

TALE FEATHERS

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

BEGINNER BIRD WALK FIELD TRIPS

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER
FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 815 AM
Special walk just for the new and/or casual watchers.
Reservations not required, but for further info contact Chris at birding@forestparkforever.org.

AUGUST PROGRAM—PAGE 5

POWDER VALLEY NATURE CENTER
TUESDAY AUGUST 18TH AT 7P
MOVIE SHOWING, *HUMMINGBIRDS: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

WHERE THE BIRDS ARE
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH AT 8A
HALF DAY TRIP IN SEARCH OF FALL MIGRANTS.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

CARLYLE LAKE
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19TH AT 630A
ALL DAY TRIP IN SEARCH OF WATERBIRDS AND FALL MIGRANTS.

SEPTEMBER OPEN HOUSE—PAGE 5

ST. CHARLES NONPROFIT DEVELOPMENT CENTER
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15TH AT 7P
DISPLAYS AND EXPERTS COVERING ALL OUR CHAPTER EFFORTS

VOLUNTEER WORK DAY—PAGE 8

CREVE COEUR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26TH FROM 9A TO 1P
JOIN OTHERS IN CLEANING UP THE AREA.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BK LEACH CONSERVATION AREA
SATURDAY OCTOBER 3RD AT 8A
ALL DAY TRIP IN SEARCH OF MARSH BIRDS AND FALL MIGRANTS.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

TWO RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
SATURDAY OCTOBER 17TH AT 8A
ALL DAY TRIP IN SEARCH OF WATERFOWL AND OTHER BIRDS.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

CLARENCE CANNON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21ST AT 8A
ALL DAY TRIP

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Engage!

As you can see, we feel it is important that every one of our members receive communications at key times of the year. This issue of *TaleFeathers* includes details from our key program areas of education, field trips and conservation. The last includes an exciting new habitat restoration effort at Creve Coeur Park. Also, we have included our annual calendar that we hope you will save for reference in the coming year.

As many of you know, the Board decided last year to move to an electronic newsletter to save money and natural resources. Since then only a fraction of you have provided us your e-mail address, meaning that most of you are missing this monthly update on our Chapter activities. We hope you like what you see in this issue and want to continue to receive it in your inbox. If so, please send an e-mail to Mitch Leachman at stlaudubon@charter.net. Please be assured we do not sell our mailing lists and will use your address for Chapter-related communications only.

Finally, we ask that you consider converting your National Audubon membership to a membership in the St. Louis Audubon Society only. National Audubon remits to us only ~10% of your annual dues. Yet, as a local-only member, 100% of your dues will stay in St. Louis to support our local efforts. If interested, please review and complete the form included adjacent to the mailing label and note the special gift for those joining at the \$50 level. Thanks so much for all you do! ♦

Board Meetings

Open to All. 1st 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.

Officers**Dave Rogles, President**

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Newsletter

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

President's Message

By Dave Rogles

My best wishes to everyone and I hope you have had a pleasant summer! This year we are looking forward to a number of changes, to continuing the themes of the past several years, and to putting a "done" stamp on some long term projects.

In April, at our annual meeting, three new members were elected to the Board: Nikki Davenport, Lisa Nansteel and Marty Smigell. Lisa has taken the position of Vice President of Education. In addition Chris Ferree, Sue Gustafson (VP-Finance), Karen Meyer (VP-Conservation) and Jim Wilson were re-elected. Our thanks and warm welcome to all of them!

The Board held a retreat in June to seek ways of making the Society more effective. Some of the suggestions will be implemented immediately and can be found on the website and within the calendar. For example, we will be moving the monthly programs around the Region so members have shorter travel distances to participate. Please look at the calendar for further information, and don't forget to save it.

Other suggestions will be incorporated more slowly as the year unfolds. Look for increased emphasis on activities that can involve the family, on additional volunteer possibilities and for weekend programs/open houses. With over 3,000 members we will attempt to develop programs that appeal to different demographics.

Of course we must not forget projects that will be stamped "done" this year. The Heron Pond project at Riverlands will be dedicated this fall (work on the road cut will begin on July 27). This project was cultivated in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers and the generous support of past-president Paul Bauer.

Fundraising will become a full time job of the board. This switch is overdue and during the board retreat we explored ways to bring the Society into the 21st Century. State and local government support for parks, trails, restoration, etc. is declining, and in some cases being cancelled. Non-profits are stepping into the breach to help the most critical cases. We are working cooperatively with other area non-profits to provide solutions for the most pressing local problems. Please take a moment to consider a local, chapter-only membership (see Page 1 and the form attached) in which 100% of your dues stay in our Community.

Lastly, I hope I see you on some of the bird walks or some of the programs. Be sure to introduce yourself and feel free to strike up a conversation. My wife reminds me that I am more likely to remember your name if you are wearing feathers--so I will try to do better this year. Best wishes and good birding!

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

On May 7th, just after we published our final spring *TaleFeathers*, I was notified the Chapter would receive a TogetherGreen Volunteer Days Grant from National Audubon. Of nearly 600 eligible Audubon groups, we were among just 36 that were chosen for this second year of the program. This is tremendous news! The grant will fund a year-long series of habitat restoration workdays at Creve Coeur Park, planned in concert with staff at St. Louis County Parks (**see page 8 for more info on how you can get involved**). These projects are actually made possible through a long-term cooperative relationship between the Chapter and County Parks that has been developed and nurtured by many, including Sue Gustafson and Jim Malone.

Announced on March 26, 2008, TogetherGreen is a dynamic and innovative Audubon program funded by Toyota that aims to provide inspiration, leadership and opportunities that help people everywhere take action at home, in their communities and beyond to improve the health of our environment. It is built on a belief that we must all work together if we hope to confront the tremendous environmental challenges and opportunities of today and the years ahead. In year one of the Volunteer Days element of TogetherGreen, more than 10,000 volunteers donated over 43,000 hours to environmental projects.

On May 1st, we submitted an application for another element of TogetherGreen funding called an Innovation Grant, which is also focused on using volunteerism to generate conservation results. The Lower Meramec Habitat Restoration and Outreach Project is a partnership with the Open Space Council and the City of Wildwood with additional support from Great Rivers Greenway, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and St. Louis County Parks, among others. The two primary goals of the project are 1) to check the spread of bush honeysuckle in the Lower Meramec Important Bird Area by replacing it with native shrubs and understory trees and 2) to educate the surrounding communities and private landowners on their potential to create quality bird and wildlife habitat at home with native plantings, pesticide alternatives and several other easily adopted bird-friendly practices. A TogetherGreen grant would be a great boost to start this project, yet we are optimistic the partners have the interest and means to make this happen even without it.

The Creve Coeur Park workdays and the Lower Meramec Restoration Project are two examples of how St. Louis Audubon can make a difference in our region, but both will require your support. Will you join us? ♦

Field Trips, Etc.

Sep 12th “Where the Birds Are” Trip: Torrey Berger will lead this half-day trip beginning at 8 a.m. to whatever area location has the best birding. Check the SLAS website, www.birdingonthe.net “regional specialties–Missouri” section or the MoBirds list serve a few days in advance for details.

Sep 19th Carlyle Lake “Pelagic” Trip: Joe Eades will lead this all day trip that begins at 6:30 am. Space is limited. Reservations are required.

Oct 3rd to BK Leach Conservation Area: Josh Uffman will lead this all day trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Space is limited. Reservations are required. Meet in the southeast corner of the Dierberg’s parking lot at the

southwest side of I-70 and Hwy 79.

Oct 17th to Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge: Mike Thelen will lead this all day trip. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Gilbert Lake parking lot just north of the entrance to Brussels Ferry outside Grafton, IL. Carpools will leave from Riverlands Teal Pond lot by 7 a.m.

Oct 21st to Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge: Pat Lueders will lead this all day trip. Meet at 8 a.m. in the Dierberg’s lot described in the Oct 3rd trip.

All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required, unless noted—consult our website for details. Contact Pat Lueders with general questions at (314) 359-9364.

One on One with Karen Meyer

This month we premiere our interview feature which we hope will become a regular offering. It is intended to help you get to know the Board members and other volunteers, through their own words.

Karen Meyer joined the Board in the spring of 2007 as Vice President of Conservation and is presently serving her third year in that position. She spoke with TaleFeathers before leaving for a well-deserved trip to New Mexico.

TaleFeathers: Describe your educational background?

Karen Meyer: I have a BA in psychology, and recall enjoying the required natural science classes. Just recently, I completed the Master Naturalist certificate program at Meramec Community College.

TF: With all the opportunities for environmental volunteerism, why Audubon?

KM: It all started some 20 years ago when we moved into a house next to a storm water retention pond and I started observing birds that frequented the water. Bird feeding followed and I began looking for opportunities to learn more about them. I met people in the process that introduced me to the Chapter and the monthly programs.

TF: How or why did you transition from learning to volunteering?

KM: Confidence in having the knowledge to contribute. Meramec's Master Naturalist program really expanded my lifelong learning and opportunities beyond birds and gave me a sense of confidence before stepping up. Of course, timing was also right by meeting board members and being asked to serve.

TF: What are your biggest conservation concerns and how can SLAS address them?

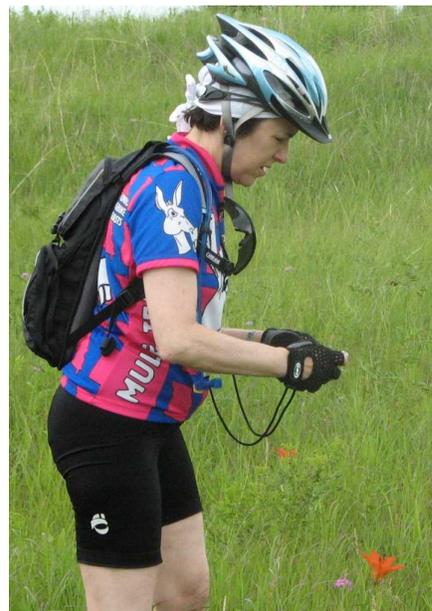
KM: Global warming, habitat destruction and air & water pollution. We have to be the watchdog and take positions on issues. In joining with other organizations on local issues, we can tell the public how they can make a difference and inspire them to do so. Also, habitat efforts like the TogetherGreen projects at Creve Coeur Park are critical to repair the local environment and to show the community what they can do.

TF: What is your favorite nature spot around St. Louis?

KM: Creve Coeur Park is in my backyard and offers solitude and lots of habitat and birds to enjoy. Also, Laumeier Sculpture Park has always been a favorite because of the arts and nature combination.

TF: What personal "environmental stewardship" activity gives you the most satisfaction?

KM: For years I have ridden mass transit—the metro in St. Louis. I am fortunate enough to live near a bus route that is just a short walk from the house. I was raised on mass transit by my Mother who did not drive and so was acclimated to buses and street cars at an early age. Yet, it is not just convenient or cheap, but good for the environment. I do not put on the miles polluting the air that I would if I drove to work every day. I enjoy the time it gives me and it is a habit that can make a difference. ♦



Karen Meyer enjoying two of her favorite hobbies—nature and biking.

Hummingbirds! Beauty and the Beast

Tuesday, August 18, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

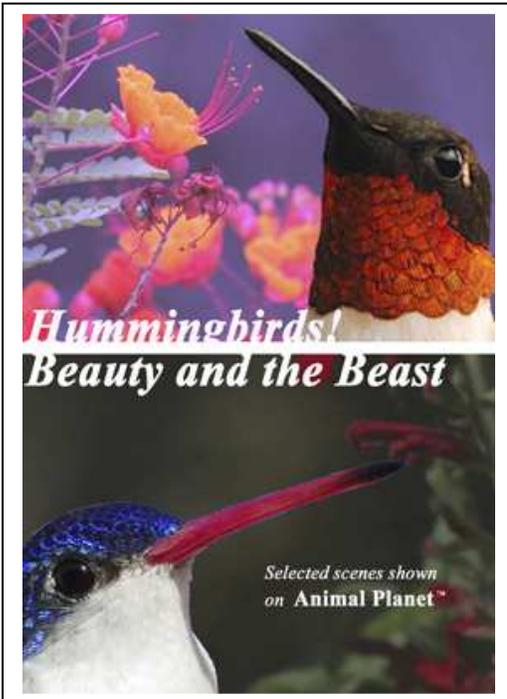
Powder Valley Nature Center

Please join us for our showing of this production by the Avian Video Center's Tom Kaminski. Released in October, 2008, it includes spectacular video of 57 hummer species, including all 16 that breed in the US. In part, it shows in just 60 minutes that for all their beauty, they are little beasts that live by the Law of the Jungle. For instance, it demonstrates that they are single moms, deadbeat dads and "teenage" chicks;

brainy warriors with specific rules of engagement; connoisseurs that put flower taste ahead of color, for starters. Also included is a special section on the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, just in time for the peak of fall migration for this our local favorite.

Avian Video Center Producer Tom Kaminski has combined his experience in broadcast journalism, aerospace communications, and college teaching to create nature programs that are uniquely educational and entertaining. Little known facts are revealed by the camera's keen eye, and a subtle sense of humor is woven throughout. Every effort is made to ensure that program content is accurate through reviews by experts in their fields.

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer and cross the bridge to Cragwold Road on your left. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mile to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance. Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314)-599-7390. ♦



Graphic from www.avianvideocenter.com

We Need You, Your Neighbor or Your Friend!

Audubon Open House

Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

St. Charles Nonprofit Development Center

Please make a note of the date and consider stopping by for light refreshments and a tour of all the St. Louis Audubon programs. You will be able to wander, open-house style, at your own pace and visit one-on-one with the folks that make it happen.

The Nonprofit Development Center is co-located with the Community Council of St. Charles at 425 Spencer Road. From I-70, take Cave Springs exit #225 south to Mexico Road. Turn right and go 2.2 miles to Spencer Road. Take Spencer left for 0.4 miles to the Center on your left, just behind the Spencer Road Library. Parking is in the rear and at the library and entrance to the center is adjacent to the library. ♦

Volunteering is COOL!

You choose your schedule and your hours.

We provide the training and the opportunity.

Writing, speaking, digging, building, teaching, editing, advocating, organizing, sharing, planning, and video and still camera work to name just some of the skills we are looking for.

We can accomplish so much more together!

Education Team has Record Year

By Lisa Nansteel

The St. Louis Audubon Society Education Team completed the 2008–2009 school year in record fashion, reaching 3,765 children and another 327 adults. Our small Team seemed constantly in demand, delivering nearly 80 programs to garden clubs, church groups, a neighborhood social group, girl and boy scouts, a camp for kids with cancer, a library, several Master Naturalist classes at Meramec Community College, and of course numerous elementary school classrooms. The figures and venues above do not include the many hundreds of additional children and their parents that visited our displays at Eagle Days and Wings of Spring. Since 2001, our efforts have now reached nearly 25,000 children and over 2,300 adults.

The Rockwoods School District has been a staple of our efforts since the beginning. Their Partners in Education (PIE) program offered an impetus for many of our programs and has been a major help in maintaining year–after–year classroom interest in our efforts. PIE celebrated its 25th year on June 4th with a



Vicki Flier (left) and Sharon Nickl demonstrate how owls hear to after-school students at Pershing Elementary in University City.



Sharon Nickl (left) and Nancy Clark use bird specimens to teach Ellisville Elementary students about biology.

ceremony in front of the Rockwoods School Board. A number of partner organizations and corporations were present and recognized, including St. Louis Audubon as represented by Vicki Flier, Sharon Nickl and Mitch Leachman.

In addition Vicki Flier, recently retired SLAS Vice President of Education, became a bit of a TV star last month by appearing on KMOV's Great Day St. Louis. She expertly discussed orioles, blue jays, and cardinals as birds instead of baseball teams. The appearance has led to a program request and hopefully a return appearance for International Migratory Bird Day next spring.

All of this success is thanks to a small group of just eight regular Team Members. Please help me thank all of them, including David Bruns, Nancy Clark, Maureen Conway, Vicki Flier, Sharon Nickl, Bobbie Poor and Marty Smigell. We are excited about the coming year, but could really use more help! If you love birds and nature and enjoy sharing it with others, consider giving us a call. We provide all the training you need and you will decide when you are ready to instruct. There is no minimum weekly commitment nor is there a requirement for daytime instruction. If you or someone you know is interested in helping bring nature to children, please call Lisa Nansteel at (636) 391–4898. ♦

Field Trip Report

By Pat Lueders

2008–2009 Recap

Northern Shrike, Brown Pelican, Great Black-backed Gull, Sprague's & American Pipits, Black Scoter, Clay-colored & Henslow's Sparrows, Cerulean Warbler...Wow! These are just some of the fabulous birds that were seen this year on St. Louis Audubon Field Trips by both new and experienced birders. Five locations were added this year to familiarize our members with new birding choices. Also, a car pooling option was introduced to reduce energy consumption to locations further than 25 miles from central St. Louis. Further, the St. Louis Audubon website developed into a popular resource used by both local and visiting birders for information on our field trips and other birding related events.

In total, over 500 enthusiasts enjoyed one or more of our Field Trips this year including visitors from Oregon, Texas, Great Britain, Kansas, and many other states. The most popular trips included our Carlyle Lake pelagic, the Busch Woodcock/Owl Prowl, the Shaw Nature Preserve spring hike, and our tour of Forest Park's Kennedy Forest. If the list of birds above sounds exciting, read on and plan to join us in the coming year season!

Fall 2009–Spring 2010

An exciting season is planned for the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 season. Our carpooling option was very popular and will be continued this year. After meeting at the designated locations (see SLAS website), members have the option of carpooling or caravanning to our remote locations. New leaders have been added and our regular leaders are returning to provide a variety of personalities and experiences throughout the season.

We have added a new concept, "Where the Birds Are", and the leaders of these trips will have the flexibility of deciding the destination a few days in advance depending on where the birds are being seen in the area. All level of birders are always welcome on our trips, and beginning birders will again find many trips that will provide additional leaders to help them with difficult identifications.

We will depend on websites to keep our birders informed of locations for trips and for making reservations for limited trips. Please check www.stlouisaudubon.org, the MOBIRDS list serve, or www.birdingonthe.net (Regional Specialties/Missouri) for destination information and trip announcements. Of course, we encourage you to save the calendar included in this issue as a reminder of our scheduled trips. We hope all of you will consider joining us for one or more of our field trips this coming year! ♦



Bill Rowe and birders at Riverlands in West Alton, MO

Pat Lueders Photo



Creve Coeur Park Habitat Restoration Workdays



St. Louis County Parks and St. Louis Audubon have joined forces for a series of **volunteer** work days.

The workdays are designed to improve the habitat for birds and other wildlife in the southern part of the Park. They are detailed in the box at right. The Park was officially designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by National Audubon in 2006. IBAs are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more bird species “of concern” and may support breeding, wintering and/or migration activities. Creve Coeur Park was selected as an IBA largely because of its significant wetland habitat—some of the only remaining in St. Louis County. The projects are made possible by a National Audubon *TogetherGreen* grant, funded by Toyota.



The marsh at Little Creve Coeur Lake

Mitch Leachman Photo

Sat Sep 26 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (All ages) Park clean-up. Rain date Oct 3.

Sat Oct 31 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (Ages 16+) Tree planting. Bring your own shovel. Rain date Nov 7.

Sat Nov 21 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (Ages 16+) Wetland restoration—woody growth removal. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. Rain date Nov 22.

Sat Feb 20 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (Ages 16+) Wetland restoration—woody growth removal. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. Rain date Feb 27.

Sat Mar 27 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (All Ages) Park clean-up. Rain date Apr 3.

Sat Apr 17 9 a.m.–1 p.m. (Ages 16+) Tree planting. Bring your own shovel. Rain date Apr 25.



October 2008 cleanup

Susan Florek Photo

Registration is requested:
call (314) 615-8822 or
email
stlaudubon@charter.net.
For general questions call
Mitch Leachman at (314)
599-7390.



Great Egret

Mike Grant Photo

Least Terns at Riverlands Looking Good



Things are looking up for the federally endangered Interior Least Tern in the St. Louis Area. As you may recall from the April 2009 *TaleFeathers*, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was to use two small barges to create an artificial nesting "island" in Ellis Bay at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

The barges were anchored in place on April 30th, Least Terns were observed in the area in May with the first nest activity seen in mid-June. Sarah Miller, the Army Corps biologist in charge of the project, noted on July 22nd:

The last time we visited the barges was on July 7th. On that day we counted a total of 12 nests. Each nest varied from 2-3 eggs for a total of 30 eggs. There were at minimum 20 adult least terns in the air while we were viewing the barge edges. This number is more likely over 24 adults considering the number of nests.

As of July 15th, three hatchlings were observed by Vincent Giammaria, intern with the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. Now, a primary concern is avian predation as harassment has been seen by crows. Please share your observations and report any avian or other disturbance directly to Sarah at (636) 899-0078. For more pictures and information, visit

http://www.photosbyat.com/gallery/8616497_Ajrd9#P-1-15. ♦

Photos at left:

Top - Two Least Tern Chicks

Middle - Nest Scrape with Eggs

Bottom - The Barge "Island"

St. Louis Audubon Society Chapter Only Membership Form

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

If already a local member, you need do
nothing but accept our thanks!

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

Your Chapter only membership will begin when your current National Audubon membership expires. At that time, you will no longer receive *Audubon* magazine. We will then begin managing your renewals. If National Audubon continues to send solicitations, you may contact them directly and request they stop.

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

** Memberships of \$50, or above, will receive a copy of Dr. Stephen Kress' *North American Birdfeeder Guide*, a \$25 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!

Contributions are Tax Deductible

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