

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 EVERY MONTH

WALK FROM 830 AM TO 10 AM, MEET AT 815 AM

For info e-mail birding@forestparkforever.org.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS BIRD SANCTUARY & COLUMBIA BOTTOM

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 2ND AT 8A

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BALDWIN LAKE, ILLINOIS

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 9TH AT 9A

ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM—PAGE 4

WEBSTER GROVES LIBRARY

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 13TH AT 7P

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT—PAGE 5

ANYWHERE YOU WANT TO OBSERVE BIRDS

ANYTIME FROM FRIDAY FEB 15TH THRU MONDAY FEB 18TH

SEE WWW.BIRDCOUNT.ORG FOR DETAILS

NATIVE LANDSCAPING WORKSHOP—PAGE 5

POWDER VALLEY NATURE CENTER

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 23RD FROM 8A TO 4P

TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR HABITAT ADVISORS

SATURDAY MARCH 2ND FROM 9 AM TO 4 PM

IF YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A CREATIVE OUTLET FOR YOUR NATIVE PLANT SKILLS, CONSIDER BECOMING A HABITAT ADVISOR FOR OUR BRING CONSERVATION HOME PROGRAM. YOU WILL HELP LANDOWNERS AROUND THE REGION CREATE HABITAT FOR OUR NATIVE BIRDS AND OTHER ANIMALS. FOR BACKGROUND ON THE PROGRAM VISIT WWW.STLOUISAUDUBON.ORG/BCH. FOR ALL THE DETAILS ON THE WORKSHOP, INCLUDING AN APPLICATION: [HTTP://STLOUISAUDUBON.ORG/BCH/TRAINING_WORKSHOP.PHP](http://STLOUISAUDUBON.ORG/BCH/TRAINING_WORKSHOP.PHP)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BUSCH CONSERVATION AREA WOODCOCK/OWL PROWL

SATURDAY MARCH 9TH AT 5P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

HORSESHOE LAKE STATE PARK IN ILLINOIS

SATURDAY MARCH 16TH AT 8A

DISCOVERING MISSOURI'S NATURAL AREAS—PAGE 4

STL COUNTY LIBRARY MID-COUNTY BRANCH

THURSDAY MARCH 28TH AT 730P

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	3
Field Trip Listing	3
Programs	4
Great Backyard Bird Count	5
Native Landscaping Workshop	5
Birding Reports	6
State Parks	7

Open House

Quite a number of folks gathered at the Audubon Center at Riverlands on Sunday, January 13th for our mid-winter open house. This annual event draws together members and friends of both St. Louis Audubon and the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. In addition to food, drink and door prizes, birds like Bald Eagles and Trumpeter Swans made it quite an event!

Thanks to everyone who helped, including Rich Thoma of WGNSS and Rixey Ruffin of Audubon. Special thanks to Patty Hagen and the Center staff for use of their great facility! For more pics, see page 2 of this issue. ♦



Jamila Reid (left) and Karen Meyer

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.

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Newsletter

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



Open House



Everyone enjoyed the Audubon Center.



Joe Walsh (left) and Paul Bauer



From left: Mary Smidt, Val Schmidt, Dan Curran, Linda and Jerry Castillon

President's Message

By Rixey Ruffin

Like most birders, I look forward to spring with great anticipation, but never more so than this year, for two reasons. First, this spring I will finally have an appropriate camera to take with me. It's not the best there is on the market, but it does allow removing one lens and replacing it with another, which is a first for me. At the moment, though, I only own the basic lens that came with the camera, not the telephoto that one typically needs for photographing birds. Thus outfitted, I've spent the winter in my backyard, photographing what comes to our feeder, and even then I can't get close enough for a sparrow to fill the frame. It's fun nonetheless, and besides, just being outdoors, in nature, is its own reward, with or without photography. (Still, it's whetting my appetite for that day when, with a lens hopefully in hand, I can photograph birds sitting in real trees!)

Second, this is the first year that I will bird as part of the St. Louis Audubon community, and so it will be a more enriching experience than ever. As a relative newcomer to Missouri, I have learned much from many Audubon members and partners about the great parks, wildlife areas and reserves we enjoy here in Eastern Missouri. I'm more excited than ever to visit, to bird, and to explore the resources around us. (Best scenario of all is to go on one of SLAS's bird walks! I'd like to tag along frequently this spring, and I hope that you will consider doing so too.) Mostly I am excited by the chance to run into some of the warm and kind people I've gotten to know in and through SLAS over the course of the last year. Paths cross often among birders, literally as well as figuratively, and I hope mine crosses theirs. I'd like to thank them for opening up a new world for me. ♦



Rixey and Anna at the Open House at the Audubon Center.

Field Trips, Etc.

Feb 2nd to Riverlands & Columbia Bottom: All day trip led by Bill Rowe that meets at 8 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 9th 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.

March 9th at Busch Memorial Conservation Area:

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.

Mar 16th to Horseshoe Lake State Park:

Mike Grant leads this all day trip starts at 8 am and is good for beginners with some light walking. From St. Louis, take I-70 east to Hwy 111 (exit 6) and turn left. Go ~2 miles to Park entrance and meet in first parking lot on right inside Park.

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

Endangered Species of Missouri

Wednesday, February 13th at 7 pm

Please join us for our annual joint program with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, to be held at the Webster Groves Library. Paul McKenzie, Endangered Species Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Columbia, will present an engaging review of the threatened and endangered plants and animals of Missouri and the federal efforts to conserve them. From false asters to terns to sturgeon, the list is far too long, yet a critical tool to help prevent the complete loss of such species.

Paul has over 40 years experience in wildlife management. He also serves on the Missouri Natural Areas Committee and the Missouri Bird Records Committee. The library is at 301 East Lockwood Avenue in Webster Groves, Missouri 63119, just three blocks east of Elm. Questions, call (314) 599-7390. ◆

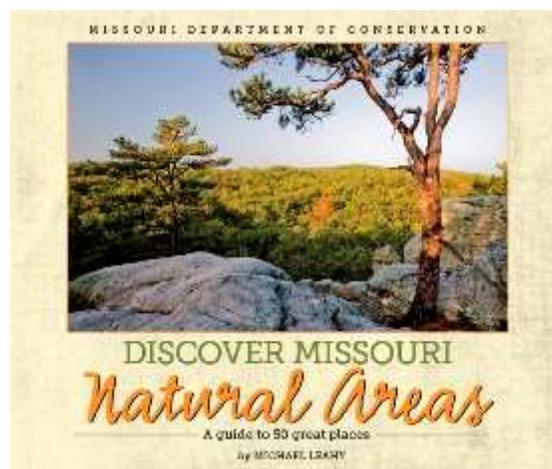


Discovering Missouri's Natural Areas

Thursday, March 28th at 7:30 pm

Mike Leahy, natural areas coordinator with the Missouri Department of Conservation, will give an overview of Missouri's natural areas and their role in the conservation of the state's natural heritage. From cypress swamps to desert-like glades, we will explore the myriad of native plants and animals that inhabit the remnant natural areas of Missouri. We will explore natural areas across the state but will also focus on those in the St. Louis region that are great destinations to visit to learn more about the natural history of this place. Come learn about the great natural features of our state.

This is the 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. 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. ◆



2013 Great Backyard Bird Count

After 15 years of success in North America, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will open up to the entire world for the first time in 2013. Anyone, from anywhere on earth, can participate by visiting www.birdcount.org and reporting the kinds and numbers of birds they see during the 16th annual count, February 15-18, 2013.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with partner Bird Studies Canada, the four-day count typically receives sightings from tens of thousands of people reporting more than 600 bird species in the United States and Canada alone.

During the 2012 count, participants reported 17.4 million bird observations on 104,000 checklists. Snowy Owls thrilled many participants when these striking birds-of-prey ventured south from the Arctic in record numbers. In 2013, scientists predict that U.S. and Canadian bird watchers will see an influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches and winter finches (such as Pine Siskins) because of scarce food supplies on their northern wintering grounds.

Participating is easy. Simply watch birds for at least 15 minutes at the location of your choice on one or more of the count days. Estimate the number of birds you see for each species you can identify. You'll select your location on a map, answer a few questions, enter your tallies, and then submit your data to share your sightings with others around the world. ◆

Native Landscaping Workshop for Homeowners

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

Saturday, February 23, 2013 from 8 am to 4 pm

Native plant landscapes have become more popular in recent years due to their functionality and aesthetic appeal. This in-depth workshop for homeowners offers information and resources on how to landscape with native plants to enhance biodiversity, create beautiful habitat gardens and address issues such as invasive species and stormwater management at home, in your own yard. This workshop is a cooperative effort of the Missouri Department of Conservation, Shaw Nature Reserve, St. Louis Audubon Society, and St. Louis Wild Ones. The workshop fee is \$20 and includes a buffet lunch, workshop materials and door prizes. For info and registration, including online payment, visit <http://stlouisaudubon.org/PNL/>. If you have other questions, please call 314-301-1500. ◆

8-Week Native Landscaping Course at Meramec

Dave Tylka, author of the MO Department of Conservation book *Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People*, will teach an 8-week native landscaping class (BIO:156) at St. Louis Community College at Meramec on Thursday evenings, March 21 through May 9, 2013, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Four Saturday field trips from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. will be held on 3/23, 4/13, 4/20 and 5/4. This course focuses on native trees, shrubs and flowers that furnish food and cover for songbirds, butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. Participants will learn how to design, establish and maintain native plant gardens and landscapes around homes, common grounds, businesses and public lands such as parks. For more information, please call Dave at 636/942-3142. ◆

Birding Reports

Pat Lueders recap from the December 15th trip:

Ten birders attended the first joint birding trip between Saint Louis Audubon and the Audubon Center at RMBS. Conditions were challenging with 20–30 mph winds even though the temperature was moderate. We started at Heron Pond that was occupied with hundreds of ducks including Ruddy Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Green-winged Teal, Mallards, Pied-billed Grebe, Coot, Pintail, Greater White-fronted Geese, and many Gadwall. There were over 100 swans but we were unable to find a Tundra. A few Harriers were working the field.

In Ellis Bay, we saw Bufflehead, more Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, and a group of 4 Red-breasted Mergansers. Sparrows were staying out of the wind at the "wood pile" or away from the hovering Kestrel. At Teal Pond, we found a flock of over 100 Greater White-Fronted Geese, a few Cackling Geese, again many swans, Hooded Mergansers, and one White Pelican. Mike Grant found 2 American Black Duck in Pintail Pond south of Teal Pond. There were few gulls in the area and nothing at Lincoln Shields because of the hunters. There were many House Finch at the Center's feeders.

Christian Hagenlocher's notes from his January 12th trip:

With cooling temps and a later-than-usual meeting time, today's group of 20+ participants enjoyed a fun-filled early afternoon at Riverlands. Birders joined us from across the state, and I enjoyed meeting and birding with all who came.

Upon our arrival many Trumpeter Swans were departing Teal Pond, probably the highest number I recall seeing at Riverlands, ever. Highlights included looks at both male and female hooded Mergansers, distant scope views of a Peregrine Falcon on the bridge (a life bird for several folks) and also some brief glimpses at a Tundra Swan on Heron Pond. Also there was a good mixture of waterfowl on Ellis Bay.

No uncommon gulls or longspurs were found by remaining birders after stopping at the Audubon Center. With the "usual" January suspects present, the birds were enjoyed by all. ◆



Hooded Merganser (left); Red-breasted Merganser

Al Smith Photos

Missouri State Parks Need Your Help

The 2013 session of the Missouri General Assembly may be our best opportunity in years to secure passage of a bond issue for state facilities that includes funding for at least a portion of the state park system's huge backlog of vitally needed infrastructure repair and rehabilitation, now estimated at some \$400 million.

Legislative leaders, including House Speaker Tim Jones and Senate President pro tem Tom Dempsey, have indicated that a bond issue for a state building fund is a priority for the session that begins January 9. Facility needs of higher education, mental health, and highways are touted, rather than state parks, even though state parks received about ten percent of the Third State Building Fund in the 1980s.

Parks may expect some support from SJR 3, a measure already pre-filed by Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Kurt Schaefer, which would authorize up to \$950 million in bonds, including \$40 million for state park facilities. But there will be major discussion and changes in both houses before any bonding measure is approved and then finally submitted to a vote of the citizenry for adoption or rejection.

It is time for citizens from throughout the state to come to the state capitol on the same day, Wednesday, February 6, to demand that state parks are included for a significant portion—at least ten percent—of any bonding measure. Ordinary citizens are best able to attest to their own love of state parks, and speak most effectively as constituents to their own representatives and senators. You can cite the health and other benefits parks provide for more than 17 million visitors a year, and the tremendous contribution of state parks to Missouri's economy, most recently estimated at more than \$1 billion a year.

You can point out that of all the buildings and all the water and sewer systems the state is responsible for maintaining, the state park system alone accounts for more than half of the total. Best of all, you can attest that you and other Missouri citizens, who have repeatedly voted by more than two to one to renew the parks and soils sales tax—which provides for employee salaries and other annual operating support for the park system—will also support a bond issue that includes significant funding for state parks.

We can make the case, but we need to do it one legislator at a time, on a day when virtually all legislators are being visited by their own constituents about this issue. Will you come and speak with your own elected leaders? They listen best to those who vote in their districts!

How to Participate

- **Put February 6 on your calendar and plan now to come to the State Capitol.**
- **Call the offices of your representative and your senator today and make appointments to meet with them on February 6** (go to www.house.mo.gov or www.senate.mo.gov or call your local public library to find your state legislators and their office numbers).
- **Email or call Nonie McClammer** (turtle50@embarqmail.com, 573-619-2626) **or Deb Schnack** (debdon49@aol.com, 573-295-6137) to let them know you will participate so you can be put on their email list to receive further information. **Persuade several friends to join you** on February 6; the more voters, the better.
- **Go to the MPA website** (www.parks.missouri.org) and then to Issues & Action/Park Funding to learn more about the issue, and expect further email updates as well.
- **On February 6, arrive at the Truman State Office Building Room 493 by 9am** for an orientation session (parking is tight in Jefferson City, but usually available at the Madison St. parking garage at the SE corner of Madison St. and E. Capitol Ave).

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

2/13

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>

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