

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

FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 8:30 A.M.

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

www.stlouisaudubon.org or (314) 367-7275

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BUSCH MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

SATURDAY MAR 7TH AT 5P

WOODCOCK AND OWL PROWL

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3 (BEGINNERS ONLY)

BUSCH MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

SATURDAY MAR 21ST AT 3P

WOODCOCK AND OWL PROWL--RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BK LEACH CONSERVATION AREA

SATURDAY MAR 21ST AT 8A

ALL DAY TRIP W/CARPOOL OPTION IN SEARCH OF WATERFOWL.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

HORSESHOE LAKE STATE PARK, ILLINOIS

SATURDAY MAR 28TH AT 8A

ALL DAY TRIP INCLUDING RIVERLANDS MBS AT ALTON.

MARCH PROGRAM—PAGE 5

CREVE COEUR COMMUNITY CENTER

THURSDAY MAR 26TH AT 7:30 P.M.

HOW TO BIRD BY EAR BY BOB BAILEY

JOINT PROGRAM WITH THE SIERRA CLUB

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

VOELKERDING SLOUGH AT BUSCH CA

WEDNESDAY APR 1ST AT 9A

HALF DAY TRIP IN SEARCH OF EARLY SPRING MIGRANTS.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3—BEGINNER FRIENDLY

MALLARD LAKE TRAIL AT CREVE COEUR LAKE PARK

SATURDAY APR 4TH AT 8A

HALF DAY TRIP IN SEARCH OF EARLY SPRING MIGRANTS.

ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER—PAGE 11

ORLANDO GARDENS, MARYLAND HEIGHTS

SATURDAY, APRIL 11--\$25 PER PERSON

AWARDS PRESENTED FOR OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR,

VOLUNTEER AND CONSERVATIONIST.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER JIM MALLMAN, PRESIDENT OF WATCHABLE

WILDLIFE, INC.

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Ducks of the St. Louis Area

by Connie Alwood

Odd ducks: On Saturday, January 13, 2001 over fifty birders, many from out of town, were gathered under the Clark Bridge on the Missouri side of the Mississippi River looking at a rare duck for the St. Louis area, the Barrow's Goldeneye, when seemingly out of nowhere a strange almost completely white duck with a few black stripes and a black mask appeared. Although most of the onlookers were experienced birders, many did not recognize the Smew, for it is a Eurasian species, not even seen on either coast of the United States. The Smew stayed for a couple of weeks, allowing birders throughout the country to come see this unexpected duck.

Status of ducks in the area: Thirty-two ducks have been reported in the St. Louis area. Yet, only twenty ducks are commonly seen every year here. Or to put it in another way, we see approximately one-fifth of the world's ducks every year. The Eurasian Wigeon, Garganey, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Smew, Fulvous Whistling and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks are accidental in the St. Louis Area with only a few sightings of these rarities. The Cinnamon Teal, the three scoters—Surf, White-winged and Black—and the Long-tailed duck are also rare; however, the

Please see *Ducks* on page 4

Board Meetings

Open to All. 1st 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.

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Newsletter

TaleFeathers is published monthly.

For submissions, comments or corrections, contact Mitch Leachman as noted above.

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park

By Karen Meyer

Second in a Series

In the first installment of this series, I reviewed the history of Creve Coeur Park in general and ended with a description of the Park as an Important Bird Area. The wetland areas south of Hwy 364, collectively referred to as Little Creve Coeur Lake (LCCL) are a primary reason for the IBA designation and this article will discuss the current status of the area.

The main body of water in the area, known as the Marsh or Little Lake (area A on the graphic below), was historically a part of the Missouri River. Yet, numerous flood control, road, and stormwater projects have basically cut this area off from natural run-off sources. This, as well as dry weather patterns, has contributed to the encroachment of cottonwood and willow on the site. A consistent water source would help keep these woody species in check. The St Louis Audubon Society, in partnership with Webster Groves Nature Society, recently pursued a grant to improve the LCCL marsh. The grant would fund installation of a well and solar pump, creating a permanent water source for marsh and much of the surrounding area.

The Memetonwish Wetlands in the northwestern corner of the park (area B on the graphic below), just south of the River Valley Drive overpass, were the result of a trade with the Howard Bend Levee District. The District needed fill dirt and the Park had a wetlands plan

Please see *Creve Coeur* on page 7



Creve Coeur Park Little Creve Coeur Lake Area

- Area A**
Little Lake March
- Area B**
Memetonwish Wetlands
- Area C**
MoDOT Mitigation Project
- Area D**
Maryland Heights Mitigation Project
- Area E**
Wetland Reserve Project

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

Create a community connection to nature through education and conservation. I have written that statement many times, as I should, since it is St. Louis Audubon's mission statement. It captures the essence of why we exist. Note, however, that birds are not even mentioned. They seem to be the focus of much of what we do, yet they are actually just the "hook," as Torrey Berger has often said. They can make our heart flutter, and they sometimes seem to be the essence of life itself! Still, our work may be *for* them, but it is *about* so much more. Clean water, clean air, healthy ecosystems, healthy children.

Working for a healthy environment, for us inspired by the miracle that is a bird, cannot be done alone. The Chapter has a long history of collaboration with many conservation organizations. That will not change and will hopefully grow stronger. Yet, I am afraid it will not be enough. The challenges facing us are so great that we must seek support and partnership everywhere possible. So, consider two more mission statements:

- Conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds
- Conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl

While these statements are somewhat more specific than our own, they too refer to the broader needs of the environment including *habitat*, *watersheds* and *wetlands*. The former is that of Trout Unlimited and the latter belongs to Ducks Unlimited. Perhaps like me, and our feature author Connie Alwood, you see a lot of common ground with our own mission.

These are just two of the many "sport" organizations that have contributed greatly to habitat conservation over the last fifty or so years. I know many folks who hunt and many more that enjoy fishing, and I believe they share essentially the same conservation ethic as we do. Further, I am looking forward to Jim Mallman's discussion at our Annual Dinner and his experiences with diverse user groups. Finally, I hope you agree with me that collaboration with these organizations would be good for all of us, especially the birds. ♦

Field Trips, Etc.

March 7th at Busch Conservation Area: John Solodar will lead this evening trip for owls & woodcock. Meet at 5 p.m. (note late time) at the Hampton Lake parking lot. In St. Charles County, take Hwy 94 south from Hwy 40. At the signal, turn right on Hwy D. Go 1.5 miles to entrance on right. Turn left at the T-intersection. The parking lot will be on the right.

March 21st at Busch Conservation Area: Josh Uffman will lead this beginners only trip for owls & woodcock. Meet at 3 p.m. (please note time) at the Hampton Lake parking lot as noted above. Reservations are required. Contact Josh at 314-387-8037 or at birdsandbugs@sbcglobal.net.

March 21st at BK Leach Conservation Area in Lincoln County: Pat Lueders will lead this all day trip. Meet at 8 a.m. in St. Charles County at the intersection of I-70 and Hwy 79. Carpooling will be offered there. On the southwest side of the interchange is a

Dierberg's. Please collect in the southeast corner of the parking lot.

March 28th at Horseshoe Lake and Riverlands MBS: Paul Bauer will lead this all day trip to Horseshoe Lake State Park in Illinois and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary near Alton. Take I-70 east across the Poplar Bridge. Exit at Hwy 111 (exit 6) and turn left. The Park entrance is about 2 miles. Meet at the first parking lot on the right.

April 1st at Voelkerding Slough at Busch CA: Pat Lueders will lead this half day trip. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Hampton Lake parking lot as noted above.

April 4th at Mallard Lake Trail at Creve Coeur Park: Mary Dueren will lead this half day drip. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Lakehouse Café parking lot.

All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required, unless noted. Contact Pat Lueders with questions at (314) 359-9364.

Ducks from page 1

St. Louis area has some exceptionally good birders. Every year one of them finds at least one or two of these duck species, alerting the rest of the birding community to their location.

What are ducks: Ducks, along with geese and swans, are included in the waterfowl family (called wildfowl in Britain). Hunting of these birds is regulated by both federal and state agencies. For our purposes, ducks are usually divided between dabblers and divers. Most dabblers upend themselves, or duck their heads under water and feed on vegetation or they skim the

surface, straining food through their wide bills. Most dabblers will also feed on land, walking along gleaning seed heads. Dabbling ducks have the ability to get airborne from a sitting position, exploding out of the water. It stands to reason that these “puddle ducks,” as they are often called, prefer marshes and shallow pools.

Divers are usually fishers, pursuing their prey with strong swimming. Their feet are usually closer to the tail, allowing them to swim faster under water. Unlike dabblers, they do not explode out of the water. Instead, they run on the water a short distance, flapping their wings as they do so before becoming airborne. Most of the divers are sea ducks, living near coastal waters or, like the eiders, spending a great deal of time out to sea. They are seldom seen walking on land.

All ducks have large heads, usually flat bills, long necks, heavy bodies and, of course, webbed feet. By nature, they live in a variety of aquatic environments. The males are usually brilliantly plumaged while the females’ cryptic plumage allows them perfect camouflage on the nest. Both males and females, however, have a bright speculum on their wings. In late summer the males lose their brilliant breeding plumage and become dull like the females. They undergo this “eclipse” plumage in order to disguise themselves while their flight feathers are molting. During this approximately six-week period, both male and female ducks are flightless. Unlike swans, who mate for life, most ducks breed for just a single season with the female building the nest. Wood Ducks and a few others are cavity nesters. The female is also responsible for taking care of the young, who stay with her until they are ready to fly. Only the above-mentioned Wood Duck and the most common of all ducks in the world, the Mallard, breed here on a regular basis. A few, the Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser and the Ruddy Duck have, on just a few occasions, bred in the area. The rest can be seen in migration, and quite a few winter here, including the Common Goldeneye, Canvasback and Common Merganser.

When and where to see ducks: March and October are the best times to observe ducks. Although Creve Coeur Lake and the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary are good places to view them, Horseshoe Lake in Madison County, Illinois is even better. The parade of ducks streaming back and forth is like watching people on a promenade. With their voices calling and the birds flying in and out, one gets the feeling of watching a general spectacle of the waterfowl world.

Population status: Although not many birders are duck hunters, most support Ducks Unlimited, even

*Northern Shoveler**Mike Grant Photo*

How to “Bird by Ear”

Thursday, March 26, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.
Creve Coeur Community Center

Whether you want to expand upon your birding skills, naturalist skills, or creatively looking for ways to make use of your musically-inclined ears in an outdoorsy way, “Birding by Ear” will connect you to hidden rewards. Bird songs beautify our outdoor urban environment, especially during spring and summer. Being able to recognize individual birdsongs joins us to the songster – sometimes visually and sometimes only with a song. Either way, familiarity with birdsongs expands our intimacy with nature. This workshop will provide you with practical guidance to help you recognize and recall individual birdsongs.

Bob Bailey earned his B.A. in Philosophy and M.Ed. in Education and is currently completing his requirements as a Missouri Master Naturalist. Bob has provided educational programs and birding field trips for St. Louis Audubon, Webster Groves Nature Study Society, and the Missouri Botanical Garden. Bob also provides field education for the urban naturalist of which learning to recognize all of nature's songs (from insects to toads) is a major component.

This is our annual joint meeting with the Eastern Missouri Group of the Sierra Club. 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. ♦

Ducks from page 4

purchasing the annual duck stamps, for this organization has worked tremendously hard in preserving habitat and providing education to the public in order to increase duck populations. Drainage for agriculture is the main reason for wetland loss. Over half the Nation's wetlands that were a part of our natural landscape before European settlers arrived have been plowed under (nearly 90 percent in Missouri). Surrounding the wetlands were upland vegetation so sorely needed for the ducks to survive. That, too, has been plowed under. The National Wildlife Refuge system was established to protect waterfowl, especially during migration.

Too bad these organizations were not in place in the early 19th century. In 1878 the Labrador Duck (pictured below) was the first bird to go extinct in the United States. There were probably never many of them to begin with. Reports from the time say that this duck was unwary of man. Except for domestic fowl and pond Mallards, most ducks fly off when humans approach—smart move. ♦



*Labrador Duck by Louis Agassiz Fuertes in 1922–1926.
Male (left), juvenile male (center), adult female (right).
This image is in the public domain because its copyright has expired. This applies to the United States and those countries with a copyright term of life of the author plus 70 years.*



Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 25.
Festival runs from 10a to 4p at Riverlands MBS in Alton, IL.
More details in April newsletter!
If you can't wait, checkout their website www.wingsofspring.org!

Missouri Birds Need Your Help “Down South”

By John Solodar

Last year St. Louis Audubon participated in state-wide efforts to help conserve wintering ground habitat in Central America for the migrant birds that nest in Missouri. This work was initiated by Brad Jacobs of the Missouri Dept of Conservation. Ultimately, many other Missouri Audubon chapters, MDC, the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, the Nature Conservancy and the St. Louis Rainforest Advocates pitched in and over \$162,000 was raised to buy important habitat in Honduras adjacent to Pico Bonito National Park. The funds donated in St. Louis and by the other Audubon chapters were multiplied about 8 times through additional matches (**see box below.**) St. Louis contributions totaled \$4,845 which translated into about \$43,000 of the final total after all matches were made. The state-wide, umbrella organization that is coordinating our efforts is called The Avian Conservation Alliance of the Americas, or ACAA.

We are asking for your help with this effort again this year. If you want to know more about the program please read the excerpt below from an article by Brad Jacobs. If you want to see where our birds spend their winters go to the website www.partnersinflight.org. The map in the upper right hand corner will show the birds of Kansas, but when you click on the line above this you will see a directory from which you can select Missouri-winter. The primary concentrations are from southern Mexico through Panama, with Nicaragua and Honduras having the heaviest concentrations.

Please make your check payable to St. Louis Audubon and include a note that the funds are for Latin

ACAA Fund Raising FY 2008

St. Louis	\$6,645
(incl. \$1,800 for scholarships)	
River Bluffs	\$5,376
Burroughs	\$2,308
Columbia	\$1,629
Ozark Rivers	\$1,000
Chariton Valley	\$900
Midland Empire	\$250
STL Rainforest Adv.	\$100
SubTotal	\$18,208
MO Cons Heritage Fund	\$10,000
SubTotal	\$28,208
MDC match	\$28,208
SubTotal	\$56,416
TNC in-kind	\$25,000
Missouri Grand Total	\$81,416

The final match was an additional \$81,416 from the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act to match what was raised in Missouri.

Final Grand Total \$162, 832

American Conservation. Contributions should be sent to John Solodar, Treasurer, 8135 Cornell Ct., St. Louis, MO 63130-3639. ACAA has a goal of raising \$15,000 this year and the St. Louis area is key to this effort. In addition to funds for Pico Bonito, St. Louis Audubon will again sponsor at least two graduate fellowships for ornithology students from Central America for their studies in the region.

The following is an excerpt from an article by Brad Jacobs written for the National Association for Interpretation.

Neotropical-Nearctic migrant birds, including nearly sixty Partners in Flight (www.partnersinflight.org) priority species that breed in Missouri during summer months, spend eight to nine months during the year in Honduras and other Central American (CA) countries during the winter. CA is about one-eighth the area of the North American breeding range, so, the migrants and resident birds share a very small and critical piece of land. This CA region is anticipating the human population to double over the next 30 years, putting considerable pressure on natural resources. If one walked a twenty kilometer transect from the Caribbean coast through Pico Bonito National Park (Pico Bonito) into the very dry tropical forest on the rain shadow side of Pico Bonito, one could see more than 400 species of birds, approximately half the species of Honduras.

ACAA's primary objective is to collect, leverage and provide direct and matching funds for bird habitat conservation

Winter Field Trip Report

By Pat Lueders

Two birding trips this winter to the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (RMBS) in St. Charles provided an opportunity for local birders to study the many species of gulls, swans, ducks and geese that are attracted to that area in addition to the large numbers of various ages of Bald Eagles.

On January 8, Mike Thelen led a large group of birders on a very cold day to RMBS, covering both the Missouri and Illinois sides of the area. We were able to identify Cackling Geese easily amongst the large flocks of Canada Geese and also found a Snow Goose and Greater White-fronted Geese. A lone Pied-billed Grebe was diving amongst them. We studied hundreds of swans to finally identify a Tundra Swan when a group flew away from the pond. Many gulls were feeding around the dam area and could be easily studied as they sat on the walls. We got good views of Glaucous and Thayer's Gull from the Illinois side.

On February 7, Bill Rowe led a group of approximately 20 birders on a much nicer day to the same area and to Columbia Bottom Conservation Area. A season high 359 swans had been reported for that day! Eleven species of duck were seen as well as very close looks at a White-winged Scoter which had been swimming in the area below the dam gates. The group studied the gulls from the Illinois side and found the Greater Black-backed Gull flying above the dam and a Thayer's Gull on the wall.

Throughout the day, large flocks of Snow Geese were heard and observed flying overhead. At Columbia Bottom, the group had time to study a Harlan's (Red-tailed) Hawk sitting in a tree and his tail when he eventually flew. We found a red-morph Eastern Screech-Owl in the wood duck box that had harbored a gray-morph a few years ago. Six species of sparrows were found in the fields.

RMBS and Columbia Bottom CA are enjoyable places to spend a winter day because of the large number and size of birds that can be seen there. Birding can be done easily from the car if it is a cold, bitter day, and the two visitor's centers provide a warm retreat from the wind. Join us there next winter, or take your own trip to enjoy a break from the winter boredom of being inside! ♦

Creve Coeur from page 2

but no funding. The main pool in this area holds water quite well, as last year's wet weather proved. However, with rainfall being its only source of water, dry periods quickly eliminate this pool—as a recent visit confirmed. The same well and solar pump project mentioned previously would support permanent water here, as well. There is a newly constructed bench and overlook shelter of this area adjacent to the trail and parking lot by the River Valley Drive overpass. Future plans, pending funding, include interpretive kiosks and walking trails.

A second constructed wetland area (area C on the page 2 graphic) was developed west of Little Lake by the Missouri Department of Transportation. This project was a direct result of mitigation requirements from the Page Avenue Extension. This large depression area has never effectively held water. MoDOT revisited the project once, but a working pool has not been achieved. We are hopeful the Parks Department, perhaps with assistance, will be able to get MoDOT to return once again to honor the original commitment.

With the construction of the Maryland Heights Expressway south of 364 and the rerouting of the southern end of Creve Coeur Mill Road, two areas of wetlands were impacted—totaling ~2 acres. The Park Staff and the U.S. Army Corps worked with the City of Maryland Heights and arranged for a nearly 5 acre mitigation project. The additional wetland pools are complete and on the site of the old ball fields in the southwest corner of the Park off River Valley Drive (area D on the page 2 graphic). Native trees and shrubs have been planted around the perimeter and a variety of prairie grasses and wetland forbs have been sown. This area has the greatest potential for primary access to the entire LCCL area. However, park officials are aware that access is presently difficult, at best. With the completion of the Maryland Heights Expressway, we are hopeful that a solution is forthcoming.

The last wetland project area within LCCL is a 160 acre wetland reserve project (area E on the page 2 graphic) with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an arm of the US Dept. of Agriculture. The next installments of this series will discuss this last area in detail, as well as the exciting plans for Audubon volunteer projects across the Park, and regrettably the threats confronting them all.

For more detail about the recent Audubon involvement in this area, visit our recently expanded conservation web pages at www.stlouisaudubon.org. Even better, see for yourself! Winter into early spring is a good time to explore the stark beauty and spring awakening of Creve Coeur Park and other St. Louis County parks. Go birding, biking, hiking, or geocaching! Get outdoors and enjoy a park near you! ◆

International from page 6

projects from eastern Mexico to Panama. The overarching target is conservation for Missouri's breeding birds on their wintering ground and the associated resident birds of our Latin American host countries. Other objectives include: providing volunteer opportunities on projects; supplying Spanish language bird books and education materials; providing monitoring, banding and optical equipment; organizing training for ecotourism guides, park guards, bird banding technicians; and operational funds and other project needs to our Latin American conservation partners.

The most important project to support right now is one involving Pico Bonito National Park and the nearby El Poligono. Whereas Pico Bonito is in a tropical rainforest, El Poligono is in a very dry forest in Honduras. The lodge at Pico Bonito NP has a list of birds that have been seen up to 1000 ft altitude. I urge you to visit their website http://www.picobonito.com/PB_files/bird.html to see for yourself the list of our birds that winter in just this part of the area. There are even more of our birds on the dry side of the mountains in the El Poligono area.

Funds directed to Pico Bonito will be spent to help acquire approximately 2,400 acres of land in the next few years, and perhaps more at a later date. This land will connect a critical isolated remnant of very dry tropical forest (VDTF) with the 257,000 acre Pico Bonito. The proposed biological corridor, which connects the newly acquired remnant of VDTF to the park, will be under the park's administration. The VDTF property to be connected to the park is a former Honduran Air Force landing strip, now called the Honduran Emerald Reserve (HER). The property contains one of the last and best examples of a high-quality VDTF natural community left in the world.

Both Pico Bonito and HER are migratory, wintering and staging areas for many U.S. priority birds of conservation concern and many of Missouri's common breeding species, including: Eastern Wood-Pewees, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, Wood Thrushes, Blue-winged Warblers, Golden-winged Warblers, Cerulean Warblers, Black-and-white Warblers, American Redstarts, Prothonotary Warblers, Kentucky Warblers, Hooded Warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, Summer Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, Orchard Orioles, Baltimore Orioles and more. The international partnership for bird conservation called "Partners in Flight" has as its goal "to keep common birds common." Our efforts in this core area of Central America, where Missouri's breeding birds winter, will help protect bird habitat over the long term and ensure that migrant birds return each spring to Missouri.

Honduras and Nicaragua have 40-50 percent of their natural communities still intact; the highest percentages in CA. Hondurans are concerned about the need to protect their natural resources. Bird habitat will be under tremendous pressure in the future. Conserving Missouri's summer breeding birds and migrants is integrally linked to the wintering areas in CA. ACAA is a way to ensure the survival of Missouri's birds. For more information on ACAA e-mail brad.jacobs@mdc.mo.gov. ◆

Birds Movements Reveal Global Warming Threat in Action

Species Wintering Farther North Show Need for Policy Change

WASHINGTON, DC, February 10, 2009—The northward and inland movement of North American birds, confirmed by thousands of citizen-observations, provides new and powerful evidence that global warming is having a serious impact on natural systems, according to new analyses by Audubon scientists. The findings signal the need for dramatic policy changes to combat pervasive ecological disruption.

Analyses of citizen-gathered data from the past 40 years of Audubon's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) reveal that 58 percent of the 305 widespread species that winter on the continent shifted significantly north since 1968, some by hundreds of miles. Movement was detected among species of every type, including more than 70 percent of highly adaptable forest and feeder birds. Only 38 percent of grassland species mirrored the trend, reflecting the constraints of their severely-depleted habitat and suggesting that they now face a double threat from the combined stresses of habitat loss and climate adaptation.

Population shifts among individual species are common, fluctuate, and can have many causes. However, Audubon scientists say the ongoing trend of movement by some 177 species—closely correlated to long-term winter temperature increases—reveals an undeniable link to the changing climate.

"Birds are showing us how the heavy hand of humanity is tipping the balance of nature and causing ecological disruption in ways we are just beginning to predict and comprehend," said report co-author and Audubon Director of Bird Conservation, Greg Butcher, Ph.D. "Common sense dictates that we act now to curb the causes and impacts of global warming to the extent we can, and shape our policies to better cope with the disruptions we cannot avoid."

Movements across all species—including those not reflecting the 40 year trend—averaged approximately 35 miles during the period. However, it is the complete picture of widespread movement and the failure of some species to move at all that illustrates the potential for problems.

- Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, and Boreal Chickadee have retreated dramatically north into the Canadian Boreal, their ranges moving an estimated 313, 246, and 211 miles respectively over 40 years. Continuing warming and development are predicted to have adverse impacts on the Boreal forest and the species that depend on it.
- Red-breasted Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, and American Black Duck, normally found in southern-tier states, have all taken advantage of warmer winter waters and have shifted their ranges north by an estimated 244, 169, and 141 miles. Still, they are likely to be negatively impacted by the increased drought expected in many parts of North America as global warming worsens.
- Only 10 of 26 grassland species moved north significantly, while nine moved south. Species such as Eastern Meadowlark, Vesper Sparrow, and Burrowing Owl were likely unable to move despite more moderate northern temperatures because essential grassland habitat areas have disappeared, having been converted to intensive human uses such as row crops, pastures, and hayfields. In combination, global warming and ongoing overuse of grasslands by humans will doom grassland birds to continued population declines.

"Experts predict that global warming will mean dire consequences, even extinction, for many bird species,

and this analysis suggests that that the process leading down that path is already well underway,” warned Audubon President John Flicker. “We’re witnessing an uncontrolled experiment on the birds and the world we share with them.”

Butcher explains that many birds move great distances to find suitable food and habitat, but questions how far they will be able to move in the face of climate change before they run out of habitat, food or even luck. “The long term picture is not good for many species, and even in the short term, a single harsh winter could have a devastating impact on birds that have moved too far,” he adds.

New forward-looking research from Audubon California reinforces the national findings, predicting that about 80 of that state’s native bird species will experience significant climate-driven reductions in their geographic range over coming decades.

Scientific models indicate that the magnitude of losses in California depends largely on steps taken now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The California Gnatcatcher could lose as much as 56 percent of its range, or as little as 7 percent, depending on how climate change is addressed. Projected range losses for the Bay area’s popular Chestnut-backed Chickadee vary from 49 percent to as little as 16 percent.

Detailed GIS maps produced using the California research project where the birds are likely to be in 50 to 100 years. Findings will help policymakers and land managers augment efforts to mitigate the severity of global warming impacts with better habitat conservation investments to address changes that cannot be avoided.

“The birds are giving us yet another warning that it’s time for urgent action,” added Flicker. “People hear about melting glaciers and changing weather, but now they can witness the impact global warming is having with the birds they see or don’t see right outside their doors. These birds are our ‘canaries in the coal mine’ and they’re telling us that we’d better do something fast to curb global warming and to protect habitat.”

Scientists say bold action is needed to overcome threats from global warming. Audubon calls on Congress and the administration to advance policies that will drastically reduce global warming pollution, cut oil dependence in half, and invest in a clean energy future and the economic benefits it offers. Americans can sign a petition at www.birdsandclimate.org to demand aggressive federal policy action.

Habitats already under siege from development, energy production, agricultural expansion and other human uses will require enhanced protection and restoration to sustain bird populations and provide ecological benefits essential to human health, economic prosperity and quality of life. Conservation efforts based on forward looking projections such as those from Audubon California are essential.

Audubon anticipates that the new avian evidence will help attract attention and spark action among more than 40 million U.S. bird-watchers, including tens of thousands who contributed to the Christmas Bird Count data on which the studies are based. The 109-year-old census provides the world’s longest uninterrupted record of bird population trends. “Citizen Science is allowing us to better recognize the impacts that global warming is having here and now. Only citizen action can help us reduce them,” said Butcher. ♦

For more info on how you can respond to the issues raised by this National Audubon press release, please visit www.stlouisaudubon.org or www.audubon.org.

St. Louis Audubon Society
Annual Awards Dinner
 Saturday, April 11th

JIM MALLMAN, PRESIDENT, WATCHABLE WILDLIFE, INC.

We are pleased to announce our 2009 Annual Awards Dinner will take place at Orlando Gardens at 2050 Dorsett Village Plaza in Maryland Heights on Saturday, April 11th. Awards will be presented for Conservationist of the Year, Educator of the Year and Volunteer of the Year. The evening will conclude with a talk from our keynote speaker, Jim Mallman, President of Watchable Wildlife, Inc., a nonprofit that advances wildlife viewing as a viable economic and conservation enterprise for communities throughout North America.

Jim Mallman is a founding Board member of Watchable Wildlife, Inc., and was appointed its president in 2001. Years earlier, while serving as a manager of commodities trading, he began working with state and federal agencies across the country to promote legislation that would secure permanent and stable funding for non-game wildlife. In 1998 he made the decision to redirect his professional efforts toward wildlife conservation. Jim was awarded The President's Award from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 1996.

We hope you will join us for an informative discussion with Mr. Mallman about the funding challenges facing non-game wildlife and habitat work and the huge economic opportunity offered by wildlife viewing and nature-related recreation.

- 6:30 p.m.—Business Meeting / Open Bar Begins Service
- 7:30 p.m.—Dinner Service
- 9:00 p.m.—Keynote Presentation, Jim Mallman

The business meeting is open to all, but only current SLAS members will be allowed to vote in the election of the Board of Directors. Feel free to skip the business portion and arrive anytime in advance of dinner at 7:30 p.m.

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

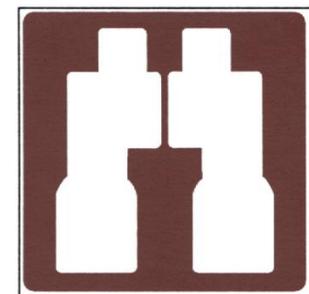
Space is limited, so please register by April 1st to insure you can enjoy this wonderful evening! Also, please bring your checkbook as we will provide a creative way for you to contribute to the Society's growth.

Orlando Gardens is at 2050 Dorsett Village Plaza in Maryland Heights, just off I-270 and Dorsett in northwest St. Louis County. Take I-270 Exit 17, Dorsett Rd and go west on Dorsett 1/3 mile to McKelvey. Turn right on McKelvey (at the Walgreen's) for quick jog to main Plaza entrance on your left (opposite the Dairy Queen). ♦

Saturday, April 11th, 2009 Annual Dinner Registration Form

By April 1st, please mail this form or a copy with payment to:
 Mitch Leachman, 2728 Lakeport Drive, Maryland Heights, MO 63043
 Make checks payable to **St. Louis Audubon Society**.

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



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!

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