

# 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

FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 815 AM

Special walk just for the new and/or casual watchers.

For info contact Chris at [birding@forestparkforever.org](mailto:birding@forestparkforever.org).

### **EAGLE DAYS—PAGE 6**

OLD CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE

9A TO 3P, SATURDAY/SUNDAY JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> & 16<sup>TH</sup>

DETAILS: [HTTP://CONFLUENCEGREENWAY.ORG/EAGLEDAYS.PHP](http://confluencegreenway.org/eagledays.php)

### **BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3**

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>

### **JANUARY PROGRAM—GREAT HORNED OWLS—PAGE 4**

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER

TUESDAY JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup> AT 7 PM

### **9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT—PAGE 6**

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, COLUMBIA

SUNDAY JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup> FROM 9A TO 330P

### **AUDUBON/WGNSS OPEN HOUSE—PAGE 6**

THE GREEN CENTER AT 8025 BLACKBERRY IN UNIVERSITY CITY

SUNDAY JANUARY 30<sup>TH</sup> FROM 130P TO 4P

### **BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3**

RIVERLANDS & COLUMBIA BOTTOM

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>

### **BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3**

BALDWIN LAKE, ILLINOIS

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>

### **FEBRUARY PROGRAM—URBAN BIRD SANCTUARY—PG 4**

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 7 PM

### **BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3**

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>

### **2011 AWARDS DINNER & SILENT AUCTION—PAGE 7**

ORLANDO GARDENS AT 8352 WATSON RD

SATURDAY, MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup>

### **NATURE WALKS FOR KIDS**

SUSPENDED FOR THE WINTER, BUT WILL RESUME IN MARCH. SEE THE FEBRUARY *TALEFEATHERS* FOR A DETAILED SCHEDULE.

### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Missouri Prairie Management | 2 |
| From the Director           | 3 |
| Field Trip Details          | 3 |
| Monthly Programs            | 4 |
| Field Trip Reports          | 5 |
| Other Events                | 6 |
| 2011 Awards Dinner          | 7 |

## Urban Bird Sanctuary

By Lynne Breakstone

U City in Bloom (UCB) is an organization which has, for the past 25 years, established and maintained over 300 public gardens—thanks to countless hours from hundreds of dedicated volunteers. UCB is now very pleased to announce the creation of a new Bird Sanctuary Garden located in the court yard space behind the Centennial Commons in University City's Heman Park.

Last spring large areas of soil were prepared and a variety of native grasses, shrubs and trees were planted. They have thrived in spite of the summer's heat and lack of rain, and last fall more areas of the courtyard soil were worked. We are also excited to be complying with the recent recommendations of the city's Green Practices Committee (GPC) which encourages the replacement of nonnative invasive species (such as Bush honeysuckle, Autumn Olive and Tall Fescue) with native plants suited to our climate and habitat.

Another important recommendation of the GPC is that of creating wildlife-friendly environments. The Bird Garden will have bird feeders, bird houses, a water supply, and plants which offer protection and food for birds and other wild creatures that live in the park. If you wish to help in the creation of a Bird Garden in your community, or in your yard, you are welcome to contact Lynne Breakstone at (314) 726-4772 or Mary Ann Shaw at (314) 727-3587 for suggestions. ♦

## 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)

### Lisa Nansteel, VP Education

(636) 391-4898

### Craig Lanham, VP Conservation

(314) 882-9763

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

### Jim Wilson, VP Finance

(314) 367-7275, ext 20

[wilsonjh@umsl.edu](mailto:wilsonjh@umsl.edu)

### John Solodar, Treasurer

(314) 862-5294

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

### Sharon Nickl, Secretary

(636) 391-8751

[nicklone@swbell.net](mailto:nicklone@swbell.net)

### 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.

# Concerns with State Management of Hi-Quality Missouri Prairies

By Dave Tylka

A management controversy has arisen between some conservation organizations and individuals and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). MDC is using a management tool called patch-burn cattle grazing (PBCG) on 11 of the state's prairies. A three-year preliminary study by MDC biologists Brent Jamison and Malissa Underwood claims that PBCG helps prairie bird populations (especially greater prairie chickens and upland sandpipers) and, of course, beef production. Retired MDC Natural History administrator Don Kurz claims that the Jamison and Underwood study contains several flaws and does not address other important ecological aspects such as prairie biodiversity and water quality, as well as the adverse effects of cattle grazing. Kurz has prepared his own report on the degradation of the high-quality prairie remnants by PBCG.

MDC plans to expand PBCG to 8 additional Missouri prairies next year. The Missouri Native Plant Society has recommended that MDC suspend PBCG on the prairies designated as natural areas that the Department manages. The SLAS Conservation Committee is studying PBCG, hopes to offer input to MDC about this issue in the future, and will report back to our membership in subsequent newsletter articles. To help our committee scientifically analyze PBCG, I have written a letter to MDC Director Bob Ziehmer asking for site selection criteria and access to their study data on plant and bird responses to PBCG.

If you are interested in obtaining copies of these two conflicting reports and studying the PBCG issue on your own, contact the MDC central office at (573) 751-4115 for a copy of the Jamison and Underwood report. If you Google the keywords "prairies, patch-burn cattle grazing and Kurz" online, the Kurz report should appear so you can download it.

Temperate grasslands are the most endangered terrestrial biomes in the world. Less than 4% of America's tallgrass prairies remain. Missouri once had 15 million acres of prairie; less than 50,000 acres remain (about 0.3% of 1% of pre-settlement prairies). Most of these remaining prairies are low- to mid-quality. MDC manages about 64 areas that contain approximately 13,000 acres of the few remaining high-quality prairies in our state. As responsible stewards, we all want to manage these high-quality prairie remnants using the most sustainable management strategies available to protect these living museums of biodiversity for future generations. ◆

## From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

Happy New Year to you, your family and friends! It is that time of year where we reflect on the past and look to the future for hope and opportunity. Often that forward thinking takes the shape of personal resolutions to overcome an obstacle or accomplish something. I ask that you reserve at least one of those vows for the birds—something you can do to positively affect the birds in our area.

While contributions to the Chapter or National Audubon are greatly appreciated and will, of course, support bird conservation and education efforts, consider something more direct and perhaps personal. Consider reaching out to a friend or relative with bird feeding information. Share with them the joys you experience and the simple ways in which they can participate. Consider participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count this year—February 18–21—or involving others if you're a veteran of the Count ([www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)).

Consider assessing your house for bird hazards, especially window strikes. Some 1 billion birds die each year in North America due to collisions with windows—a surface that birds either do not see at all or in which they see a reflection of habitat or the sky. If you know you have a problem window, check with your local bird/feed/farm supply store for simple and cheap devices to keep birds away. Sometimes simply keeping the blinds or shades drawn alters the window's appearance enough. Also, hanging reflective ribbon or devices (like old CDs) outside and in front of the window can sufficiently distract the birds. My own experience with a single, diagonal reflective ribbon across half of my patio door reduced the almost daily impacts to very rare. Visit [http://web4.audubon.org/bird/at\\_home/SafeWindows.html](http://web4.audubon.org/bird/at_home/SafeWindows.html) for more info.

Consider creating, or expanding your existing, backyard bird habitat by planting native trees, shrubs and other perennials. This can be one of the most enjoyable projects you ever undertake in your yard. Finches and sparrows feeding on the seed heads of coneflower and aster; mockingbirds, robins and waxwings plucking the fruit from pokeweed and beautyberry; and so much more! Make a plan and start small. The birds will find your bounty no matter where you live. There are many resources to help get you started, but perhaps the best online is [www.grownative.org](http://www.grownative.org), complete with a reference guide to other websites, resources and publications.

There are many other ways you can resolve to personally support the birds—be creative and let us know about your efforts. Drop us an e-mail or phone call (or a post on our Facebook page). For me, I intend to add several new natives to my flower beds this spring—perhaps even a trumpet vine for the hummingbirds.

Thanks for all that you do and best wishes for a bird-healthy 2011! ◆

## Field Trips, Etc.

**Jan 15<sup>th</sup> to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary:** Half day trip led by Dave Rogles that meets at 9 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.

**Feb 5<sup>th</sup> to Riverlands & Columbia Bottom:** All day trip led by Bill Rowe that meets at 8 am. A very good trip for beginners. Follow Jan 15<sup>th</sup> directions.

**Feb 12<sup>th</sup> to Baldwin Lake, Illinois:** All day trip led by Torrey Berger 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 19<sup>th</sup> to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary:** All day trip led by Joe Eades that meets at 8 am. Follow directions for Jan 15<sup>th</sup> trip.

All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required, unless noted—consult our website for details. Contact Pat Lueders with general questions at (314) 359-9364.

## Forest Park's Great Horned Owls

*Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm*

Our monthly programs resume at the Forest Park Visitor Center on January 18<sup>th</sup> with a special program on the Great Horned Owl. Mark Glenshaw, an amateur naturalist and enthusiast, will share inside stories about his observations of a Great Horned Owl pair in Forest Park.

Mark has been watching the pair for over four years and leading many owl prowls in the park. His pictures and interesting tales reveal the pair's habits and behaviors while raising yearly broods. His passion has led to much research on the species in general, and by the end of the evening you will understand his fascination with this amazing predator.

The Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor Center, at 5595 Grand Drive, is just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere. The program will be held in the Learning Lab. Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314) 599-7390.



## The Rescue & Recovery of Injured Songbirds

*Tuesday February 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm*

Carol Kershner, founder and Executive Director of Wild Bird Rehabilitation in Overland, will present an informative and entertaining program about her organization's efforts with our small, native birds at the Forest Park Visitor Center on February 15<sup>th</sup>. Founded in 1992, WBR is the only organization in eastern Missouri that cares for small native birds. Since they began, over 40,000 injured and orphaned birds have been received by the group's volunteer staff.

Prior to setting out on her own, Carol was the Avian Director and Volunteer Coordinator at Missouri Wildlife Rescue. Carol is a member of the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association and has been a speaker at its national convention. Carol received a bachelor of arts from Lewis & Clark College in Oregon and holds an associate degree in Non Profit Management from Washington University.

The Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor Center, at 5595 Grand Drive, is just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere. The program will be held in the Learning Lab. Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314) 599-7390. ◆



*Red-bellied Woodpecker in recovery*

*WBR Photo*

## Trip Report from Riverlands

By Pat Lueders

Bill Rowe was a good sport to lead eight rain-drenched birders around Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (RMBS) on Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. When we arrived at 8 am, there were large number of birds in all the bodies of water, but they moved off as it got later in the morning. We started at Teal Pond and two Snow Geese flew over vocalizing, one white and one blue. There was also a large number of Common Goldeneye, a few Hooded Mergansers, Mallards and one Shoveler.

The largest number of ducks was in the bay near Ellis Island. We were surprised that we could not find a Cackling Goose in with the hundreds of Canada. We saw Trumpeter Swans, Greater White-fronted Geese, Gadwall, a few Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Bufflehead, Ringed-neck Duck, Canvasback, large numbers of Common Goldeneye and Mallards, one Common Merganser, and a few Ruddy Ducks between the rain showers both there and in Ellis Bay near the river.

We were also surprised that the museum at the lock & dam was closed, but there is a shelter with a roof just south of there that was convenient to use to scope the gulls on the walls of the lock. We could only find Herring and Ring-billed. We saw at least three Bald Eagles during the morning, one Harrier and a Kestrel.

We called it a morning when it began to pour around 11 am. Two Pied-billed Grebes at Lincoln Shields ended the day. ◆



### At the Dining Room Window

by Karen B. Meyer

While watching winter juncos, finches, and sparrows,  
 Away from a tree sailed a tiny, white thing,  
 Intent like an arrow,  
 Horizontal, fairy-like, it flew across the water.  
 This magical season, what could it be  
 Moving so bird-like over my sea?  
 Memories of butterflies, dragonflies, moths,  
 I wondered what nature mysteriously brought.  
 Close to my window but too quick to know  
 I pondered, but no, it couldn't be snow.  
 No other snowflakes, and so straight it flew  
 While the wind barely blew.  
 Then I spotted a sparrow, white feather in beak  
 Carefully carrying its prize toward the peak  
 Of a sheltering cedar tree.  
 Guess it must be,  
 My fairy was only a feather t'was lost  
 One that a sparrow likely had tossed  
 To the wind on a cold winter's day.  
 I'm happy that feathers can take me away,  
 And I'm still believing—there could be angels.

Top: Hooded Mergansers  
 Bottom: Northern Harrier

Photos by Al Smith

## Mid-Winter Open House

Come One, Come All!

*St. Louis Audubon  
Webster Groves Nature Study Society*

**Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>  
1:30 pm to 4:00 pm**

Bring a dish. Beverages will be provided.  
Door prizes will be given.

**The Green Center  
8025 Blackberry Avenue  
University City**

From I-170, take Delmar east 4 stop lights  
to North and South Road. Turn left and  
left again on Blackberry.

## 9th Annual Statewide Environmental Summit

Saturday, January 22nd, 2011  
Anheuser-Busch Natural Resources Building  
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO  
9:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.  
*Registration Begins at 8:30 a.m.*

Join MVC Education Fund and leaders from  
Missouri's diverse environmental and  
conservation communities at the Summit, where  
we will discuss key issues facing the state and  
map our common agenda for the upcoming  
legislative session.

For complete details, including online  
registration visit  
<http://www.movotesconservation.org/MVC/EFsummit.aspx>.

## Eagle Days at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge

**9 am to 3 pm, January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>**

Residents of the bi-state area are invited to view bald eagles this January at Eagle Days – a free public program at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge. During the winter, the Mississippi River hosts one of North America's largest concentrations of bald eagles, who are drawn to areas of open water in search of fish, their preferred food. The Chain of Rocks rapids to the south of the Bridge are ideal fishing grounds. From the Bridge, an ideal viewing platform, visitors can watch eagles fishing, riding ice floes, soaring overhead or roosting in nearby trees.

### Live Eagle Educational Program

Repeated every 20 minutes from 10:00 a.m. until 2:40 p.m.

### Viewing Scopes

Special scopes on the Bridge allow close-up views of eagles

### St. Louis Audubon Display

Featuring hands-on children's activities and exhibits of local birds

### Lewis and Clark Re-enactors

At both the Illinois and Missouri Bridge entrances, featuring models of Lewis and Clark's Pirogue

**Parking:** Free parking is available at two satellite lots in Missouri, the St. Louis Welcome Center at Riverview and I-270 and North Riverfront Park, off of Riverview south of the waterworks. A free shuttle will be available from both locations. Free parking is also available at the Illinois Bridge entrance. Parking at the Missouri Bridge entrance costs \$5.

St. Louis Audubon Society  
**2011 Awards Dinner & Silent Auction**  
 Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>

**PEG ABBOTT, THE TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY**



We are pleased to announce our 2011 Awards Dinner will take place at Orlando Gardens at 8352 Watson Road in Webster Groves on Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. Awards will be presented for Conservation, Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Volunteer, and Lifetime Achievement. The evening will conclude with our keynote speaker, Peg Abbott, Outreach Coordinator for The Trumpeter Swan Society. Peg will lead a discussion and presentation on the conservation history and current status of the Trumpeter Swan—North America’s largest waterfowl and one of our rarest native birds.

After many decades of commercial and subsistence hunting, the Trumpeter Swan was nearly extinct in 1900. Only a few hundred individuals remained in the remote valleys of the northern Rockies, Alaska and western Canada. With complete protection and heroic intervention, 3,700 birds were counted in the 1968 rangewide survey—the same year The Trumpeter Swan Society was founded to unite public and private efforts to restore sustaining populations of the Swans.

Trumpeters today still suffer mortality due to the ingestion of lead, powerline collisions, loss of habitat and illegal shooting. While populations have increased dramatically, recovery is still in progress, and they are listed yellow on the 2007 Audubon Watchlist and extirpated in the state by the Missouri Department of Conservation. The Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton harbors one of the largest wintering populations of the birds in the Midwest. The long-term future of this magnificent bird is dependent upon places like Riverlands, people like Peg and the collective will and determination of all of us.

Please join us for Peg’s engaging presentation of this amazing conservation success story in-progress.

6:00 p.m.—Registration / Open Bar / Silent Auction Begins

7:00 p.m.—Dinner Service and Award Presentations

8:30 p.m.—Keynote Presentation by Peg Abbott

The cost is just \$25 per person. Reservations are required—please use the form below.

Orlando Gardens is at 8352 Watson Road in the General Grant Shopping Center in Webster Groves, about one-half mile west of Laclede Station Road and one mile from I-44 and the Elm Avenue exit. ♦

**Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Awards Dinner Registration Form**

Please mail this form or a copy by February 20<sup>th</sup> with payment to: St. Louis Audubon at P.O. Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122. Make checks payable to **St. Louis Audubon Society**. If you would prefer to pay by credit card, visit our website to register online, [www.stlouisaudubon.org](http://www.stlouisaudubon.org).

|         |                                      |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| _____   | \$25.00 x _____ = _____              |
| Name(s) | Fee            No.    Total Enclosed |

## St. Louis Audubon Society Annual 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. Please visit our website or contact us for a copy of our most recent Annual Report. Nearly all programs are staffed by volunteers, and we constantly review our budget to reduce expenses and maximize our efficiency.

\$250    \$100    \$50    \$30    Other\_\_\_\_\_

Your past support has made much of our success possible, and we need your support again. If you share our passion for birds, and connecting kids and our communities to Nature through them, please send in your gift today.

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

1/11

**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