

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.

WETLAND WALKS

TWO RIVERS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

DECEMBER 14, 21 AND 29 AT 9A

FOR DETAILS CALL THE REFUGE AT (618) 883-2524 OR E-MAIL

CORTNEY SOLUM AT CORTNEY_SOLUM@FWS.GOV

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY DECEMBER 15TH AT 8A

EAGLE FESTIVAL

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS

SATURDAY JANUARY 5TH FROM 10 AM TO 2 PM

[HTTP://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/ALTON-IL-AND-AUDUBON-CENTER-RIVERLANDS-EAGLE-FESTIVAL-JANUARY-5-2013](http://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/ALTON-IL-AND-AUDUBON-CENTER-RIVERLANDS-EAGLE-FESTIVAL-JANUARY-5-2013)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY JANUARY 12TH AT 10A

EAGLE WATCH

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS

SUNDAY JANUARY 13TH AND 20TH FROM 10 AM TO 2 PM

[HTTP://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/AUDUBON-EAGLE-WATCH-SUNDAY-JAN-13](http://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/AUDUBON-EAGLE-WATCH-SUNDAY-JAN-13)

OPEN HOUSE SOCIAL—PAGE 5

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS

SUNDAY JANUARY 13TH FROM 3P TO 6P

EAGLE DAYS

CLARKSVILLE, MO

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY JANUARY 26TH AND 27TH

[HTTP://MDC.MO.GOV/EVENTS/EAGLEDAYS](http://MDC.MO.GOV/EVENTS/EAGLEDAYS)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 2ND AT 8A

BILL ROWE LEADS THIS ALL DAY TRIP THAT WILL INCLUDE COLUMBIA BOTTOM CONSERVATION AREA. MEET AT THE TEAL POND LOT—FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FOR THE JAN 12TH TRIP.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Junior Audubon	1
November Birding	3
From the Director	3
Field Trip Listing	3
Guest Essay	4
Open House	5
Christmas Bird Count	6

Junior Audubon

St. Louis Audubon is proud to announce the re-launch of our Junior Audubon program, in cooperation with the Audubon Center at Riverlands, the Missouri Department of Conservation and the World Bird Sanctuary.

The program is free and developed for families with children in grades 2–7 (ages 7–14) with an interest in birds and nature.

The program includes:

- The quarterly *Junior Audubon* e-bulletin on local bird related activities and family-friendly events.
- A Junior Audubon pin to wear with pride.
- Special invitations to programs and activities exclusively for Junior Auduboners and their families.
- Support for other projects such as school projects, setting up feeding stations and nesting boxes.

Programming begins right after the New Year in January; so, don't wait and sign up today!

Families should send their contact info and the name(s) and ages of their children to stl.jr.audubon@aol.com to begin receiving the *Junior Audubon* e-bulletin. For questions, please call Marty at (314) 640-0897. ♦

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

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.

November Birding

Excerpts from Mike Thelen's report from the November 3rd field trip.

The rain held off all day Saturday as we birded Busch and Weldon Spring CAs in St. Charles County. By my count we tallied an even 60 species, and highlights included:

4 RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, in keeping with the season's trend. One of the birds was shuttling between the conifers and a scraggly tree lakeside, apparently caching seed. 1 RUSTY BLACKBIRD, 2 PURPLE FINCH, 1 SEDGE WREN, certainly a late date for this species, but not quite a record for Missouri, 1 BALD EAGLE, 2 SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, 5 RED-SHOULDERED HAWK.

As I drove west on I-64 in the morning twilight, doing 60-MPH birding, I spotted 1 BARRED OWL perched, in all places, on a sapling between the shoulder and frontage road.

Thanks to Rosanne Naunheim, who tipped us to WILSON'S SNIPE. We relocated all 8 at Busch lake 8. The flock was nervous, but we had good scope looks. Also for the day: 2 BELTED KINGFISHER, 4 PILEATED WOODPECKER, 2 EASTERN MEADOWLARK, 60+ CEDAR WAXWING, plus large movements of BLUE JAY and AMERICAN ROBIN across a wide area.

There were just a few chickadees for the day, and 1 struck me as a CAROLINA CHICKADEE. Also along the Blue Grosbeak Trail, 4 NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD congregated on the trail-side end of the "northern shrike" hedge. They responded quickly to pishing, as did the sparrows and 1 EASTERN TOWHEE. We looked carefully there, and elsewhere on the trail, but did not see a Harris's.

15 birders participated. Special thanks to Jeannie Moe for offering us the hospitality of the Weldon Spring Interpretive Center where we had a comfortable place to warm up and have lunch. ◆



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Al Smith Photo

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

It is so hard to believe that another year is drawing to a close! Seems like yesterday we had just finished our pilot for the Bring Conservation Home program and the birders were abuzz with the irruption of Snowy Owls. Now, amidst the holiday shopping and New Year's plans, we are celebrating a very successful first year for BCH and trying to squeeze in time to chase this year's influx of crossbills. With that, we hope you enjoy Chrissy McClarren's piece on the topic of crossbills and such on Page 4 of this issue.

You may have noticed we are returning to a previous tradition of a combined December and January issue of *TaleFeathers*. The next regularly scheduled edition will be available on/about the first of February. Take note of the front page calendar with numerous field trip and eagle watching opportunities. The Chain of Rocks will not have their usual weekend open house, but we believe the event will return even stronger in 2014. Hopefully you can make the Clarksville weekend or one of the Audubon Center events in West Alton.

If you're anything like me, holiday shopping can be a real challenge. The older I get, the more determined I am to refrain from buying "trinkets" as gifts but instead offer my loved ones something very meaningful. Some of those gifts have included animal "adoptions," organization memberships, special event passes and even a goat (yes, really).

St. Louis Audubon has created such a gift opportunity with a certificate for the application fee to our Bring Conservation Home program (see graphic below). Simply complete the giving form at our website, <http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/giving/SLAS-Donate.pdf>, and note BCH or Bring Conservation Home on the "occasion" line. Cost is just \$50 and includes a chapter-supporting membership. If the recipient is already an Audubon member, send just \$25 and note "member already." We will mail the certificate direct to you; please be sure your contact information is included on the form. For complete details about BCH, checkout the program web pages at <http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/index.php>.

Another creative option to keep you from the mall crush is to give a gift donation to our year-end appeal. The complete letter can be viewed at http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/giving/annual_appeal-2012.php. Simply fill out the same giving form noted previously for BCH, or if you prefer to give by credit card, see <http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/giving/giving.php>.

Be sure to note "gift donation" and we will send you an attractive card for your loved one.

Finally, thank you so much for all your support! We hope to thank you in person at our open house on January 13th at the Audubon Center at Riverlands. Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season! ◆

NATURESCAPING COUPON

Holder is entitled to
One BRING CONSERVATION HOME
SITE SURVEY from
St. Louis Audubon
Includes written report with specific steps to
improve your landscape for birds and wildlife.
Expires June 1, 2013
www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH or (314) 599-7390 for details



Bring Conservation Home
A St. Louis Audubon Society Community Partnership

Field Trips, Etc.

Dec 15th to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary: Pat Lueders & Mike Grant will lead this half day trip that starts at 8:00 am. Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. Turn right on the last road before the Alton Bridge (at the gas station). Continue about a mile to the Audubon Center on the left—jointly sponsored with Audubon Missouri.

Jan 12th to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary:

Christian Hagenlocher will lead this half day trip that starts at 10:00 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.

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

Log of a Birding Pirate

By Chrissy McClarren

As a young person, “Credendo Vides...Believing is Seeing” was the motto I learned from fairytales and mythology. As a much older person, I picked up a Sibley’s guide to the birds of North America and found I had to rely heavily on this motto as I poured through the pages of unimaginable avian wonders. I began my own voyage into the realm of the birds. Behaving like a besotted pirate, as I have discovered many birders do (so I’ll just call birders pirates), I took matters into my own hands as I became greedy for more and more bird sightings. Nothing had prepared me for the hordes of treasure hidden everywhere right under my nose. But believing, I saw. As each bird from Sibley’s pages came to life in front of me, I swooned, er, I mean swaggered, as I fell in love with each magical wild feathered marvel. And here I am, four years later, still riding the high seas of bird bliss, most recently on the coattails of Crossbills.

Crossbills are a coveted treasure amongst Missouri birding pirates since they are rare in these parts, especially St. Louis. And then there’s the fact that we pirates have an affinity for rogue birds, especially ones with daring bills such as that! Why, who in their right mind wouldn’t be reminded of Captain Hook! So, of course, when I was awakened one morning two weeks ago by one of our locally famous birding pirates, Captain Bill Rudden, and he says, “Ahoy, matey, there’s a male Red Crossbill in them Hemlocks on the Isle of Carondelet Park,” I fell off my bunk (I’d never seen a Red Crossbill), grabbed my binoculars and hauled my rig down the cove a few blocks. And what a fine male this Crossbill was! Putting down anchor all day, I found more showed up in the same trees – as well as more pirates.

And then, like an explosion, pirates were finding Crossbills everywhere in the St. Louis area and spreading the word. (Birders are a different breed of pirate – we share our treasure maps.) And then a pair of famous birding pirates, the Malones, discovered a new treasure map called Faust Park. Pirates found not only Red, but White-winged Crossbills there. And yours truly found an uncommon Common Redpoll. Other pirates were finding Redpolls in other St. Louis areas, too. Then White-winged Crossbills showed up at the Isle of Carondelet! If the excitement weren’t enough, tucked in every nook and cranny we pirates went were Pine Siskins galore. Oh, the booty! We pirates were hunting down treasures everywhere. Smirks (aka smiles) were on everyone’s faces. But we pirates, we are never satisfied. We are always plotting our next move. As I warned earlier, we’re greedy. In every St. Louis pirate’s hull, be sure they are building platform bird feeders to place on deck to attract a rare Evening Grosbeak. I know I am. And they are keeping their eye open for a Bohemian Waxing. ♦



Red Crossbill



Andrew Reago Photo

Red Crossbill

Al Smith Photo



Common Redpoll (left); Red Crossbill and Pine Siskin



Al Smith Photos

White-winged Crossbill

Andrew Reago Photo



Mid-Winter Open House
Come One, Come All!
St. Louis Audubon Society
Webster Groves Nature Study Society
Sunday, January 13th
3:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Bring a dish. Beverages will be provided.
Door prizes will be given.
Audubon Center at Riverlands
301 Riverlands Way
West Alton, MO 63386
Come early and check out the Eagles and Trumpeter Swans. The Center and its exhibits will be open during the social. For Center info, including volunteer needs <http://riverlands.audubon.org/>.
Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. Turn right on the last road before the Alton Bridge (at the gas station). Continue ¾ mile to Center on your left.

Citizen Science in Action: The 113th Christmas Bird Count

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), the longest-running citizen science wildlife survey in the world, will undergo several significant changes beginning this year as Audubon builds on the program's success to entice birdwatchers to lend their eyes and ears year round. Fees to participate in the count will be dropped to encourage greater participation, and the annual published report, *American Birds*, will go digital in 2013, saving more trees for the birds. CBC information will be available online in Spanish for the first time. And in 2013, Audubon will begin to extend conservation-focused observation efforts throughout the seasons.

From Dec. 14, 2012, to Jan. 5, 2013, tens of thousands of volunteers will add a new layer to data that has shaped conservation and Congressional decisions. The CBC revealed the dramatic impact climate change is already having on birds and a disturbing decline in common birds, including the Northern Bobwhite quail. The many decades of data not only helps identify birds in need of conservation action, it also reveals success stories. CBC helped document the comeback of the Bald Eagle and significant increases in waterfowl populations, both the result of conservation efforts.

Last year's count shattered records. A total of 2,248 counts and 63,223 people tallied over 60 million birds. Counts took place in all 50 states, all Canadian provinces, plus 99 count circles in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands. In Colombia, the Christmas Bird Count is a crucially important monitoring system of biodiversity in the country.

To register and view survey locations from across the country, including Missouri, see the National Audubon website at <http://birds.audubon.org/get-involved-christmas-bird-count>.

Here is a quick summary of the counts in or around the St. Louis region:

Saturday, December 15th: The Kirksville CBC includes Thousand Hills State Park, and Big Creek and Sugar Creek Conservation Areas. Please e-mail Jason Luscier for details – jluscier@truman.edu.

Saturday, December 22nd: Weldon Spring CBC begins at 8 am from the August A Busch Conservation Area HQ in St. Charles, MO. For questions, contact Anne McCormack at annemccormack@sbcglobal.net.

Friday, December 28th: Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge CBC is centered on Elsberry, MO and covers areas in and on the Mississippi flood plain. Public areas include Clarence Cannon NWR, BK Leach Conservation Area, Prairie Slough, Reds Landing Management Area, and part of Two Rivers NWR. For details contact Bruce Schuette, basch@centurytel.net, or Scott Schuette, sschuette01@hotmail.com.

Tuesday, January 1st: The Confluence CBC. E-mail Randy Korotev for details rlkorote@artsci.wustl.edu. ◆



*Northern Bobwhite at Riverlands
Migratory Bird Sanctuary in January 2009.*

Al Smith Photo

Birth of the Birds

by Chrissy McClarren



I could gush for 10,000 pages on the wonder, magic and phenomena of birds, but could I really capture that gratefulness I feel deep in my body when I witness such awesome beings? From the first time their colors splashed upon my thirsty eyes and I drank, I became a drunk with no remorse. My days were henceforth inebriated by birds. And more birds. And more birds. And to whom do I owe the thanks for living this intoxicated life? Who birthed these marvels of earthly delight? I drink to thee...and thee...and thee...into infinity.

St. Louis Audubon Society Year-end Fundraising Appeal

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

12/12

We are proud of our accomplishments and the variety of programs we use to achieve our goals. Still, the threats facing our environment are growing and require new or expanded efforts.

Your past support has made our success possible, and we need your help again to sustain our growth. Help us continue to build strong bonds with nature for our children and our community. If you share our passion and our commitment, please send in your gift today.

\$250 \$100 \$60** \$30 Other _____

** Donations at the \$60 level or higher will receive a *Birds of St. Louis* note card set as our gift, with favorite images from Paul Bauer's personal photo collection.

Thank you so much for your interest and support!

Donations are tax-deductible.
St. Louis Audubon is a tax-exempt charity.

If you prefer credit card, visit our website
<http://www.stlouisaudubon.org>

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



Customer Name
Street Address
City, ST ZIP Code