

TALE FEATHERS

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

Calendar

BEGINNER BIRD WALK FIELD TRIPS

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER AT 5595 GRAND DRIVE

FIRST SATURDAY OF MOST MONTHS

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

FOR INFO CONTACT AMY [BIRDING@FORESTPARKFOREVER.ORG](mailto:birding@forestparkforever.org)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

TOWER GROVE PARK

SATURDAY MAY 10TH AT 730A

NATIVE PLANT SALE

SHAW WILDFLOWER MARKET

SATURDAY MAY 10TH FROM 9A TO 4P

[HTTP://WWW.MISSOURIBOTANICALGARDEN.ORG/VISIT/FAMILY-OF-ATTRACTIONS/SHAW-NATURE-RESERVE.ASPX](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/visit/family-of-attractions/shaw-nature-reserve.aspx)

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

SHAW NATURE RESERVE

SATURDAY MAY 17TH AT 730A

BEGINNER BIRD WALK

CHESTERFIELD'S CENTRAL PARK LAKE

MEET IN FRONT OF THE CHESTERFIELD AMPHITHEATER

SATURDAY MAY 17TH FROM 8A TO 10A

REGISTRATION REQUIRED AT (636) 812-9500

STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—PAGE 4

HONEYSUCKLE KILL AT CREVE COEUR PARK

SATURDAY MAY 17TH FROM 9A TO 12P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BUSCH MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

SATURDAY MAY 24TH AT 630A

NATURESCAPING OPEN HOUSE—PAGE 7

SUSAN & KEI PANG'S LANDSCAPE

RICHMOND HEIGHTS

SUNDAY JUNE 8TH FROM 1P TO 5P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BUSCH MEMORIAL CONSERVATION AREA

SATURDAY JUNE 14TH AT 545A

PURPLE MARTIN SHOW & TELL—PAGE 2

CREVE COEUR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK

SATURDAY JUNE 21ST AT 9A

SUSTAINABLE BACKYARD TOUR

SATURDAY JUNE 22ND FROM 11A TO 4P

[HTTP://WWW.SUSTAINABLEBACKYARDTOUR.COM/](http://www.sustainablebackyardtour.com/)

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Back to Nature at Queeny Park

By Herb Huebner

St. Louis Audubon joined with St. Louis County Parks, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Shaw Nature Reserve and Forest ReLeaf of Missouri in 2013 in a major multi-year project to restore the natural communities of over 80 acres of Queeny Park. The country has experienced massive loss of wildlife habitat over the last century, and projects like this help enhance bird, butterfly, bee and amphibian populations in the urban areas. Queeny Park is ideal because it is located between the Creve Coeur Park, Busch/Weldon Springs and the Meramec River Important Bird Areas. The acreage includes restoration of forest, wetland and stream bank natural areas as well as construction of a complete native prairie. One goal of the project is to showcase the transformation of what can be accomplished for wildlife in an urban setting. The establishment of native vegetation will also reduce storm water runoff and soil erosion and stream bank stabilization along Owl Creek which runs through the park.

The restoration includes removal of non-native invasive plants like Asian Bush Honeysuckle, Japanese Honeysuckle, Sericea Lespedeza, and invasive grasses like fescue. Replanting will include native trees and shrubs as well as five species of prairie grasses and about 30 species of prairie wildflowers. The project is

See Queeny Park on Page 5

Board Meetings

Open to All. 2nd Tuesday of even months at 7 pm at the Sunset Hills Community Center at 3915 S. Lindbergh Boulevard.

Board recruitment is an ongoing process and requires a long-term commitment. If you have thought of serving in such a way, just stop by or call one of us.

Officers

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Newsletter

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

Purple Martin Show & Tell

By Karen Meyer

Come see the thriving Purple Martin colony at Mallard Lake near the Creve Coeur Lakehouse in Creve Coeur Park on Saturday, June 21 from 9:00–10:00. This is an opportunity to closely observe the martins in the colony where most adult birds will be actively feeding young.

Local Purple Martins experts will discuss the parenting behaviors of the martins, discuss their dependency on human-provided housing and provide tips to attract and care for a colony. St. Louis Audubon volunteers who monitor the nesting progress of the colony will lower the housing to show an active nest. Samples of different types of Purple Martin housing -- houses and gourds -- will be available as well as informational literature.

The Creve Coeur Lakehouse is at 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Rd, St Louis, MO 63146. The martin houses are on the east side of the restaurant, not far from Mallard Lake. For questions, please call Karen Meyer at (314) 602-7318.

After the presentation, Audubon volunteers will head to the west side of the park to check the 10 nest boxes on the Bluebird Trail. You are welcome to accompany them on the level 1.5 mile walk. ♦



Karen Meyer performs a nest check last summer

John Miller Photo

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

We recently trained another group of passionate volunteers as Habitat Advisors in our Bring Conservation Home program. These nine individuals have committed to help us teach landowners about the critical importance of creating habitat for birds and other wildlife in their own spaces and providing personal advice on how to do so. Their assistance will be greatly appreciated as we are well underway on another busy year of landscape surveys; we're already booking into June with 5–6 scheduled per week.

Just a few short weeks ago, Karen Meyer led the St. Louis Audubon support for a planting project at Castlewood State Park. Nearly 100 volunteers helped plant some 800 native trees, shrubs, sedges and perennial flowers to improve the bottomland habitat at this key element of the Lower Meramec Important Bird Area. We are especially pleased with our new collaboration with The Open Space Council for the St. Louis Region. They helped recruit volunteers for the project and are doing the same for our final event of the season at Creve Coeur Park on May 17th (see details on page 4 of this issue).

More recently, a cadre of folks helped staff the Back to Nature open house event at Queeny Park. The day provided activities, including bird walks, to the public and showed them the large restoration project underway that will transform the natural areas over the next few years. Jean Favara headed up the group and with Joe Eades led the bird walks. Anne Horton, Herb Huebner, Karen Meyer and Linda Tossing also delivered key support. (See the feature article on page 1 and 5 of this issue.)

These are just a few of the chapter programs and events that are made possible by volunteers. There really are many more—we could make a long list of just the Education Team's efforts! In addition, we have behind-the-scenes volunteers handling things like membership and all our board positions. It takes a lot of people to keep even this small non-profit running smoothly and effectively.

We care deeply about our mission of connecting people to nature, and we're very proud of our history and our success. Please help me thank all of those volunteers, and consider a personal thank you the next time you go on a bird walk, help with honeysuckle or see any of them at an event. If you'd like to become one of them, just drop me or Linda Tossing a note; our info is on the previous page. Have a great spring! ◆

Field Trips, Etc.

May 10th at Tower Grove Park: Pat Lueders leads this half day trip at 7:30 am. From I-44, take Kingshighway south to Magnolia. Turn left and proceed to entrance on right. Right again on Northwest Dr and follow to Gaddy Bird Garden on right. Meet at Garden entrance.

May 17th to Shaw Nature Reserve: Connie Alwood leads this all day trip that includes moderate hiking over some rough terrain and is good for beginners. Meet at 7:30 am in the lot inside the main entrance. Take I-44 west to Hwy 100 (Gray Summit exit). Cross the highway and turn right. Entrance is on the left.

May 24th at Blue Grosbeak & Lost Valley: Bob Bailey leads the half day trip that includes moderate hiking over some rough terrain. *Meet at 6:30 am.* From Hwy 40, take Hwy 94 south ~ ¾ mile to the Lot on left.

June 14th at Blue Grosbeak & Lost Valley: Mike Grant leads this half day trip that *meets at 5:45 am.* Take directions from May 24th trip.

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

Hope is the Thing with Feathers: Americans and Three Birds

Monday, August 18, 2014 at 7:30 pm

St. Louis Zoo's Living World

Join us for a lecture and book signing by Joel Greenberg, who has over 25 years experience working on natural resource related issues in the Midwest. Currently a Research Associate of both the Chicago Academy of Sciences Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and the Field Museum, he has authored four books including *A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction* (2014).

This presentation looks at three birds, each representing a different outcome at the hands of people. With a population in the billions, the passenger pigeon was the most abundant bird in North America. Yet within a matter of decades, unrelenting human exploitation drove it to extinction. The Kirtland's warbler has since historical times bred in a very limited range and within narrow habitat parameters. Although it costs a million dollars a year, we now know how to maintain healthy populations. The whooping crane declined to 23 living individuals twice. Extensive conservation work has been devoted to saving this charismatic species, but its fate is still an open question.

Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Anheuser-Busch Theatre. Admission is free. No reservations are needed.

This Conservation Conversation is presented by the Saint Louis Zoo, in partnership with the Academy of Science-St. Louis. For information on this event visit stlzoo.org or call (314) 646-4544.

Spring Stewardship Project

Saturday, May 17th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle kill.

All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. The work site is in the west region of the park, off Waterworks Road. From I-270, take Hwy 364/Page west to Exit 17 at the Maryland Hts Expressway. Go north to the first light at River Valley Drive. Turn left for approx. 2.5 miles to 4-way stop. Turn left again, drive into gravel lot, thru gate, just as road turns right. Follow signs from there. Parking is limited, please carpool if possible.

Project begins at 9 am with registration starting at 8:30. All are half-day and include food/bev while it lasts. Gloves and other supplies/materials are provided.

Volunteers are requested to register for all projects by providing their name, contact information and number attending to mitch@stlouisaudubon.org or (314) 599-7390.



These projects made possible by support from an REI grant. For info, visit www.rei.com.



Back to Nature at Queeny Park

Continued from Page 1

scheduled to last through 2015, but ongoing maintenance will be required to retain the health of the natural communities.

Jean Favara, St. Louis Audubon's Vice President for Conservation, and Herb Huebner, Conservation Committee member, are active participants of the Queeny Park Project Team. Jean has already performed eight bird surveys of the restoration area as a baseline of data at the project's early stages, and Audubon bird walks will be scheduled in the future to contribute to the scientific measurement of this type of intervention. Audubon has also coordinated volunteers to assist with the invasive plant removal and tree planting. Since 2009, Mitch Leachman, Audubon Executive Director, and Dennis Hogan, St. Louis County Parks' Environmental Resource Specialist, have worked together to plan similar projects at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park that have drawn over 2,000 volunteers to 30 separate stewardship events.

The Missouri Department of Conservation provides project leadership, and experts in urban forestry, urban wildlife, and public relations. St Louis County, in addition to Dennis Hogan, has provided park leadership and operations management support.

The Project Team encourages you to walk through Queeny Park to get a feeling for progress to date and enjoy the rebirth of the area as time goes on. The park's loop trail, Hawk Ridge, gives you a number of opportunities to see some of the "open woodland" after invasive plant removal. The single best place to see a large section of the woodland plantings is the paved stretch of the Owl Creek Trail that runs north from the corporate shelter below the Dog Museum. Watch over time as signage is placed to explain the project to the general public. ◆



Clockwise from top left: Mike Walsh with Forest ReLeaf gives planting instructions last November; the whole crew—55 helped out with the project; volunteers at work in the field; one dedicated youth takes his work with a smile (STL Audubon Photos)

Field Trip Excerpts from April

From Sue Gustafson & Mike Grant's trip to Dresser Island on April 12th:

This morning the St. Louis Audubon Society group started at Dresser Island Conservation Area in St. Charles County. A beautiful morning, but after walking for 2.5 hours and being overwhelmed with the vocalizations of Brown-headed Cowbird, Tufted Titmouse and Northern Cardinal, our patient group decided this was NOT the place to be for spring arrivals. We did manage to get good looks at an immature Bald Eagle, Blue and Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Wood Duck, Spotted Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, Fish Crows, and a lone American White Pelican. It was so slow (as in dead, dead, dead) for passerines that Marc Lund resorted to his iPhone for possible other items of interest, and he informed us of Mike Brady's post about Castlewood State Park earlier this morning. Eyes got big, minds started whirring, and the next thing we knew, we had a group consensus to take our field trip to Castlewood State Park! We decided that the Mississippi River was the wrong river to be on this morning, so we headed to the Meramac River.

The hour drive southwest to Castlewood State Park was well worth it, as within a minute out of our cars heading to the River Trail, we had great looks at Yellow-throated and Yellow-rumped Warblers and started hearing Northern Parulas that a few of us got on. We headed downriver on the trail, being followed by Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Yvonne Homeyer called us over to the concrete structure where she saw a Prothonotary Warbler, but we could not relocate it. After a picnic lunch, we headed upriver on the trail and had Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and two Broad-winged Hawks (one a close-up look). The bird of the day was definitely Yellow-throated Warbler, as we saw and/or heard at least twelve. We concluded mid-afternoon, at which time Mike Thelen lingered on (a man on a mission) and did indeed relocate the Prothonotary Warbler near the concrete structure on the River Trail. SO, we owe a HUGE thanks to MIKE BRADY for the heads-up about a great place to bird today. There were some life birds and it was a 'life park' for some of the VERY enjoyable members of our group today. We hope to see all of you out again soon! (And thanks to Susan Eaton for the cookies☺)

From Bob Bailey's trip to Forest Park and Tower Grove Park on April 26:

Great group of 40+ birders including big help from Mike Grant, John Solodar, Mick Richardson, Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren

Although we had 9 warbler species, highlights were a Great Horned Owl, a Barred Owl with its pair of owlets (all seen through Mike Grant's fantastic new scope), a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers building their nest, a Blue Jay having just caught a snake for breakfast; and at TGP, a Red-tailed Hawk at eye-level, just 10 feet off the bubbler path waiting patiently for its prey (which it missed and had to settle on snatching an ordinary bird).

All in all, a good day to be out! ◆

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Al Smith Photo



Naturescaping Open House

...a native landscaping learning opportunity



Sunday, June 8th, 2014

from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Richmond Heights, MO

No Charge Donations Appreciated

Contributions are tax-deductible.
Donations benefit the St. Louis Audubon Society's
Bring Conservation Home program.

See beautiful examples of rain gardens,
butterfly gardens and songbird habitat.

Learn about native landscaping.

Talk with experienced native plant gardeners,
including the event hosts.

Snacks and cool drinks provided.
Door prizes while they last.

For info on Bring Conservation Home visit
www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH

Hosted by Susan & Kei Pang
115 Lake Forest Drive
Richmond Heights, MO 63117



RSVP not required. For questions, contact Mitch at
(314) 599-7390 or mitch@stlouisaudubon.org.



ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY



Bring Conservation Home

A St. Louis Audubon Society Community Partnership

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P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, MO 63122-0227

5/14

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

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!

\$20 \$30 \$50 \$100 Other_____

Education Only

Conservation Only

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All Contributions are Tax Deductible

If you prefer credit card, visit our online donation page at <http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/giving/giving.php>.

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