March 2012
Volume 79, Issue 3

TALE FEATHERS

St. Louis Audubon Society, P.O. Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122-0227
www.stlouisaudubon.org director@stlouisaudubon.org (314) 599-7390

Calendar

Beginner Bird Walk Field Trips

Forest Park Visitor Center at 5595 Grand Drive
First Saturday of Every Month
Walk from 830 am to 10 am, Meet at 815 am
For info contact Chris at birding@forestparkforever.org.

Honeysuckle Workday—page 7

Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park
Saturday March 3rd from 9a to 1p

March Joint Program—page 5

STL Zoo Living World
Wednesday March 7th at 730p

Birding Field Trip—page 3

Busch Conservation Area Woodcock/Owl Prowl
Saturday March 10th at 5p

Honeysuckle Workday—page 7

Castlewood State Park
Saturday March 10th from 8a to 12 noon

Birding Field Trip—page 3

Horseshoe Lake State Park in Illinois
Saturday March 17th at 8a

March Joint Program—page 5

STL County Library Mid-County Branch
Thursday March 22nd at 730p

Trash Bash Watershed Cleanup—page 7

Creve Coeur Park & Old Chain of Rocks Bridge
Saturday March 24th from 830a to 12p

Native Landscaping Workshop—page 2

Powder Valley Nature Center
Saturday March 31st from 8a to 4p

Birding Field Trip—page 3

Castlewood State Park
Saturday April 14th at 8a

2012 Awards Dinner—page 6

Orlando Gardens in Webster Groves
Saturday April 14th at 6 pm
Mark H.X. Glenshaw, Keynote Speaker

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Trumpeter Swan Watch

By Pat Lueders

Trumpeter Swans were nearly extirpated in the early 1900s due to hunting pressures, but over the past few decades populations have started to increase thanks to the efforts by many people and agencies. Monitoring is essential to the recovery of this largest waterfowl species in North America. It provides crucial data on how many Trumpeter Swans use the St. Louis area in the winter, the age composition of flocks, and where some of these individuals travel each year. When the population was nearly extinguished, crucial knowledge of traditional migration routes and winter food sources was also lost. Recreating this knowledge is one of the greatest challenges in the effort to rebuild secure populations.

Missouri observers have recorded the highest number of Trumpeter Swans wintering in states south of the 40th parallel with sightings in 41 of 114 counties. Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (RMBS) along the Mississippi River in St. Charles County is the single most important wintering site in the southern states with counts of 500 or more in the past few years.

Because of the importance of our area to the Trumpeter Swans' survival, this winter the St. Louis Audubon Society (SLAS) partnered with The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS), the Audubon Center at Riverlands, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers River Project Office, and

See Trumpeter Watch on Page 4

Board Meetings

Open to All. 2nd Tuesday of Every Month at 7 pm. Powder Valley Nature Center at 11715 Cragwold.

Board recruitment is an ongoing process and requires your interest and our need. If you have thought of serving in such a way, stop by or call one of us.

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Newsletter

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

Member of EarthShare Missouri

Partners for Native Landscaping

Workshop for Homeowners

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center
Saturday, March 31, 2012 from 8 am to 4 pm

Native plant landscapes have become more popular in recent years due to their functionality and aesthetic appeal. This in-depth workshop, designed for both beginner and advanced gardeners, offers information and resources on how to landscape with native plants to enhance biodiversity, create beautiful habitat gardens and address issues such as invasive species and stormwater management at home, in your own yard. This workshop is a cooperative effort of the Missouri Department of Conservation, Shaw Nature Reserve, St. Louis Audubon Society, and St. Louis Wild Ones. Workshop fee is $15, payable at the door and includes a buffet lunch (cash or checks only). Please register in advance by calling 314-301-1500. For additional details, visit http://mdc.mo.gov/regions/st-louis. ◆

Wanted: Habitat Advisors

Training Workshop March 17th

If you've been looking for a creative outlet for your native plant skills, this could be just right for you! Habitat Advisors perform Bring Conservation Home (BCH) landscape surveys, owner interviews and certification assessments and compile their written notes and findings. Advisors will receive a complete survey of their own landscape at no charge. For details on the BCH program www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH.

The workshop covers the BCH program, its procedures, and key native landscape topics. Prior experience with the four program areas of native plants, invasive plants, water conservation, wildlife stewardship and a long-term commitment to the program will be essential for your success and that of the program. This is a great way to creatively use your training and knowledge to help improve our community one landscape at a time. For additional details including a link to a position description, the required qualifications and an application, see http://stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/training_workshop.php.

You will be contacted after your application is received and reviewed. Those accepted into the program will receive additional details. Please note there is a $10 workshop fee to help cover the cost of supplies, food and beverages. ◆

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

The older I get, and certainly the greater my experience with Audubon, the more I realize we simply can never say THANKS often enough! It is such an easy thing to do, but so often overlooked, taken for granted or simply forgotten. So, please allow me a few paragraphs to offer some thanks.

First, a very big "thank you" to our many generous donors! We have listed all those that have given over the last 12 months on pages 9-10 of this issue. It is inspiring; over 200 different people chose to support our efforts. In addition, another 30+ individuals and companies gave their products or professional services to help our cause. Please help us thank them by patronizing their businesses, where possible. Finally, we are receiving a growing amount of financial support from diverse grants and sponsors such as Fred Weber and REI. Their support will be essential to our continued growth and presence in the region.

On a related note, I wanted to share the tremendous success of our 2011 year-end fundraising drive. We began with a letter last November, which many of you received. To our great satisfaction, your response was quick and generous—149 people have given $9,360, the most ever! We had set $10,000 as a "stretch goal," which is now clearly within reach. Thank you all so very much!

Finally, I want to welcome and thank our volunteer leaders. In recent months, the Board of Directors has filled several open positions. These same positions will be voted on by the membership at our annual meeting prior to the Awards Dinner on April 14th. Please help us welcome Nick Davenport, Katie Park and Mike Walsh to the Board. Nick is a retired construction superintendent and loves all things "bird." Katie is in her final year at Maryville, pursuing a biology degree. Mike is the Forestry Programs Manager at Forest ReLeaf of Missouri. We are pleased to have their experience and commitment.

With new beginnings also come endings, of a sort; for us that will mean the retirement of several board members this April. We will do our best at the Awards Dinner and in this newsletter to recognize their contributions and thank them for their service. In the meantime, when you see a board member or any of the other essential volunteers that make Audubon "work," say THANKS! And THANK YOU, too! ◆

Field Trips, Etc.

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

Mar 17th to Horseshoe Lake State Park: This all day trip starts at 8 am and is good for beginners with some light walking. From St. Louis, take I-70 east to Hwy 111 (exit 6) and turn left. Go ~2 miles to Park entrance and meet in first parking lot on right inside Park.

April 14th to Castlewood State Park: Bernie Favara leads this half day trip that includes moderate hiking and is good for beginners. Meet at 8 a.m. in the lot just after the park office on Kiefer Creek Rd.

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

Trumpeter Swan Watch

Continued from Page 1

the Audubon Society of Missouri (ASM) to begin a citizen science monitoring program titled the Great Rivers Trumpeter Swan Watch. Fifteen trained volunteers were assigned to areas in the Great Rivers region and conducted bi-monthly counts and observations of the wintering swans. The recording form noted where the swans were feeding, resting, the number of adults and juveniles, the other waterfowl present in their area, and banding collar numbers.

Missouri also participated in the nationwide Trumpeter Swan count conducted from January 3-10, 2012 by The Trumpeter Swan Society. A state wide count was compiled using contributions by birders to the ASM list serve, the CACHE & SPARKS data programs, and National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) counts.

Some initial statistics are available and a complete summary of the watch is being compiled by the Audubon Center staff for the TTSS. The largest number of swans counted during the watch was 702 on December 3rd with 276 at RMBS and 350 at Two Rivers NWR. The statewide count of 605 swans in January included 309 swans at RMBS and 255 at Squaw Creek NWR near St. Joseph, MO.

Three collar numbers were submitted on December 13th to the national banding lab and the results were returned as follows:

69C was banded September 3, 2004 in Burnett County, Wisconsin

57Y was banded September 3, 2008 in Sawyer County, Wisconsin

71N was banded September 17, 2009 in Price County, Wisconsin

All three were listed as "too young to fly" when originally banded. Biologists will use our sightings of the birds to assist in evaluating the success of their programs.

The results if the 2011-2012 Great Rivers Trumpeter Swan Watch will be available in the future at the Audubon Center web site http://riverlands.audubon.org/. If you would like to participate in this valuable citizen science project, watch for a request for volunteers later this year. ◆

Gerald Plowman photo.

U.S. Army Corps photo.

On Arctic Ground, an Alaskan Journey

St. Louis Zoo—Living World
Wednesday, March 7th at 7:30 pm

Join us for a sensory journey through the largest expanse of wild lands remaining in America, along with its rich diversity of arctic wildlife: wolves, caribou, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, wolverine, dinosaurs of the past, and a host of migratory birds from all corners of the world—the National Petroleum Reserve in northern Alaska. Author, teacher and adventurer Debbie Miller shares her three summers paddling 400 miles of rivers in the National Petroleum Reserve. She has explored the wilderness of Alaska for more than 30 years. Her forthcoming book *On Arctic Ground* (Braided River, May, 2012) explores the National Petroleum Reserve.

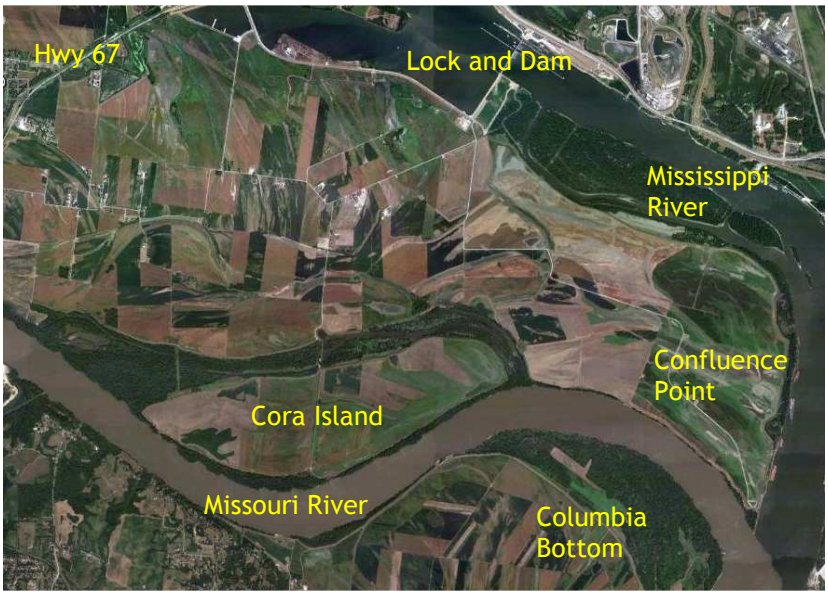
Debbie is the author of *Midnight Wilderness: Journeys in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*, a book that is based on 14 years of adventures exploring the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A passionate advocate for protecting the Arctic, she has also authored 15 nature books for children about Alaska's wildlife, such as *A Polar Bear Journey* and *Survival at 40 Below.* Debbie will be available for book signings after the program. ◆

Restoring the Confluence

Thursday, March 22nd at 7:30 pm

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

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



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

St. Louis Audubon Society

2012 Awards Dinner

Saturday, April 14th

MARK H.X. GLENSHAW, NATURALIST

St. Louis Audubon is pleased to announce that the 2012 Awards Dinner will feature Mark H.X. Glenshaw as the keynote speaker. The dinner will be hosted at Orlando Gardens at 8352 Watson Road in Webster Groves on Saturday, April 14th.

Mark Glenshaw is an award-winning naturalist who has closely observed and documented the lives of a mated pair of Great Horned Owls in Forest Park in St. Louis, Missouri since December 2005. During this time, he has observed and documented a vast range of behaviors including hunting, mating, nest-site selection and rearing of young. He shares his work on his blog, forestparkowls.blogspot.com.

His work has been featured in *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *St. Louis Magazine*, and *Show-Me Missouri*. He leads owl prowls and gives talks for interested individuals and small groups as well as for formal events and groups such as The St. Louis Bioblitz, Wonders of Wildlife-St. Louis, Missouri Department of Conservation and Washington University in St. Louis. He was awarded the Citizen Scientist Award for the 2006 St. Louis Bioblitz by the Academy of Science-St. Louis.

Mark's talk will cover how he found these owls, basic facts about the species, and the different behaviors he has been able to see and document with photos and videos to illustrate these behaviors. He will conclude by discussing how people want to connect more with nature and ways that naturalists, birders and other nature experts can help.

6:00 p.m.—Registration / Open Bar
6:15 p.m.—Business Meeting
7:00 p.m.—Dinner Service and Award Presentations
8:15 p.m.—Keynote Presentation by Mark Glenshaw

Tickets are $35 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, April 14th, 2012 Awards Dinner Registration Form

Please mail this form or a copy by April 1st 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, http://stlouisaudubon.org/news/content/awards_2012.php.

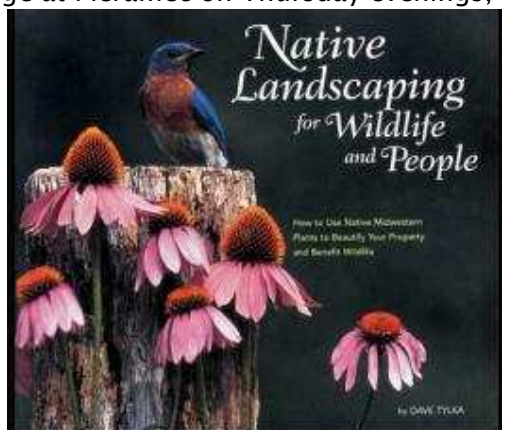
_____ $35.00 x _____ = _____
Name(s) Fee No. Total Enclosed

Native Landscaping Course

WHEN: Thursdays, March 22nd through May 10th, and four all-day Saturday field trips

WHERE: St. Louis Community College at Meramec

WHAT: Dave Tylka, author of the MDC book, *Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People*, will teach an 8-week native landscaping class (BIO:156) at St. Louis Community College at Meramec on Thursday evenings, March 22 through May 10, 2012, from 5-7:00 p.m. Four Saturday field trips from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. will be held on 3/24, 4/7, 4/21 and 5/5. This course focuses on native trees, shrubs and flowers that furnish food and cover for songbirds, butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. Participants will learn how to design, establish and maintain native plant gardens and landscapes around homes, common grounds, businesses and public lands such as parks.



INFO: For more information, please call Dave at 636/942-3142.

Honeysuckle Project at Castlewood State Park

Saturday, March 10th from 8 a.m. to 12 noon
Join Missouri state park staff and other groups in continuing to eliminate this invasive plant from the Park. Bring gloves and loppers/saw if you have them. A limited supply of tools will be available. Meet at Shelter #2, 1401 Kiefer Creek Road, Ballwin, MO. After entering the park, pass the office and the Creek. The shelter is the next right. For questions or to register e-mail castlewood.state.park@dnr.mo.gov.

Confluence Trash Bash

Saturday, March 24th from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon, followed by lunch
Our mission is to work together to clean local streams and neighborhoods. Volunteers can choose from three registration locations (including Creve Coeur Park). Clean-up sites will be assigned near your starting location. Volunteers will return to the same location for a free lunch and celebration! Prizes will be awarded for the Weirdest, Biggest, and Most Expensive trash found. This is a great event for families, scout groups, and just about anyone. To register http://confluencegreenway.org/trashbash.php

Honeysuckle Workday at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park

Saturday, April 14th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch is included.
All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. Meet in the upper park—west of I-270 and north of Dorsett. Take I-270 Exit 17 for Dorsett Rd and go west about 1.5 miles. Enter Park on right, just before light at Marine and take Streetcar Drive north. Continue past park office, ball field and tennis court to gravel parking lot on right. Parking is somewhat limited, so please carpool if possible. Rain date April 15.

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

February Birding

by Pat Lueders

Ten brave birders ventured out in the 20 degree weather Saturday, February 11th to bird the Baldwin Lake IL/ Peabody Coal areas in Southern IL. We started by searching the Red Bud/Hwy 154 area for the Snowy Owl, and we are happy to add this species to the list of the great birds seen on this trip! With help from Chris Brown and our scout car of Dave & Maryanne Marjamaa & Anne Kirkpatrick, we saw the Snowy Owl at a distance, about 1/4 of a mile south of Hwy 154 and west of Prairie Rd. Some members of the group went back for a better view since it was a life bird for them. Baldwin Lake reminded me of trips to Duluth with steam coming off of the surface of the water. We found a Ross's Goose feeding with a flock of 77 Cackling Geese (thanks Maryanne for counting them). There were a number of Shovelers in the lake and a large flock of Snow Geese could be seen in the middle. In addition to a Red-Shouldered Hawk, a number of Bald Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks and Kestrels were seen in the area. A Golden-crowned Kinglet and Hairy Woodpecker joined some of our winter residents in the trees at the entrance.

At the Kaskaskia River boat launch at the southwest corner of the lake, we saw a number of ducks from the blind including Gadwall, Mallards, Green-winged Teal, Ringed-Necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, and Pied-billed and Horned Grebe.

The agricultural fields on the way to Peabody Coal yielded Horned Larks, Killdeer, & Meadowlarks. We encountered a few flocks of Common Grackles that numbered individuals in the 100's. The entrance to Peabody had a flock of 200 Ringed-billed Gulls in the field. Matt Malin, a Cape Cod birder new to our area, found a Bonaparte's Gull in the river slough at the northern end. We searched for, but didn't locate, any shrikes but did see a number of Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Hooded Mergansers, and Snow Geese flying over. At dusk, with our group spread out for coverage, we found 3 Short-eared Owls near the sign, ironically, that said "Short-eared Owl Roosting Area." One landed twice on one of the owl perches provided by the refuge giving the group great looks! We were treated to a beautiful sunset as we left. ◆

Short-eared Owl (left) and Common Goldeneye. Al Smith photos.

Many Thanks to All Our 2011 Donors!!

Board President Dave Rogles, Executive Director Mitch Leachman, and the entire Board of Directors extend their heartfelt thanks for your support this past year. You are critical to our success!

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_____

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St. Louis, MO 63122-0227

3/12

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St. Louis Audubon Society
Chapter-Supporting Membership Form

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

Your Chapter-Supporting membership runs concurrently with your National Audubon membership, if you choose to maintain the latter. To continue to receive the *Audubon* magazine, you must maintain your National membership.

☐ $20 ☐ $30 ☐ $50** ☐ $100 ☐ Other_____

** Memberships of $50, or above, will receive a copy of Dr. Stephen Kress' *North American Birdfeeder Guide*, a $15 value, as our gift. This 220 page book covers feeding and observing tips and includes common species profiles.

100% of your dues stay in St. Louis supporting our local efforts. All our programs are free. Thank you very much!

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St. Louis, MO 63122-0227

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