

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 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

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY DECEMBER 13TH AT 2P

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT—PAGE 4

DECEMBER 14TH TO JANUARY 5TH

ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

[HTTP://BIRDS.AUDUBON.ORG/CHRISTMAS-BIRD-COUNT](http://BIRDS.AUDUBON.ORG/CHRISTMAS-BIRD-COUNT)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS

SATURDAY DECEMBER 20TH AT 8A

[HTTP://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/BIRDING-TRIP-RIVERLANDS-DEC-20-8-1030A](http://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/BIRDING-TRIP-RIVERLANDS-DEC-20-8-1030A)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY JANUARY 10TH AT 9A

BIRDS OF WINTER WEEKENDS

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS

SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS IN JANUARY AND EARLY FEBRUARY

FROM 10 AM TO 2 PM

[HTTP://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/BIRDS-WINTER-1](http://RIVERLANDS.AUDUBON.ORG/EVENTS/BIRDS-WINTER-1)

EAGLE DAYS AT OLD CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE

NORTH ST. LOUIS COUNTY

SAT & SUN JANUARY 17TH AND 18TH FROM 9 AM TO 3 PM

[HTTP://MDC.MO.GOV/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/RESOURCES/2010/03/EAGLEDAYS14_15.PDF](http://MDC.MO.GOV/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/RESOURCES/2010/03/EAGLEDAYS14_15.PDF)

OPEN HOUSE SOCIAL—PAGE 2

AUDUBON CENTER AT RIVERLANDS

SUNDAY JANUARY 25TH FROM 3P TO 6P

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Repay Your Spark Bird

Most of us can recall our own “spark bird,” that bird that captured our attention enough to have us decide to spend some serious time learning about or watching birds. In fact, the discussion of one’s spark bird is a common question among birders: “What was your spark bird?”

It may have been a Scarlet Tanager, a Hooded Merganser, an Eastern Bluebird, a Bald Eagle, a Trumpeter Swan, a Prothonotary Warbler, or a Peregrine Falcon.

Whatever the species, it’s wonderful to share the experience, along with the wonder of it all.

But here’s another question: “What have you ever done for your spark bird?”

Perhaps we should “repay” our spark-bird species in some way? At minimum, all birds need appropriate habitat throughout their life cycle, food, water, and a safe place to nest. Are there ways to “give” your Orchard Oriole “spark-bird” a nesting site? And how about building a series of Wood Duck boxes? Can you help support efforts to secure breeding habitat for your much-appreciated Cerulean Warbler? And maybe help to preserve stopover habitat for that “spark-bird” American Avocet?

There are many ways to approach this issue. You could give-back through hands-on involvement in an

Continued on next page

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 your interest and our need. If you have thought of serving in such a way, stop by or call one of us.

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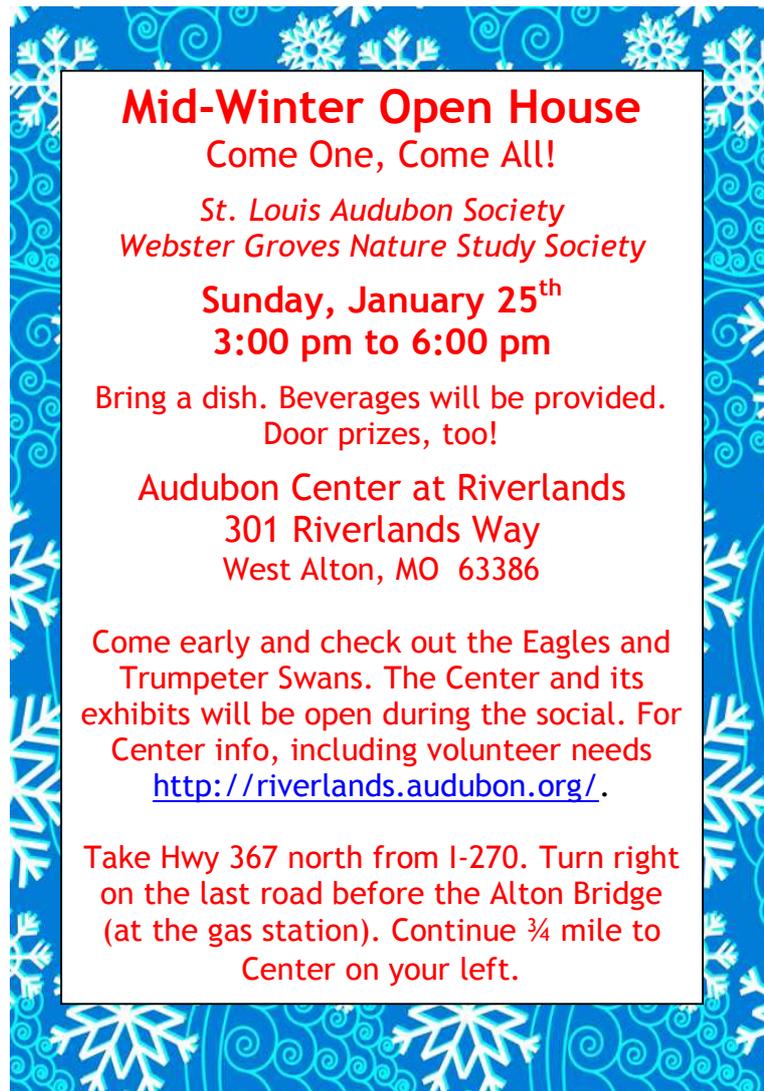
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Newsletter

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



Mid-Winter Open House

Come One, Come All!

*St. Louis Audubon Society
Webster Groves Nature Study Society*

**Sunday, January 25th
3:00 pm to 6:00 pm**

Bring a dish. Beverages will be provided.
Door prizes, too!

**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 $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to Center on your left.

Spark Bird

Continued from Page 1

individual project at a public space like our stewardship projects. Perhaps you could create habitat on your own property and enlist the guidance of our Bring Conservation Home program. Of course, you could choose to support all our programs with a financial contribution, and that is made easy with our year-end appeal. See the last page of this newsletter for details about the appeal or simply give online, www.stlouisaudubon.org.

These are just a few of the ways you could help your “spark-bird.” There are many more. We hope you’ll pick one.

Find at least one that works for you and our individual “spark bird.” Seriously consider pursuing them.

This was adapted, with permission, from a recent e-bulletin of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. To read more or sign up:

<http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/> ♦

President's Message

By Linda Tossing

St. Louis is blessed with four wonderful seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Each season is special and necessary for the natural environment.

The winter season has arrived in St. Louis with snow, freezing rain and cold. Nature reacts by going to sleep or dormant during this time to replenish the nutrients found in the ground and to prepare for the warming of spring and new growth. Birds that forage for insects leave the St. Louis area and migrate to warmer climates. Some birds from the north migrate to the St. Louis to spend the winter, usually foraging for seeds and fruits. Bald Eagles will gather around open waters to catch fish. But then, other wildlife will dig in and hibernate until spring.

People do the same, some leave for warmer climates (usually called "snow birds") and others stay here for the winter! We, also, tend to dig in and hibernate during the winter season!

So this year, I would like to encourage you to step out and take a walk in the woods. Walking in the woods in the winter is a wonderful experience! Once the leaves have fallen, the trees take on beautiful silhouettes, and you can see the lay of the land. In the sunlight, the different types of bark stand out. After a snow, the woods glisten, the land looks like a winter wonderland, and there is an almost hushed quiet. Surprisingly, there is a lot of wildlife including birds, squirrels, deer and even fox and coyote! I encourage you all to take a walk in the woods this winter. Of course dress warm and be safe, but enjoy the wintery outdoors.

Thanks for all of your support! Have a wonderful and safe holiday season! ◆

Field Trips, Etc.

Dec 13th to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary:

This half day trip will **start at 2 pm**. Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. Turn right on the last road before the Alton Bridge (at the gas station). Continue 0.7 mile to the Audubon Center on your left.

Jan 10th to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary: This

half day trip will start 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.

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

Looking for a sustainable gift for that special someone who likes to play in the dirt. A coupon for a landscape survey through our Bring Conservation Home program may be just the thing. Simply click the Donate button at www.stlouisaudubon.org, choose your giving method and note "BCH certificate" on the purpose line. Cost is just \$50 and includes a chapter membership. We will mail the certificate direct to you. Program info at www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH.

A Gift of Bird Habitat

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



Don't Miss the 115th Christmas Bird Count

Since the Christmas Bird count began over a century ago, it has relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteers like you. <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count> The Count is organized around "circles" across the country, including several in the St. Louis region. Participants select a specific circle, sign up on line and receive additional instructions from the coordinator for that circle.

When does the count happen?

All Christmas Bird Counts are conducted between December 14 and January 5 each season. Your local count will occur on one day between those dates. Participate in as many counts as you wish!

How does participation work?

There is a specific methodology to the CBC, and you must make arrangements to participate in advance with the circle compiler, but anyone can participate.

Each count takes place in an established 15-mile wide diameter circle, and is organized by a compiler.

If you are a beginner, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler. Check out the sign-up link above for information on how to contact the compiler.

Visit the CBC Frequently Asked Questions to learn more. <http://birds.audubon.org/faq/cbc> ◆

Hog Island Camp Registration Open

By Karen Meyer

The "Fall Migration: Living on the Wind" Hog Island camp I attended this September was a very fine adventure. Once you're shuttled the short distance from the mainland to the island via the Snow Goose, you enter a peaceful, picturesque and welcoming setting. Accommodations are comfortable, cozy, and basic, with shared baths and showers. The bird leaders, other staff, volunteers and food were all outstanding. The trip included several excursions to other islands in search of migrant seabirds and warblers. Happily, I was able to add 17 new birds to my life list. While the main focus was on the fascinating phenomenon of bird migration, we also learned about the history and geology of the area. When the five days had passed, I wasn't ready for the adventure to end. Take a look at the 2015 National Audubon camp schedule and consider treating yourself to one of the Hog Island learning experiences next year. A limited number of scholarships available. For complete details, see <http://hogisland.audubon.org/>



Riverlands Field Trip Report

By Mike Grant

Riverlands lived up to its nickname of “Windy-lands” on Saturday, Nov 8th with scope-shaking, whitecap making winds. Early scouts looked for the previously reported Snow Buntings to no avail. A group of about 20 started at Teal Pond. The only Eagle of the day was perched in a tree on one of the small islands in Ellis Bay. Teal Pond held Canada Geese, Double-crested Cormorants, Mallards, and several Hooded Mergansers. Ring-billed Gulls provided air cover and small group of Trumpeter Swans faked a landing. A distant Red-Tailed Hawk was found by Mike Thelen. Mixed flocks of blackbirds flew about, buffeted by the winds.

Intel from other birders had us driving down Weiss to Red School Rd in search of a Merlin and Kestrels. Neither were found along the drive and we proceeded on Orton Rd to the Heron Pond blind. We quickly discovered that while the blind is a great work of art and architecture, we could barely see any of Heron Pond from that vantage point. While the rest of us were wondering what the point of a blind so far from the water was, Mike Thelen arrived and reported he found a Kestrel and Rusty Blackbirds on Red-School Road.

We then drove to the Cora Island parking lot, and found a Great Blue Heron that was laying down in a field. Around the parking lot were White-crowned Sparrows, Northern Cardinals, Chickadees, and Tufted Titmice. More Hooded Mergansers were a couple hundred feet off the road in an obscured waterhole. A flock of Greater White-fronted Geese flew over and several Northern Harriers were hunting over the soybean fields.

On the drive back into Riverlands we picked up the Kestrel and Rusty Blackbirds that most had missed driving out. And about 10 Killdeer.

As it was 10AM the consensus was that a pit stop at the fine Audubon Center was required. From there we walked out to the Ellis Bay overlook deck. Saw a few distant Pelicans and Ruddy Ducks. Heron Pond, that seems to be receding in to the weeds, had many Mallards and few Teal. Ellis Bay had a large flotilla of Coots and distant Cormorants. Several mixed flocks of ducks held more Ruddys and new for the day Redheads, Canvasbacks and Ring-necked Ducks. Around the dam a few Ring-bills flew and some sat on the walls next to a Herring giving good size comparisons.

A trip to the other side of the dam led to the discovery of an undetermined gull. It was sitting on the wall and never gave good looks at the wings. It was a very even grayish brown and had dark eyes. Likely first cycle Herring, but maybe a first cycle Thayer's. Our last stop added a turkey.

Thanks to all who participated! ◆



Snow Bunting (left), not seen on the field trip, and American Kestrel

Al Smith Photos

St. Louis Audubon Society Year-end Fundraising Appeal

Name: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
Address: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
City, State, Zip: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
E-Mail or Phone (if desired): <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
Make checks payable to: St. Louis Audubon Society Mail Checks to: St. Louis Audubon Society P.O. Box 220227 St. Louis, MO 63122-0227

12/14

We are proud of everyone who helps us achieve our goals, including passionate volunteers, dedicated members and enthusiastic donors.

Your past support has made our success possible, and we need your help to sustain our programs. Help us continue to connect our community to the nature that surrounds us all. Please send in your gift today.

<input type="checkbox"/> \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$60** <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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** Donations at the \$60 level or higher will receive a *Birds of St. Louis* or *Birds of Forest Park* note card set as our gift (please select one).

No thanks. Please do not send me any gifts.

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
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