to a functional one. No longer are we choosing plants on their long-lasting bloom time but on

See Inspiration on Page 5

Board Meetings

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

Board recruitment is an ongoing process and requires a long-term commitment. If you have thought of serving in such a way, just 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.

Good Things Come to Those Who Wait

By Karen Meyer

Many bird enthusiasts are familiar with the west side of Creve Coeur Park because of Little Creve Coeur Lake and the newer wetlands to the west, and south. The lot at the red sheds formerly allowed access to Little Creve Coeur Lake, but use of the lot was discontinued once the Maryland Heights Expressway was built.

We're very pleased to announce that the day has finally arrived for the opening of the parking lot off of River Valley Drive. This paved lot is adjacent to the bird blind (see May 2013 *TaleFeathers* article for more info about the blind) and the small marsh. The gates to this parking lot at the 90 degree bend on River Valley Drive will be open by 8:00 am daily and will close 1/2 hour after sunset. On occasion these hours might vary slightly as staff integrate this new task into their schedules.

The gravel road trail from the lot is for foot traffic only. Follow it north and it will then wind to the east. Little Creve Coeur Lake is on the left near the end of the road. If you're inclined to walk the Bird Box Trail, it spans north off the gravel road just after the bend to the east. St. Louis Audubon volunteers have installed, maintain and monitor 10 blue bird boxes scattered along this road. A mowed path continues off the Bird Box Trail to the west, through the field to the lot at the Eileen Pfeiffer Shelter, with a side loop that returns south to the gravel entrance road off River Valley Drive. County Parks is working up trail signs for these paths to be posted at both the new lot and the Pfeiffer Shelter.

Many thanks to Dennis Hogan, Joe Strasser and St. Louis County Parks staff for making this happen. Happy spring birding everyone!



Savanna Sparrow at Creve Coeur Park

Al Smith Photo

President's Message

By Rixey Ruffin

The daffodils in bloom outside the window suggest that maybe the long winter of 2013–2014 is finally behind us. Not only have the Redbirds arrived (Busch Stadium looks like a very large nest, now that I think about it), but many other birds are about to as well. In other words, it's almost spring migration, and here's hoping each of you can find the time to witness at least some small part of this annual miracle.

Spring is also the time for other changes. For St. Louis Audubon, it's when we start and end our fiscal year, and when we start and end terms on the Board. I am pleased to say that Katy Fechter, Pat Lueders, and Jamila Reid will each be staying on the Board for another term, continuing to add their insights and leadership in a variety of ways. At the same time, we say farewell and thank you to Ann Earley, who will be taking a much deserved respite from the Board. Thank you, Ann, for all that you have done for the organization. This spring also marks the end of my term as President (though I'll stay on the Board). I've been honored to serve St. Louis Audubon and I cherish the new friendships made along the way. My deep gratitude to the members of the Board for all their help over the past two years; most Directors know more about birds and conservation than I do, and I would have been lost (sometimes literally) without them. In particular, my thanks to Mitch, who is a dedicated and tireless advocate for this organization and its goals, and a source of wise counsel to boot.

The new President and the other officers will be chosen by the membership at the annual meeting, but regardless of the outcome, I am confident that the Board of the St. Louis Audubon Society will be in good hands for a long time to come.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve, and I hope to see you out birding! ◆

Field Trips, Etc.

April 12th to Dresser Island Conservation Area: Sue Gustafson and Pat Lueders will lead this all day trip that starts at 7:30 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 26th 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 10th 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 17th 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 mikecurlew@att.net.

Spring Stewardship Projects

Saturday, March 15th Confluence Trash Bash. Watershed Cleanup.

All ages welcome. To register: <http://www.stlmsd.com/educationoutreach/msdgreeninitiatives/trashbash>

Saturday, April 12th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle kill.

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.

Saturday, April 19th at Castlewood State Park. Planting project.

All ages welcome. Help us celebrate Earth Day. Bring a shovel if you have one. 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.

Saturday, May 3rd at McKelvey Woods Park. Honeysuckle kill.

All ages welcome. We continue a new partnership with the City of Maryland Heights! Bring your favorite lopper or saw. Meet at Dogport, just north of Aquaport at 2344 McKelvey Road, Maryland Heights, 63043.

Saturday, May 17th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle kill.

All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. The work site is in the west region of the park, off Waterworks Road. From I-270, take Hwy 364/Page west to Exit 17 at the Maryland Hts Expressway. Go north to the first light at River Valley Drive. Turn left for approx. 2.5 miles to 4-way stop. Turn left again, drive into gravel lot, thru gate, just as road turns right. Follow signs from there. Parking is limited, please carpool if possible.

All projects begin at 9 am with registration starting at 8:30. All are half-day and include food/bev while it lasts. Gloves and other supplies/materials are provided.

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



These projects made possible by support from an REI grant. For info, visit www.rei.com.



Inspiration for Habitat: Native Landscaping

Continued from Page 1

how many animals may feed on its tissue or sip its nectar. Most of us have made this step. More of an effort for some of us. But for all of us, to play with Armstrong's statement, "One small step for man, one giant leap for the local animals."

Now, Dr. Tallamy is once again suggesting we step outside our comfort zone by suggesting that we discard the notion of front vs. back yard design. So far, we've been thinking "tidy" by limiting the height of our front yard gardens versus the back. Perhaps we try a more orderly approach to the front by clumping our plants in groups, maybe having a specimen garden bed while in the back, we relax with more informal style. Perhaps we have more lawn in the front while we've practically removed all turf grass in the back yard.

However, if we are really thinking function rather than aesthetic, wouldn't we embrace a plan that offers more function in our space? Could the front yard/back yard be our last vestige to the former aesthetic standard? Time will tell when we recognize holding on to front yard/back yard is the final defense of the aesthetic standard. I might not be ready to fully let it go yet myself. But, I'm surprised at the changes I was willing to make post-Tallamy talk. And, isn't that really what a good teacher does? He/she is always encouraging us to step beyond the comfort zone.

In this workshop, the speakers including Tallamy were speaking to the choir. Next year, I suggest we are offered a significant discount if we can bring a friend or neighbor with us who really isn't a choir member yet. Somehow, we need to put the "reach" in "outreach!" ♦



Clockwise from top left: A full house for both events; Doug Tallamy (University of Delaware), keynote speaker; retail plants for sale to event participants; Jean Ponzi (Missouri Botanical Garden), event emcee (Robert Weaver Photos)

Field Trip Report

By Bill Rowe

Our St. Louis Audubon Society group of 15+ found excellent viewing conditions at Horseshoe Lake State Park, IL, on March 15, with the sun behind us, no wind, a glassy lake surface, and a whole lot of waterfowl spread out across the north end -- the most numerous by far being Lesser Scaup, forming big rafts that totaled perhaps 8,000 birds. Much smaller, but also noteworthy, was a floating/diving group of up to 70 Red-breasted Mergansers. We studied the many ducks (and a few Pied-billed and Horned Grebes) from several vantage points and eventually located a single male Long-tailed Duck at rest among the scaup -- most likely the same individual that was first reported there weeks ago. Among the few Ring-billed Gulls present were a couple of early-arriving Bonaparte's Gulls.

Moving first to the causeway and then around to the boat ramp gave us more great views of a lot more waterfowl, this time much larger numbers of Ring-necked Ducks massed around the edges and Canvasbacks, American Coots, and other species on the open water. As we watched, a flock of 60 Greater White-fronted Geese and another of 25+ apparent Snow Geese landed, but on closer inspection the apparent Snow Geese turned out to be about half Ross's Geese, mostly adult with one or two juveniles.

Our total bird list of 54 species for the state park, including 21 waterfowl, is found here, with my (possibly way-off) number estimates:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S17453357>

We then took a short drive around the nearby farm fields, seeing one Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk and a few other species before heading for lunch.

After lunch, those who remained continued on to Columbia Bottom CA. As always in the afternoon, it was rather quiet except for the very active and noisy flocks of Red-wings everywhere (all apparently pure flocks, containing virtually no other blackbird species). We did eventually locate a meadowlark that allowed us to stalk it with our scopes and see that it was a Western Meadowlark by the pattern of yellow on the throat, and we found four American Golden-Plover on a small wet area near the road. Raptors included Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, and Red-tailed Hawk. At the confluence, the Ring-billed Gulls formed a large distant roost of fully 1,000 birds, with a few Herring Gulls mixed in, but nothing else around. Mike Thelen and I stayed later at the end and added a few more species for the area. Here's the modest list:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S17453664>

All in all, a good day to be out! ◆



Lesser Scaup



American Golden Plover

Al Smith Photos

A Taste of India

Tuesday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m.

In March of 2013, Susan Eaton had the opportunity to go on a rare adventure: a 2-week birding trip to India with her friend Sue Gustafson! They visited several of the national parks: Ranthambhore, Corbett, Keoladeo, and the Himalayan Mountains. After the birding trip, Susan's husband joined her in Delhi, and they took a 2-week tourist trip. It was a "rare" adventure because, for the first time, she got to see the "birder's view" AND the "tourist's view" of the same country. Please join us for a Taste of India.

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 Grand Glaize Branch of the St. Louis County Library at 1010 Meramec Station Road, St. Louis, MO 63021, just northeast of the intersection of Big Bend and Hwy 141. For questions, call (314) 599-7390. ◆

Earth Day and Other Spring Events

Edgar Denison Day at Kirkwood Farmer's Market in downtown Kirkwood

Saturday April 19th from 10 am to 3 pm

http://www.kirkwoodinbloom.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=calendar.calDetail&event_id=119

West County Earth Day Festival at Parkway West High School

Saturday April 26th from 9 am to 2 pm. This is the former Chesterfield Earth Day event.

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

Back to Nature at Queeny Park

Saturday April 26th from 9 am to 2 pm

<http://www.stlouisco.com/ParksandRecreation/ParkPages/Queeny>

Earth Day at Forest Park

Sunday April 27th from 11 am to 6 pm.

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

Wildflower Market at Shaw Nature Reserve

Preview Friday May 9th and Public Sale Saturday May 10th from 9 am to 4 pm

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/visit/family-of-attractions/shaw-nature-reserve/things-to-do-at-shaw-nature-reserve/events/wildflower-sale.aspx> ◆

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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 you prefer credit card, visit our website
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If already a Chapter-Supporting member, you need do nothing but accept our thanks!

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