

# 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  
FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 815 AM  
Special walk just for the new and/or casual watchers.  
For info contact Chris at [birding@forestparkforever.org](mailto:birding@forestparkforever.org).

### BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY  
SATURDAY DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>

### EAGLE DAYS—PAGE 7

OLD CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE  
9A TO 3P, SATURDAY/SUNDAY JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> & 16<sup>TH</sup>  
DETAILS: [HTTP://CONFLUENCEGREENWAY.ORG/EAGLEDAYS.PHP](http://confluencegreenway.org/eagle-days.php)

### BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY  
SATURDAY JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>

### JANUARY PROGRAM—GREAT HORNED OWLS

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER  
TUESDAY JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup> AT 7 PM

### AUDUBON/WGNSS OPEN HOUSE—PAGE 7

THE GREEN CENTER AT 8025 BLACKBERRY IN UNIVERSITY CITY  
SUNDAY JANUARY 30<sup>TH</sup> FROM 130P TO 4P

### BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS & COLUMBIA BOTTOM  
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>

### NATURE WALKS FOR KIDS

SUSPENDED FOR THE WINTER. OUR SCHEDULE WILL RESUME IN MARCH. PLEASE WATCH THE FEBRUARY *TALEFEATHERS* FOR A DETAILED SCHEDULE.

### 2011 AWARDS DINNER & SILENT AUCTION

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SATURDAY EVENING MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup> AT ORLANDO GARDENS IN WEBSTER GROVES (8352 WATSON RD). OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER WILL BE FROM THE TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY. WATCH OUR WEBSITE AND THE JANUARY ISSUE OF *TALEFEATHERS* FOR FULL DETAILS.

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## Forest Park's Great Horned Owls *Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm*

Our monthly programs resume at the Forest Park Visitor Center on January 18<sup>th</sup> with a special program on the Great Horned Owl. Mark Glenshaw, an amateur naturalist and enthusiast, will share inside stories about his observations of a Great Horned Owl pair in Forest Park. Mark's been watching the pair for over 4 years and leading many owl prowls in the park. His pictures and interesting tales reveal the pair's habits and behaviors while raising yearly broods. Mark's hobby has led to much research on the species in general, and by the end of the evening you'll understand his fascination with this amazing predator.

The Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor Center, at 5595 Grand Drive, is just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere. The program will be held in the Learning Lab. Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314) 599-7390. ◆



### Board Meetings

Open to All. 1<sup>st</sup> 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

(636) 541-1069

[president@stlouisaudubon.org](mailto:president@stlouisaudubon.org)

#### Lisa Nansteel, VP Education

(636) 391-4898

#### Craig Lanham, VP Conservation

(314) 882-9763

[conservation@stlouisaudubon.org](mailto:conservation@stlouisaudubon.org)

#### Jim Wilson, VP Finance

(314) 367-7275, ext 20

[wilsonjh@umsl.edu](mailto:wilsonjh@umsl.edu)

#### John Solodar, Treasurer

(314) 862-5294

[Solodar@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Solodar@sbcglobal.net)

#### Sharon Nickl, Secretary

(636) 391-8751

[nicklone@swbell.net](mailto:nicklone@swbell.net)

#### Mitch Leachman, Executive

##### Director

(314) 599-7390

[director@stlouisaudubon.org](mailto:director@stlouisaudubon.org)

### Newsletter

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

## Citizen Science in Action

### The 111th Christmas Bird Count

From December 14, 2010 through January 5, 2011 tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission – often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations – and to help guide conservation action. This year's count will help scientists understand the impact of the Gulf oil spill on vulnerable species.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

You need not be an expert or even have experience to participate. However, there are guidelines to follow, so please contact a compiler for the area of your interest, as noted below.

The Weldon Spring CBC is Sunday, Jan. 2. The count circle includes Busch & Weldon Spring Conservation Areas, Babler State Park and some parts of Chesterfield. Beginners are welcome! Contact Anne McCormack at [annemccormack@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annemccormack@sbcglobal.net) for info or simply meet at the Busch Conservation Area HQ at 8:00 am on Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>.

For a listing of Christmas counts across the State, visit the ASM website at <http://www.mobirds.org/CBC/CBCSchedule.asp>.

For CBC info <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. ♦



This just in! We are pleased to announce a new partnership with the Alpine Shop. We hope to provide more details in the next *TaleFeathers*.

## President's Message

By Dave Rogles

Many of you have already received our Annual Appeal letter. I hope you took a moment to read the letter and will consider Audubon in your year-end giving plan. If you are not a member and did not receive the letter, I encourage you to view it under the Latest News section of our website, [www.stlouisaudubon.org](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org).

I am often asked why we need additional financial support. If you have been following our journey the last couple years you know that our organization is now servicing over 3,600 Audubon homes in the greater Metro Area. We have hired an Executive Director to improve existing programs and create new ways to serve our community. We made this decision in light of a growing focus on the local conservation landscape and at-risk National Audubon funding. This makes your support critical.

We do not need a massive infusion of cash. Though our endowment fund has weathered the recession better than most, we have had to rely on its principle to maintain our operations—not a good long-term strategy. Further, a look ahead spotlights the need for increased local community involvement. Our local environment, our parks, water, floodplains and wetlands, are under attack. None are important enough to attract National resources. It is up to us to protect these areas. It is up to our professional staff to track the threats and devise a response plan for the Board's consideration.

Our approach is already showing great promise. Chapter staff and volunteers have produced some amazing results in just the past year, and to showcase some of the successes we have created our first-ever Annual Report. It can be viewed or downloaded under the New on the Web section of our website.

The math is simple. We have 3,600 members. If everyone gives \$10.00—just 3¢ per day— we maintain the resources to continue the fight. You can do the math yourself; as the number of donors slide up or down, the gift needed per donor changes. Most years we receive the bulk of our support from a few donors. Make a difference this year, become one of the few.

St. Louis Audubon is a tax-exempt charity recognized by the IRS, and your contribution is fully tax-deductible. For your convenience, we have provided an Annual Appeal donation form on the last page of this newsletter.

If you cannot give financially consider becoming an active volunteer. It is your organization—give us a couple of hours a month and make a difference in your community.

As always, have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season! ◆

## Field Trips, Etc.

**Dec 11<sup>th</sup> to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary:** All day trip that meets at 9:00 am. Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. Turn right on the last road before the Alton Bridge (at the gas station). Turn right on the next road to the Teal Pond lot.

**Jan 15<sup>th</sup> to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary:** Half day trip led by Dave Rogles that meets at 9:00 am. Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. Turn right on the last road before the Alton Bridge (at the gas station). Turn right on the next road to the Teal Pond lot.

**Feb 5<sup>th</sup> to Riverlands & Columbia Bottom:** All day trip led by Bill Rowe that meets at 8:00 am. A very good trip for beginners. Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. Turn right on the last road before the Alton Bridge (at the gas station). Turn right on the next road to the Teal Pond lot.

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.

## A Victory for the Birds!

By Craig Lanham

By now you have likely heard that the Missouri Gaming Commission has unanimously approved a casino gaming license for a project in Cape Girardeau. This marked the end of a 16-month long battle by St. Louis Audubon and a large coalition of groups (organized as Save the Confluence) opposed to two separate casino proposals for the Mississippi Riverfront near the Confluence. This marks a victory for the birds, other wildlife, and their habitat that was being put at-risk from the projects. For complete details checkout <http://www.ksdk.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=230277> or the Post-Dispatch article at [http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/article\\_42872e93-e459-5378-8648-3d85408c3a85.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/article_42872e93-e459-5378-8648-3d85408c3a85.html). We made clear from the start that the Chapter takes no position on gambling and supports commercial development, in the right place. However, these projects would have put numerous species of birds at risk from noise and light pollution, habitat loss and collision with buildings and vehicles, as they navigated the Mississippi Flyway. Many thanks to Karen Meyer, Save the Confluence and everyone who spoke out for the birds and against these projects!

On a separate and broader note, many thanks to all who volunteered their time this past year in support of the conservation efforts of St Louis Audubon Society. Your efforts make a huge difference for our natural world as well as the birds and wildlife whose lives depend on it. ◆

## Honeysuckle Removal Begins at Creve Coeur Park



27 volunteers participated in our November 13<sup>th</sup> kickoff of the campaign to eradicate busy honeysuckle from Creve Coeur Park. When finished they had cleared about an acre in the southwest corner of the Park and stacked the branches for chipping by park staff. The work will continue in the spring with workdays on March 5<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Projects on public lands will only be successful in the long-run if private landowners recognize the problem of bush honeysuckle and replace it with native plants. This project did well toward that broader goal with several media mentions, including STL Public Radio, the Suburban Journal and a new online community news outlet called Patch. All can be viewed via links in the Latest News section of our website. Additional pictures from the workday can also be found there. ◆



*Above: Wali Wahidi stacks honeysuckle branches*

*Right: The honeysuckle "wall" along the Park boundary*

*STL Audubon Photos*

## Trip Report from St. Stanislaus

By John Solodar

Eleven birders turned out for the birding trip to St. Stanislaus Conservation Area in St. Louis County on Wednesday Oct 27. This included three Russians—one was a grad student studying chemistry at UMSL and the others were friends of his from Moscow. What a surprise, and they were delightful to have along. Fortunately, the predicted high wind held off while we were in the field.

The highlights of the day must have been the acrobatic dogfights among some raptors between 11 am and Noon. First, we had a Bald Eagle and a Red-tailed Hawk going at it with the hawk chasing the eagle and then the eagle chasing the hawk on a return pass. Next, there was a “paso doble” between a Red-tailed Hawk and what one observer felt was a Northern Harrier (they thought they had seen the white rump patch). However, soon after the two birds disappeared behind some trees a Cooper's Hawk quickly emerged heading our way, leaving the identity of the “harrier” uncertain.

Later, there were three different individual raptors diving at each other and going around in circles in one area of the sky. I think that we were all so entranced that identification took a back seat except to say that there was at least one Red-tail, probably a Cooper's Hawk and something else.

The bird list for the day included the following 27 species: American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Tufted Titmouse, American Goldfinch, Carolina Wren, Northern Flicker, Eastern Towhee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Crow, Chickadee sp, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Junco, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-Crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Blue Jay, Northern Mockingbird and American White Pelican.

Thanks to those that visited this nice, little-used natural area. I hope we repeat the trip next year. ◆



Above: Immature Bald Eagle (left) and Red-tailed Hawk (right)

Top: The latter chasing the former

Photos by Al Smith

## Trip Report from Central Missouri

By Edge Wade

Approximately two dozen people enjoyed various portions of the Little Dixie Lake, Bradford Farm, Eagle Bluffs field trip on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. Winds of 20–30 mph brought wind chill into the 30s, and waterfowl hunting was in full swing. Yet, we had good company and some good bird sightings in the mix.

At Little Dixie Lake only one Ruddy Duck, 2 Ring-billed Ducks and 5 Hooded Mergansers were on the lake. We saw many American Robins. The group on the east side found 4 Golden-crowned Kinglets and a couple of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (thanks to the fine ears of Kathleen Anderson).

Jean Leonatti scouted Bradford Farm while we were at Little Dixie. Her work paid off with the discovery of a group of 13 Brewer's Blackbirds, seen well by all, lifers for some. Also at Bradford were Swamp, White-crowned, White-throated, and Savannah Sparrows, an Eastern Towhee, a harrier, a successful hunting American Kestrel, many giant Canadas, two Ring-necked Ducks and a Pied-billed Grebe. Jean heard a Western Meadowlark before we arrived.

We were joined by River Bluffs Audubon members Barb Duncan and Jane Frasier at McBaine Katy Trail Parking Lot, where we did a little car consolidation to reduce the funeral cortege aspect of our low-gear parade before entering Eagle Bluffs for the 1–3 pm viewing window that allows us to go as far as Pool 8. Even Katy Pool and Buck Pools were closed except to hunters.

Eagle Bluffs showed its name to be proper with the sightings of one immature and one adult Bald Eagle. Waterfowl were scanty in places we could see them (many were seen flying way back on off-limits Pool 7). Mallards, Gadwall, a couple of shovelers, a Ruddy Duck and one elusive Redhead were sharing pools with American Coots, a few Pied-billed Grebes and some Double-crested Cormorants. A small mix of sparrows was enjoyed by a group led by Susan Hazelwood.

The highlight was at the end. Two stunning Sandhill Cranes flew down as Sandy Elbert's car was passing a picked corn field on the way out. Cell phones were used to call people back to see them standing, feeding, and just being that magical creature that is such a soul warmer to see and to hear.

Hope you can join us next year! ◆



*Sandhill Cranes*

*Photo by Al Smith*

*Photos by AT ©*

## Mid-Winter Open House

Come One, Come All!

*St. Louis Audubon  
Webster Groves Nature Study Society*

**Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>  
1:30 pm to 4:00 pm**

Bring a dish. Beverages will be provided.  
Door prizes will be given.

The Green Center  
8025 Blackberry Avenue  
University City

From I-170, take Delmar east 4 stop lights  
to North and South Road. Turn left and  
left again on Blackberry.

## THANK YOU

Please join us in giving a special thank you to Dency Kahn for her very generous donation of a framed cross stitch work for our use as a fundraiser. The piece was an integral part of our recent Trivia Night and helped make it a financial success. Dency has been a long-time member and supporter of St. Louis Audubon, and we all say THANKS!



## Eagle Days at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge

**9 am to 3 pm, January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>**

Residents of the bi-state area are invited to view bald eagles this January at Eagle Days – a free public program at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge. During the winter, the Mississippi River hosts one of North America's largest concentrations of bald eagles, who are drawn to areas of open water in search of fish, their preferred food. The Chain of Rocks rapids to the south of the Bridge are ideal fishing grounds. From the Bridge, an ideal viewing platform, visitors can watch eagles fishing, riding ice floes, soaring overhead or roosting in nearby trees.

### Live Eagle Educational Program

Repeated every 20 minutes from 10:00 a.m. until 2:40 p.m.

### Viewing Scopes

Special scopes on the Bridge allow close-up views of eagles

### St. Louis Audubon Display

Featuring hands-on exhibits of local birds

### Lewis and Clark Re-enactors

At both the Illinois and Missouri Bridge entrances, featuring models of Lewis and Clark's Pirogue

**Parking:** Free parking is available at two satellite lots in Missouri, the St. Louis Welcome Center at Riverview and I-270 and North Riverfront Park, off of Riverview south of the waterworks. A free shuttle will be available from both locations. Free parking is also available at the Illinois Bridge entrance. Parking at the Missouri Bridge entrance costs \$5.

## St. Louis Audubon Society Annual Fundraising Appeal

We believe the Audubon approach to education and conservation is essential to our community and needed now more than ever. We have expanded our efforts, but maintain a “no charge policy for our services. Please visit our website or contact us for a copy of our most recent Annual Report. Nearly all programs are staffed by volunteers, and we constantly review our budget to reduce expenses and maximize our efficiency.

\$250    \$100    \$50    \$30    Other\_\_\_\_\_

Your past support has made much of our success possible, and we need your support again. If you share our passion for birds, and connecting kids and our communities to Nature through them, please send in your gift today.

Thank you so much for your interest and support!

*Donations are fully tax-deductible*  
St. Louis Audubon is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charity.

Name:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Make checks payable to:  
St. Louis Audubon Society

Mail Checks to:  
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St. Louis, MO 63122-0227

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

St. Louis Audubon Society  
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