

# TALE FEATHERS

St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122  
www.stlouisaudubon.org director@stlouisaudubon.org (314) 599-7390

## Calendar

### BEGINNER BIRD WALK FIELD TRIPS

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER  
SATURDAY JAN 3<sup>RD</sup> AND FEB 1<sup>ST</sup> AT 8:30 A.M.  
Special walk just for the new and/or casual watchers.  
[www.stlouisaudubon.org](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org) or (314) 367-7275

### EAGLE DAYS—PAGE 3

CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE AT 10950 RIVERVIEW DRIVE  
SAT/SUN JAN 17<sup>TH</sup>/18<sup>TH</sup> FROM 9A TO 3P  
Live eagle program, hands-on bird exhibits, refreshments,  
spotting scopes and Lewis & Clark re-enactors.

### BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY AT ALTON  
SATURDAY JAN 10<sup>TH</sup> AT 9A  
Half-day with Eagles, Gulls, Ducks, & Swans

### JANUARY PROGRAM—PAGE 5

POWDER VALLEY NATURE CENTER  
TUESDAY JAN 20<sup>TH</sup> AT 7 P.M.  
Politics & the Environment: The 2009 Legislative Needs—  
State & Federal

### BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MBS & COLUMBIA BOTTOMS CA  
SATURDAY FEB 7<sup>TH</sup> AT 8A  
All-day with Eagles, Gulls, Ducks, & Swans

### BACKYARD BIRD FESTIVAL—PAGE 4

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN  
SATURDAY FEB 7<sup>TH</sup> FROM 7:30A TO 2P  
Classes, ID tips, exhibits and guided walks for all skill  
levels. Registration required. Call (314) 577-9506. Fee.

### FEBRUARY PROGRAM—PAGE 5

CREVE COEUR COMMUNITY CENTER  
TUESDAY FEB 17<sup>TH</sup> AT 7 P.M.  
*March of the Penguins*, the Movie, plus Q&A w / St. Louis  
Zoo Keeper, Rick Smith

### GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT—PAGE 9

YOUR HOUSE, A PARK, ANYWHERE  
FRI-MON FEB 13<sup>TH</sup>-16<sup>TH</sup>, ANYTIME  
Citizen science project coordinated by Audubon and the  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

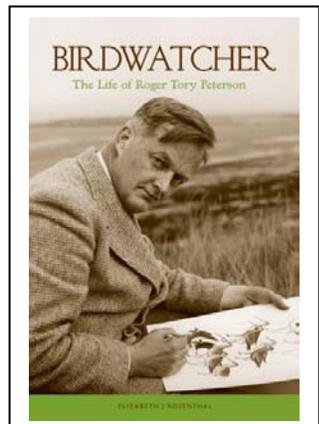
Roger Tory Peterson Book Review	1
Conservation Report	2
From the Director	3
Field Trip Details	3
Monthly Program Details	5
Field Trip Report	6
Scholarships and Awards	7
Bird Banding Workshop	8
Great Backyard Bird Count	9

## *Birdwatcher* *The Life of Roger Tory Peterson*

A book review by Connie Alwood

An old maxim goes, “Never hang a man’s picture on the wall until he is dead.” Roger Tory Peterson is dead. Hang the picture. You could have hung it long before he died. It’s not that Dr. Peterson did not have flaws. It’s as if, compared to his virtues, his flaws were mere blemishes.

*Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson* (The Lyons Press pp. 348 \$29.95) by Elizabeth J. Rosenthal has an enigmatic style, as if Rosenthal patterned herself after John Bartlett of *Bartlett’s Book of Quotations*. She conducted over a hundred interviews with all the prominent players in Roger’s life, those who are still living, that is, and she quotes their praise so often that the book is almost an encomium or elegy without the poetry. At first I was put off by this style, but I became used to it. Nevertheless, it remained disconcerting.



Please see *Birdwatcher* on page 4

## 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)

**Vicki Flier, VP Education**

(314) 968-9166

**Karen Meyer, VP Conservation**

(314) 982-1774

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

**Sue Gustafson, VP Finance**

(314) 968-8128

[smgustafson@juno.com](mailto:smgustafson@juno.com)

**John Solodar, Treasurer**

(314) 862-5294

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

**Susan Krupa, Secretary**

(636) 405-1230

[smkrupa@msn.com](mailto:smkrupa@msn.com)

**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.

## MVC Environmental Summit

By Karen Meyer

On Saturday, December 6, Missouri Votes Conservation (MVC) held its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Summit in Columbia, Missouri. Attending were 130 individuals from various organizations, government agencies, and citizen groups from all across the state, including several board members from the St. Louis Audubon Society. The purpose of the summit was to create a common legislative agenda for 2009, educate the attendees and offer opportunities to forge alliances. The main topics were energy/climate policy, factory farms, green building, sand & gravel mining, water pollution, transportation, solid waste reduction, nuclear energy/CWIP (Construction Work in Progress), and energy efficiency.

After overview presentations about each issue area, attendees were asked to choose a topic/breakout group for participation in the development of an action plan. I joined the energy/climate policy group, and our discussions involved a wide range of recommendations for the new governor. Our plan urged that Governor-Elect Nixon sign and fully support the Midwestern Governor's Association Energy Security and Climate Change Platform and the Greenhouse Gas Accord—policy proposals for greenhouse gas reduction targets (<http://www.midwesterngovernors.org/publications.htm>). Governor Blunt chose to support only portions of the Platform and authorized no one to participate in the Accord. Also, the group discussed the need for state legislation to encourage green jobs and advance education for green trades. Missouri is one of only seven states without a residential and commercial building energy code. So, the action plan requested support for an energy code, as well as infrastructure development for clean electricity.

I was encouraged by the depth and breadth of ideas under consideration in just that one session and look forward to future opportunities to be involved in these discussions. This week I learned that a document incorporating all the action plans from the summit has been presented to the governor.

To read more details about the summit and its mission, please visit MVC at <http://www.movotesconservation.org/summit.aspx>. Watch our website/newsletter and stay tuned to MVC during the 2009 legislative session this January through May. Be aware of our local conservation issues and look to get acquainted with your state representatives. Our collective efforts can make this New Year the beginning of a real turn-around for the environment, in general, and greenhouse gas reduction, in particular. ♦

## From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

Happy New Year and welcome 2009! I can hardly believe it, but another year has passed. As we consider the challenges and opportunities for the year to come, it is right to look back and say THANKS to all those that make St. Louis Audubon possible!

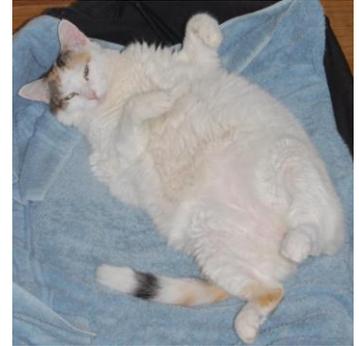
Praise to Vicki Flier, Sharon Nickl, Lisa Nansteel, Nancy Clark, Elizabeth Dix, Cathy Hardebeck, Maureen Conway, Bobbie Poor, Sue Gustafson, David Bruns, Dale Ponce, Dorrie Dee, Bobbie Poor and Pat McCormick of the Education Team for their time and talents.

Many thanks to Karen Meyer, Sue Gustafson, Linda Tossing and the many others that furthered our conservation agenda in 2008.

Much appreciation to Pat Lueders and all the field trip leaders, for braving the elements to show us the birds in and around St. Louis.

Thanks to all those "behind the scenes" folks that

*This is the "Cheyenne" of my personal e-mail address. She is my unpaid home office assistant.*



keep things running smooth like John Solodar, Susan Krupa, Anne Horton, Mary Dueren, to name a few.

Welcome and congratulations to our newest board members, including Tom Bormann, Chris Ferree, Shawn Clubb and Charlie Deutsch!

For those I may not have called out by name, know your contributions are essential and appreciated.

Finally, thanks and praise to Marti Buchanan, Dave Rogles, and Diane Pierce! Their efforts made possible our transition to this electronic newsletter. Changes continue, but the foundation was theirs. Further, many thanks to Diane as she continues to manage our website, nearly unnoticed! ♦

## Field Trips, Etc.

### January 10<sup>th</sup> at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary:

Mike Thelen will lead this half-day trip. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Teal Pond Lot reached via Hwy 367 north from I-270. Turn right on last road before the Alton Bridge—at the Fiska Gas Station. Turn right on the first road after the station to the Teal Pond lot.

### February 7<sup>th</sup> at Riverlands MBS and Columbia Bottom

**CA:** Bill Rowe will lead this full-day trip. Meet at 8 a.m. (note early time) at the Teal Pond lot at Riverlands as noted above.

All field trips are FREE.  
Reservations not required.  
Contact Pat Lueders with questions at (314) 961-6614.



*Mike Grant  
Photo*

### January 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>—Eagle Days

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days.

This annual event, sponsored by MDC, Trailnet and Audubon, is a free, family-friendly celebration of the American Bald Eagle. Live eagle programs are offered every 20 minutes. Spotting scopes and volunteers will be on the bridge helping you see the birds along the River. St. Louis Audubon volunteers will be manning hands-on, kid-friendly exhibits about birds inside the warming tent at the center of the bridge. Refreshments will be available. Bring your binoculars and dress for cold weather. The Old Chain of Rocks Bridge is just south of I-270 via the Riverview Drive exit just west of the Mississippi River.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Mitch Leachman at (314) 599-7390.

*Birdwatcher* from page 1

Style is a word that we can easily use with Roger. All birders know that he invented the Peterson guide to birding by painting a stylized bird with pointers highlighting the bird's main features. When he published his first guidebook "in the height of the great depression" in 1934 (this is almost a mantra in the publishing world), the first printing of two thousand copies sold out in one week. At twenty-five, Roger Tory Peterson became famous in the birding community. Twenty years later with a *Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, his fame spread to Europe. By the time of his death, Peterson was an international celebrity.

Rosenthal, or the people she quotes, explains how this boy of two Swedish immigrants became the most acclaimed illustrator of nature books in the United States and a world famous leader for international conservation. We learn of the young Roger's obsession with bird watching and bird painting, his early connection to what are now the National Audubon Society and its nascent leaders.

What makes me want to hang Peterson's portrait on the wall is not his ability to identify birds in the field better than most. Even in his later years some of the big names in birding were impressed by Roger's "magic ears" (personal aside: over forty years ago, I read an article in Newsweek of a birder who could walk through some woods in eastern Texas in May and just call out the names of all the birds he heard--Roger T. Peterson, of course). Nor is it his ability to illustrate a field guide or even be responsible for all the field guides in the Peterson editions. What impresses the most, and Rosenthal's biography illustrates it well, is Dr. Peterson's untiring and persistent environmental conservation efforts.

Preserving nature and teaching conservation through birds and other means was Roger's real forte. Defending Rachel Carson when the Agricultural industry tried to demean her, fighting to save Midway Atoll for the Laysan Albatross when the military wanted to kill all of the "Gooney

Birds", helping establish and promote the World Wildlife Fund, and being an early promoter for a major national park to be established in the Galapagos Islands are just a few of the major projects that Dr. Peterson engaged in. Furthermore he understood before most that the spraying of DDT was causing the demise of the Osprey and he worked relentlessly to see this chemical banned.

Although Rosenthal focuses on Roger Tory Peterson, the world famous conservationist, she also paints the portrait of Roger at work in his "Old Lyme" studio, on world voyages with Lars Linblad, or engaged with the pursuit of birds for his famous *Birds of America* written with James Fisher. We see what role Roger's three wives played in his success; how his two sons fared growing up with a famous, but somewhat detached father.

You'll be left with the overwhelming impression that Roger Tory Peterson was the "Great Man," as people often referred to him. Elizabeth J. Rosenthal's book may not do him justice, but it serves its purpose. There will be better biographies. She does provide lots of photos of Dr. Peterson. You can hang any one of them on your wall. Hell, hang them all up. ♦

*"What impresses the most...is Dr. Peterson's untiring and persistent environmental conservation efforts."*

## Backyard Bird Festival

Saturday, Feb 7<sup>th</sup> at the Missouri Botanical Garden

Bundle up and bring your binoculars for a bird-watching bonanza! Adults and children of all ages can brush up on their birding skills with guided walks, identification tips, live exhibits, and informative classes for beginners to advanced birders. Birding walks led by St. Louis Audubon. 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. \$18 per person; \$15 Garden members. Pre-registration required; (314) 577-9506 or [www.mobot.org/education](http://www.mobot.org/education).

## Politics and the Environment The 2009 Legislative Needs—State and Federal

Tuesday, January 20, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.  
Powder Valley Nature Center

Liz Forrestal and Jill DeWitt will discuss the environmental issues facing the incoming state and Federal legislatures, respectively, and provide comments about the agenda expected to be presented by conservation advocates. With changes in leadership at both levels of our Government and the growing “green awareness” within our Society, there is potential for great advances to a number of environmental causes.

Liz is the Executive Director of Missouri Votes Conservation, a non-partisan, non-profit dedicated to furthering pro-environment legislation in Missouri. MVC was one of the key organizations behind the Proposition C ballot initiative last November, which set a state renewable energy standard. Liz is a board member of Audubon Missouri and serves on various committees of the U.S. Green Building Council (St. Louis Chapter). She is the founding member of Sustainable St. Louis, a non-profit that works to jumpstart a sustainability plan for the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Jill is president of Burroughs Audubon Society in Kansas City and Community Outreach Policy Coordinator for Audubon Missouri. In the latter position, Jill educates activists and legislators about the impact of climate change in Missouri and is the Audubon voice in state-wide coalition work. Jill also serves as the environmental representative to the Mid-America Regional Council's Air Quality Forum.

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer and cross the bridge to Cragwold Road on your left. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mi. to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance.

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314) 599-7390.

## March of the Penguins Movie and Discussion

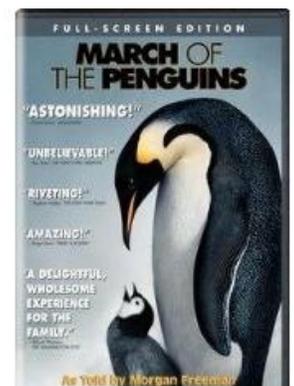
Tuesday, February 17, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.  
Creve Coeur Community Center

Please join us as we show this National Geographic, Academy Award-winning documentary. Morgan Freeman narrates the amazing story of how thousands of Emperor Penguins walk 70 miles into Antarctica to breed their young every year. This 80 minute movie is free to all and will be followed by a few comments and a Q&A session with Rick Smith, St. Louis Zoo Keeper in the Penguin/Puffin House.

The Emperor Penguin, at nearly 4 feet and over 70 pounds, is the largest of the world's penguin species. It is also the most ice-adapted—making it especially vulnerable to the effects of global warming. One colony is estimated to have declined by 70 percent in the last 40 years. On Dec 18, the Department of the Interior declined to list the Emperor as a threatened species while it proposed listing for seven other penguin species less-dependent on the South Polar ice cap.

Rick Smith has over 20 years of experience working with penguins, puffins and other bird species. He has published several papers and spent four summers with National Audubon's Project Puffin. Most recently, Rick supported the Center for Conservation of the Humboldt Penguin in Punta San Juan, Peru.

This is our annual joint meeting with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. From I-270 and Ladue, go east on Ladue, left at the light at New Ballas, go ¼ mile north to the Creve Coeur Government Center at 300 N. New Ballas. Community Center is in the northwest corner of the lower level (closest to Olive and Ballas). Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314)-599-7390.



## Fall and Early Winter Birding Report

By Pat Lueders

Thank you to all of the St. Louis Audubon (SLAS) field trip leaders who donated their time and shared their expertise in leading our birding trips this year to many locations throughout the state!

St. Louis Audubon sponsored and SLAS leaders led six field trips to a variety of habitats during the months of November and December. Usually, more than 15 members and guests enjoyed the camaraderie of birding our local areas with old and new friends while learning even more about our birds and their habitats.

November 1, John Solodar substituted for Paul Bauer and led a group to Horseshoe Lake in Illinois. The duck migration was late this fall and few live ducks could be found amongst the decoys. Gulls were also scarce during this trip, but a nice variety of sparrows were found near the borrow pit area.

Joe Eades led a group of 16 birders to Southwest Missouri during the weekend of October 31–November 2. The group enjoyed unseasonably warm weather and had great birding on the prairies of the extreme western part of the state. The target birds were Sprague's Pipit, Harris Sparrow, and Greater Prairie Chicken, and all three species were seen by the group. Other good finds were Short-eared Owls, LeConte's Sparrows, Vesper Sparrows, Pine Siskins, a very unusual Golden-crowned Kinglet, and many raptors. Joining our out-of-town trips is a great way to learn other birding spots around the state and to enjoy getting to know other birders.

SLAS has five field trips on Wednesdays this year, and the November 12 trip was to Riverlands and Columbia Bottom CA. The excitement of the trip was the discovery of a Northern Shrike at Columbia Bottom by the leaders. The shrike continued to be seen regularly for a few weeks after its discovery.

On November 15, Mike Thelen led a group of hardy birders to Busch/Weldon Springs on a cold, rainy morning. Some of the more interesting birds included: a rusty Blackbird, 5 Bald Eagles, Eastern Towhees, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, Brown Creepers, and 14 Fox Sparrows at Blue Grosbeak Trail.

December 6 was a car pool trip up HWY 79 to B.K. Leach CA and other birding spots such as the Winfield Dam area. Our most plentiful species were Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagles, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and Wilson's Snipe. There was an unusual sighting of 4 Great Egrets at B.K. Leach and 3 Least Sandpipers at Sandy Slough. The totals for this trip can be seen on the CACHE report at [www.mobirds.org](http://www.mobirds.org).

On December 13, our last trip of the year was led by Mike Thelen to Riverlands. This trip there were large numbers of gulls, swans, geese and ducks—what a difference a month makes. We studied a flock of over 170 swans and found at least 6 Tundra Swans among the Trumpeters. We sorted Cackling Geese and one Greater-white Fronted Goose out of the large group of Canadas. Other birds of interest included Bonaparte Gulls, Baltimore Orioles, and 3 species of mergansers.

Field trips for 2009 begin January 10 at Riverlands. Please consult the listings in this newsletter, [www.stlouisaudubon.org](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org) for our calendar, or the trip notices posted to Mobirds for details. All are welcome to join us on our free trips. We provide this service to help familiarize all those interested with the best birding spots in the state and to acquaint them with local birders. We hope you can join us in 2009! ♦

*LeConte's Sparrow Watching at Sunrise in Prairie State Park*



## Scholarship Funding Highest Ever

By Lynne Breakstone

Education has been a hallmark of National Audubon since the beginning, and St. Louis Audubon (SLAS) has been no exception. Our Education Team has provided free, in-class programs to over 20,000 grade school children in the last eight years. The field trip committee has continually expanded their offerings to over 30 guided walks this year alone. Finally, the monthly speaker series offers information on numerous bird- and wildlife-related topics to the public. However, the Chapter's founders and leaders chose to go much further and actively assist students and teachers with their studies and training. Our scholarship program has grown in recent years to become the single largest program element for the Society at nearly \$11,000 this fiscal year.

The SLAS scholarship program supports graduate students, teacher training and recognition of exceptional achievement at the high school level. The graduate scholarship awards have recently been expanded to include a separate award for specific work in Latin America, and they collectively total nearly \$9,000. The traditional graduate award is offered to students enrolled in a graduate program at a university in the St. Louis area conducting research on tropical or temperate bird populations, bird ecology, bird migration or conservation of birds and their habitat. The new Latin America award is designed to support graduate field work in the countries where the neotropical migratory birds that breed in Missouri spend their winters including Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, Costa Rica and southern Mexico.

SLAS support for teacher training has been focused on scholarships to area environmental education instructors and youth leaders to the Audubon Ecology Camps in Maine, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Unfortunately the Hog Island Camp in Maine will not be offering programming in 2009. While the Scholarship Team reviews their options for support of teacher training in the future, we invite science educators to contact Julie Leeman at (636) 861-1490 to discuss possibilities for summer 2009. We are open to suggestions regarding other quality summer programs. Finally, the Chapter provides a small financial award to an exemplary high school student who plans further study in ecology, biology or related fields.

Now is the time for consideration of scholarship applications. Deadlines vary by specific award, but submissions are typically required in early March. If you or someone you know is interested and potentially eligible for any of these awards, please contact Lynne Breakstone at (314) 726-4772 or visit our website at

[www.stlouisaudubon.org](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org). ♦

*"Our scholarship program has grown in recent years...nearly \$11,000 this fiscal year."*

### Call for Award Nominations

St. Louis Audubon has been recognizing outstanding achievement in the environmental conservation and education arenas for many years. Past recipients include standouts within the chapter and our greater St. Louis community, including:

Leo & Kay Drey

Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay

Jim Holsen

Nikki Davenport

Owen Sexton

Vicki Flier

Bruce Schuette

Nominations are now being accepted for our 2009 honorees in the categories of:

Outstanding Volunteer

Outstanding Educator

Outstanding Conservationist

Outstanding Legislator

Robert J. Terry Lifetime Achievement

Please submit a written summary of your nomination by March 1<sup>st</sup> to Lynne Breakstone at 7220 Princeton, St. Louis MO 63130.

## Songbird Banding Project to Start 8<sup>th</sup> Season

By Linda Tossing

Ever wondered what it was like to hold a live bird? Have you wished to participate in bird science projects, but felt ill-equipped? Do you have more than a casual interest in the banding of birds? If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, please read on. You may find the World Bird Sanctuary (WBS) Songbird Population Study is just right for you!

The WBS Field Studies Department began their Bird Population Study in 2002. The purpose is to identify the regular songbird residents found on the sanctuary property during each season of the year and the occasional visitors who stop by during migration. This also provides an education and training opportunity for future field biologists from local schools and universities. Bird banding is one of four data collection methods used to support the study (others include census, Project Feeder Watch and nest box study).

Bird banding data are useful in both research and management projects. Individual identification of birds makes possible studies of dispersal and migration, behavior and social structure, life-span and survival rate, reproductive success and population growth. Such baseline information is essential to the identification of critical habitat and species of conservation concern and to evaluate the results of previous actions. With the limited resources for research and management, bird banding data helps agencies focus their efforts where it is most needed or likely to succeed.

Good banding data requires consistency and plenty of dedicated volunteers! Every Thursday morning from March 19<sup>th</sup> thru October, a team of no less than four gives 5–6 hours each to the project at the WBS, adjacent to Lone Elk Park. Their hours vary from 4 am to 12 noon (due to sunrise) most of the month, except for the once a month Thursday evening session. Activities include mist net setup and tear down, removal of birds from the nets, banding, data collection and recording. Not everyone can make it every week and some have pursued other interests.

So, new team members are always in need.

Two sequential training workshops will be held at the Sanctuary: February 12<sup>th</sup> from 12 noon to 4 pm and Feb 26<sup>th</sup> from 8 am to 12 noon. No prior experience is required, but your interest and commitment are essential. The interaction with birds alone is amazing, but being an active part of their conservation is tremendous!

[For more information or to sign up for the workshop, call Linda at \(314\) 849-4260.](#)

The handling of birds by its nature carries risks for individual birds. All banding activities, including the WBS Songbird Study, are governed by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and administered by the Bird Banding Laboratory at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. For general information regarding bird banding, see <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/>. ♦

*Less than 1,000  
Master banding  
permits exist  
outside  
government  
agencies and  
academia*



Colleen Crank Photos



## Join the Great Backyard Bird Count

From a news release on [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org)

Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), February 13–16, 2009.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this free event is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, schoolyards, and local parks, and, at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online.

Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online. Participants can also explore what birds others are finding in their backyards—whether in their own neighborhood or thousands of miles away. Further online resources include tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators. In addition to entering their tallies, participants submit thousands of digital images for the GBBC photo contest. Many are featured in the popular online gallery.

The data these “citizen scientists” collect helps researchers understand bird population trends, information that is critical for effective conservation. Their efforts enable everyone to see what would otherwise be impossible: a comprehensive picture of where birds are in late winter and how their numbers and distribution compare with previous years. In 2008, participants submitted more than 85,000 checklists.

“The GBBC has become a vital link in the arsenal of continent-wide bird-monitoring projects,” said Cornell Lab of Ornithology director, John Fitzpatrick.

To participate, simply click on <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html> and follow the steps. ◆

## “American Wind Wildlife Institute” Will Set New Cooperative Action on U.S. Wind Energy Development

Press Release: November 19, 2008

AUSTIN, TX – In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, 20 of the nation’s top science-based conservation and environmental groups and wind energy companies have created a national institute to facilitate timely and responsible development of wind energy while protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat. The institute will do this through research, mapping, mitigation and public education on best practices in wind farm siting and habitat protection.

Scientific, conservation and wind industry leaders believe that wind energy must play an important role in combating climate change. Understanding that wind power is already one of the cleanest and most commercially viable energy sources, AWWI will help the industry serve as an example for other energy sectors by proactively addressing potential biodiversity impacts as wind energy is more widely deployed.

The seven non-profit founding organizations of AWWI, which have members in all 50 states, represent more than 4.3 million members nationwide. These founding groups include: Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club and Union of Concerned Scientists.

“The expansion of wind power in the United States is essential to reduce heat-trapping emissions and limit the impacts of global warming on our nation’s wildlife,” said Dr. Peter Frumhoff, AWWI board member and Director of Science and Policy at the Union of Concerned Scientists. “Our new institute will work to ensure that wind power and wildlife can both thrive.” ◆

Full text of the P/R <http://www.awwi.org/news.php>.

### St. Louis Audubon Society Donation Form

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

Your support will allow us to maintain and expand our efforts in the St. Louis Metro Area. All our programs are free to the public. Thank you very much for your past support!

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 63043

Education Only

Conservation Only

International Efforts Only

General Fund--Unrestricted

Contributions are Tax Deductible

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.stlouisaudubon.org](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org)

St. Louis Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 220227  
St. Louis, MO 63043



Customer Name  
Street Address  
City, ST ZIP Code