

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 contact Chris at birding@forestparkforever.org.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS BIRD SANCTUARY & COLUMBIA BOTTOM
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4TH AT 8A

BACKYARD BIRD FESTIVAL—PAGE 6

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4TH FROM 9A TO 3P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BALDWIN LAKE, ILLINOIS
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11TH AT 9A

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

ANYWHERE YOU WANT TO OBSERVE BIRDS
ANYTIME FROM SATURDAY FEB 17TH THRU MONDAY FEB 20TH
SEE WWW.BIRDCOUNT.ORG FOR DETAILS

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS BIRD SANCTUARY
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 18TH AT 8A

BIRD EVOLUTION PROGRAM—PAGE 4

STL COUNTY LIBRARY GRAND GLAIZE BRANCH
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21ST AT 7P

CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 29TH ALL DAY
FOR INFO VISIT [HTTP://WWW.MOENVIRON.ORG/2012/01/2012-MO-CONSERVATION-LOBBY-DAY/](http://WWW.MOENVIRON.ORG/2012/01/2012-MO-CONSERVATION-LOBBY-DAY/)

HONEYSUCKLE WORKDAY—PAGE 6

CREVE COEUR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK
SATURDAY MARCH 3RD FROM 9A TO 1P

GARDEN BLITZ—PAGE 5

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN
SATURDAY MARCH 3RD FROM 9A TO 3P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BUSCH CONSERVATION AREA WOODCOCK/OWL PROWL
SATURDAY MARCH 10TH AT 5P

MARCH JOINT PROGRAM—PAGE 4

STL COUNTY LIBRARY MID-COUNTY BRANCH
THURSDAY MARCH 22ND AT 730P

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Director	3
Field Trip Listing	3
Monthly Programs	4
Native Plants	5
Other Events	6
Bird Conservation Issue	7

Eagle Days Visitors Top 6,000

Eagle Days at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge always draws a big crowd, and this year was no exception with 6,259 visitors counted! As many as 12 Bald Eagles were seen in the area, and the “usual” pair of Peregrine Falcons—posing for pics on the bridge.

Many thanks to all our volunteers including Jerry Castillon, Mary Dueren, Polly Freshwater, Sue Gustafson, Katy Manar, Karen Meyer, Julie Nicolai, Katie Park, Anne Rankin-Horton, Dave Rogles, Marty Smigell and Mike Thelen! If you missed it this year, mark your iPad or Blackberry for the 2nd weekend in January 2013. Hope to see you there! ◆



Board Meetings

Open to All. 2nd 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

Lisa Nansteel, VP Education

(636) 391-4898

Conservation Issues

(314) 599-7390

conservation@stlouisaudubon.org

Jim Wilson, VP Finance

(314) 367-7275, ext 20

wilsonjh@umsl.edu

John Solodar, Treasurer

(314) 862-5294

Solodar@sbcglobal.net

Keri Lammering, Secretary

(314) 646-4614

klammering@stlzoo.org

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.

Mid-Winter Open House Thanks

On January 22nd, 65 people gathered at the Audubon Center at Riverlands for the annual St. Louis Audubon Society & Webster Groves Nature Study Society Open House. Food, drink and good conversation was shared by all. This was our first official event at the Center, and we could not be more pleased! Many thanks to Patty Hagen, Katy Manar and everyone at the Center that helped make it happen.

Speaking of thanks, a big THANK YOU to all who attended. Special mention to the co-coordinators of Rich Thoma, Jane Deschu and Karen Meyer for their hard work. If you missed us this year, we hope you can make it next year. ◆



Top: Katy Manar, US Army Corps Biologist, gives a tour of the Center. Note the floor map of the Great Rivers and Mississippi Flyway (Mike Grant Photo)

Bald Eagle seen that weekend at the Sanctuary (Al Smith Photo)

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

Last year, you heard about the Pilot Phase of our Bring Conservation Home private lands habitat assistance and certification program (see April and August 2011 *TaleFeathers*). Completed in October, six volunteer Habitat Technicians were trained and 17 landscapes surveyed. Each of the 17 homeowners received a report with unique recommendations on how to improve their property for the benefit of birds, wildlife and the homeowner. Seven of those surveyed were certified at the Silver level, and three more received at least Gold. Perhaps most importantly, eleven owners expressed a firm commitment to implement Bring Conservation Home recommendations. Thanks to all who made the Pilot a success!

The Pilot also helped us develop a solid business plan, which was presented to and approved by the St. Louis Audubon Board of Directors last fall. Since then, we have been meeting with prospective partners in the community—corporate, government and organizational. We are very pleased to announce that Missouri American Water will be our first corporate sponsor and partner for Bring Conservation Home. With a shared interest in water quality and conservation, it makes sense. Discussions have already begun on how best to utilize American Water resources to help market the program to the community.

In addition, a partnership plan is in-progress with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Watch our website and future issues of *TaleFeathers* for updates on this and other partnerships.

Meanwhile, we have begun detailed planning for the program kick-off. Volunteer training will be held on March 17th at Alberici Headquarters in Overland. Details, including a job description and skills required, will be posted to our website later this month. Also, a Native Landscaping Workshop for Homeowners is under development with key partners, to be held March 31st at Powder Valley Nature Center. Complete info will be in the March *TaleFeathers*.

Bring Conservation Home is well on course for a spring kickoff! If you would like to participate in the program or simply learn more, visit our website <http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/index.php>. ♦



Field Trips, Etc.

Feb 4th to Riverlands & Columbia Bottom: Full 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.

Feb 11th to Baldwin Lake, Illinois: All day trip led by Pat Lueders that meets at 9:00 am at the Hwy 270 and Hwy 30 west commuter lot. Caravan and carpool will be arranged there. Site can be reached via Hwy 3 south from I-255 in Illinois to Redbud. Then east on Hwy 154 to Baldwin. Follow signs to Lake Baldwin.

Feb 18th to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary: Half day trip led by Bill Rowe that meets at 7:30 am. Follow directions for Feb 4th trip.

March 10th at Busch Memorial Conservation Area: Sue Gustafson and John Solodar will lead this evening Woodcock and Owl Prowl. Meet at 5 p.m. (note the time). Take Hwy 94 south from Hwy 40. At 1.3 miles, turn right at light for Hwy D. Go 2 miles to entrance on right. Turn left at T to Hampton Lake and meet in lot.

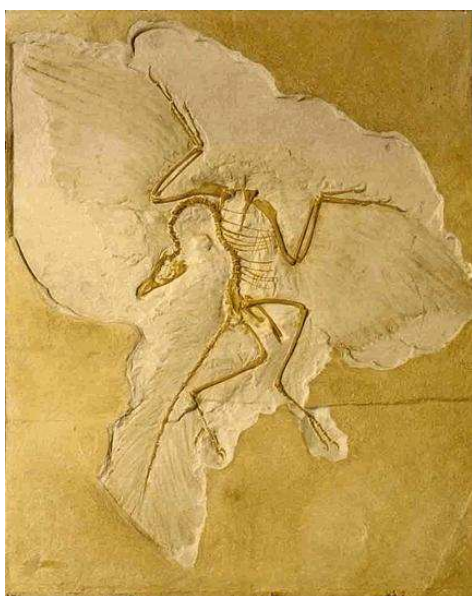
All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required, unless noted—consult our website for details. For questions, contact Mike Grant at mikecurlew@att.net.

The Early Evolution of Birds

Tuesday, February 21st at 7 pm

Please join us for our annual joint program with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, to be held at the St. Louis County Library's Grand Glaize Branch. David Peters, of the Eastern Missouri Paleontological Society, will discuss the dynamic field of bird evolution, especially the new fossil finds in China and how they impact our understanding of how birds evolved from Theropod dinosaurs.

The library is at 1010 Meramec Station Road in Manchester, Missouri 63021, just east of Hwy 141 and north of Big Bend. Turn right after the Shop n Save plaza. The program is in meeting room 1. ◆



Restoring the Confluence

Thursday, March 22nd at 7:30 pm

Please join us for our annual joint program with the Eastern Missouri Group of the Sierra Club, to be held at the St. Louis County Library's Mid County Branch. Quinn Kellner, Manager at Jones-Confluence Point State Park, and Dean Bossert, Deputy Manager of the Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge, will deliver a joint program on the history of and habitat restoration plans for their respective public areas at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers.

Confluence Point covers 1,100 acres of owned and leased floodplain in St. Charles County, directly opposite Columbia Bottom Conservation Area. Cora Island covers 1,265 acres on the north side of the Missouri River, almost immediately upstream of Confluence Point Park. The habitat plans for these areas will greatly improve the hi-quality natural areas available for birds and other wildlife, while offering greater opportunities for passive recreation in the region.

The library is at 7821 Maryland Avenue in Clayton, Missouri 63105 at Central Avenue and just blocks from two Metrolink Stations. The program is in the large auditorium. Questions, call (314) 599-7390. ◆

The Case for Natives

By Lynne Breakstone

Last August Mitch Leachman wrote about his newfound excitement about gardening with native plants or “naturescaping.” Since Mitch and I are part of the Bring Conservation Home Program, we are learning the value of native plants in encouraging wildlife-friendly habitats. Last summer my husband and I had a small inground swimming pool removed and we were therefore forced to re-design most of our backyard. As a supporter of BCH, OF COURSE I had to plant only natives. After putting in about a dozen different kinds, we left St. Louis for the month of July, one of the hottest on record. I offer here three very good reasons for you to consider naturescaping:

- 1) In spite of the awful heat, we didn’t lose a single native that we had planted only a few months before; natives need much less water than exotics.
- 2) We planted cardinal flower (*Iobelia cardinalis*) in our new rain garden; not only is it beautiful but we have been delighted to see all the hummingbirds which it has attracted;
- 3) We also planted swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*): it has also attracted hummingbirds as well as monarch and other types of butterflies. Before season’s end, we had counted twelve monarch butterfly caterpillars happily munching on our swamp milkweed plants!

With spring around the corner, I hope you will consider native plants as an addition to your home landscape. Checkout the resources on our website, <http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/index.php>, and if you have questions about the Program, just call (314) 599-7390 or e-mail conservation@stlouisaudubon.org. ♦



From Left: Cardinal Flower and Hummingbird, Monarch Butterfly caterpillar, Monarch chrysalis.

St. Louis Garden Blitz: Solve–Grow–Enjoy

Missouri Botanical Garden, Saturday March 3rd from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Through the education and understanding of healthy local ecosystems, you can solve many common garden problems in your own garden space. Join us for an informative and inspiring day of classes, demonstrations, exhibits and workshops featuring both nationally and locally-recognized horticulture professionals. This year’s keynote speaker is Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*. This event is produced by Missouri Botanical Garden and the Horticulture Co-op of Metro St. Louis in association with the St. Louis Master Gardeners. Members \$70; non-members \$85. For more info or to register, call (314) 577-9506 or see the event calendar at www.mobot.org.

7th Annual Backyard Bird Festival

WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 4, 2012 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Missouri Botanical Garden

COST: Activities included with Garden admission. Guided bird walks, led by St. Louis Audubon volunteers, will be offered at 9, 10 and 11 a.m. and are an additional fee (\$8 adults, \$6 children ages 3 to 12).

INFO: Call (314) 577-5100 or visit the event calendar at www.mobot.org for more info. ◆

The Great Backyard Bird Count Workshop

WHEN: Wednesday, February 8th from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: St. Louis REI Store at 1703 S. Brentwood Blvd

DESCRIPTION: The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's 2012 Great Backyard Bird Count is February 17-20. During this workshop, hosted by St. Louis Audubon, you will learn how to participate in the Count from your own backyard, a local park, school yard, or any other outdoor site. You will become familiar with, and learn how to identify, our winter species, how to count them, and how and where to post the results. All skill levels and backgrounds can participate and are welcome.

INFO: FREE! To register, visit <http://www.rei.com/event/33396/session/41981>. ◆

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FIELD TRIP AT BUSCH MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

Saturday, February 11, 2012 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

You're invited to become a citizen scientist and participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)! You will learn the basics of how the GBBC works, how data is entered in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website, and then take a walk on the Fallen Oak Trail to do a practice bird count at the feeder station. The program is open to anyone ages 10 and up. Please dress for the weather and bring your binoculars and field guides to help gather data. FREE! Reservations call 636-441-4554.

DRESSER ISLAND CONSERVATION AREA HIKE

Saturday, February 18, 2012 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Where is there a place in winter that you can hike along a big river and see pelicans, ducks, geese, eagles, muskrat houses and possibly trumpeter swans? It is called Dresser Island, and it is located near West Alton in St. Charles County. Join us for this 6 ½ mile hike for adults only please. We will also participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count during our hike. FREE! Reservations call 636-441-4554.

HONEYSUCKLE WORKDAY AT CREVE COEUR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK

Saturday, March 3rd from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch is included.

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. Rain date March 10.

Please register with name and number participating at director@stlouisaudubon.org or (314) 599-7390. ◆

Nests to Die For—Open Pipes

from Audubon California

Exposed vertical pipes with open tops pose a tremendous hazard to birds and other wildlife. They are particularly hazardous for birds that either fall into these openings, or enter looking for nesting space. Once inside, birds are unable to open their wings to fly out, and the smooth sides make it impossible to climb out. Inevitably, the birds suffer a miserable, unnecessary death from starvation and exposure.

Open pipes are a threat to all birds

Open pipes kill birds indiscriminately. Both common birds and protected species have been found among the layers of dead birds in open pipes. And the destruction can occur in pipes from one to 10 inches wide.

Audubon California staff pulled down a 20-foot-tall ventilation pipe in 2009 from an abandoned irrigation system and discovered a seven-foot-long black mass composed entirely of decomposed carcasses of hundreds of dead birds and animals including kestrels, flickers, bluebirds, and fence lizards. The date etched into the concrete at the base of the pipe showed that it had been in place for more than 50 years.

Where open top vertical pipes can occur

Open vertical pipes occur in more places than you might think, including:

- Sign posts
- Fences
- Survey markers
- Building plumbing vents
- Irrigation systems
- Chimneys

How you can help on your property

- Look around and identify all the open top vertical pipes on your property.
- Cap, close, remove or screen all of them.
- Even pipes placed temporarily will trap birds.
- Put screens over sapling protector tubes, or leave openings at the bottom for birds and others to escape.
- When you visit other properties, public or private, share the dangers of open pipes.

For additional info, including details on capping solutions for residential vent pipes, see Audubon California's Kern River Preserve website at : http://kern.audubon.org/death_pipes.htm. ◆



St. Louis Audubon Society Year-end 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. Nearly all programs are staffed by volunteers, and we constantly review them to reduce expenses and maximize efficiency.

Your past support has made much of our success possible. Help us continue to connect our kids and our communities to nature. If you share our passion, please send your gift today.

\$250 \$100 \$60** \$30 Other_____

** Donations at the \$60 level or higher will receive a *Birds of Forest Park* note card set as our gift, with images from Edward Crim’s *Forest Park 365* project.

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:

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

1/12

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

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



Customer Name
Street Address
City, ST ZIP Code