

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.

FOREST PARK PROJECT DAY—PAGE 5

12TH ANNUAL HONEYSUCKLE REMOVAL PROJECT

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6TH FROM 9A TO 12P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

BUSCH & WELDON SPRING CONSERVATION AREAS

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6TH AT 8A

CONSERVATION FORUM—PAGE 8

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 10TH FROM 6P TO 9P

HABITAT RESTORATION WORKDAY—PAGE 5

CREVE COEUR PARK HONEYSUCKLE KILL

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 13TH FROM 9A TO 1P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

DAY TRIP TO CENTRAL MISSOURI, INCLUDING EAGLE BLUFFS

TO RESERVE, E-MAIL PAT AT PLLUEDERS479@AOL.COM.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 13TH

NATURE WALK FOR KIDS—PAGE 8

CREVE COEUR LAKE MEMORIAL PARK

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 14TH AT 10A

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

WE APOLOGIZE, BUT THERE WILL BE NO PROGRAM THIS MONTH.

PLEASE WATCH THE NEWSLETTER FOR FUTURE ANNOUNCEMENTS

AS OUR REGULAR SCHEDULE SHOULD RESUME IN JANUARY.

WE REGRET ANY INCONVENIENCE.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

HORSESHOE LAKE STATE PARK IN ILLINOIS

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 20TH

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 3

RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY

SATURDAY DECEMBER 11TH

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FeederWatch Season Starts

The 2010-11 season of **Project FeederWatch** begins **November 13**, though you can sign up at any time. FeederWatchers keep track of their birds through the winter and report their tallies each week. With each season, FeederWatch increases in importance as a unique monitoring tool for more than 100 bird species that winter in North America.

What sets FeederWatch apart from other monitoring programs is the detailed picture that FeederWatch data provide about weekly changes in bird distribution and abundance across the United States and Canada.

Because FeederWatchers count the number of individuals of each species they see several times throughout the winter, FeederWatch data are extremely powerful for detecting and explaining gradual changes in the wintering ranges of many species. In short, FeederWatch data are important because they provide information about bird population biology that cannot be detected by any other available method.

Visit www.feederwatch.org to learn more and to sign up. New participants receive a kit with a handbook, a bird-identification poster, calendar, and instruction booklet. There is a \$15 fee to help cover the costs of materials and participant support. You and your family can have fun learning about our birds while obtaining important data for their future conservation! ♦

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.

Officers

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president@stlouisaudubon.org

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Newsletter

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

Audubon Center Seeking Volunteers

As part of its *Mississippi River Initiative*, Audubon has established an Audubon Center in the St. Louis region, near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The **Audubon Center at Riverlands** is located within the U.S. Corps of Engineers' *Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary*.

The Center will include boat-based nature tourism experiences on the Mississippi River and River islands; a state-of-the-art birding and wildlife trail throughout the entire region; educational programming for kids and adults; environmental leadership development; an intense focus on improving water quality for current and future generations; community and economic development initiatives; and advocacy to restore and conserve the River and its habitats.

We are pleased to report that construction is in the final stages and we look forward to a soft opening this winter (TBD) followed by a Grand Opening once all the building exhibits have been fabricated and installed next spring (TBD). Please stop in and see us on your next visit to Riverlands!

For information about volunteering, programming, events or supporting the center, please contact: Dr. Patricia Hagen, Executive Director at phagen@audubon.org or Jane Drake, Education Director at (636) 899-0090 or jane.drake3@gmail.com. ◆



Director's Report

By Mitch Leachman

It is my great pleasure to report the success of our first-ever Trivia Night fundraiser held just a few short weeks ago on October 16th at the Bridgeton Community Center! 84 people participated and helped us raise over \$2,000 for the education and conservation programs of the Chapter and the community awareness efforts of the Maryland Heights Residents group.

Raffles and silent auctions are key elements of events such as this, and they would not be possible without the generous donation of prizes from our supporters. Please help me thank the following generous donors by patronizing their establishments (where possible):

Bozzay Florist	Breadsmith of St. Louis
Extra Thyme Catering	Farm & Home Supply of Quincy, IL
Sheryl Jacobs	Dency Kahn
Laurie's Shoes	Mitchell James Salon
REI, Inc.	Richard Spener Photography
Dave Rogles	Schnucks of Maryland Heights
Whole Foods Market	Wild Bird Center of South St. Louis County
Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop	

Also, special thanks to all those that helped make the evening a success—from soliciting donations to helping setup to staffing the event—including Glenn Changar, Kim Cuddeback, Charlie Deutsch, Polly Freshwater, Craig Lanham, Karen Meyer, Melissa Moulton, Julie Nicolai, Bryan Prather and Dave Rogles.

Of course, THANKS to those that participated! We greatly appreciate your support. We do plan to repeat this event at least once a year, and hope you will consider joining us next time. It is a great time for a great cause! Until then, keep your brains sharp! ◆

Field Trips, Etc.

Nov 6th to Busch & Weldon Spring Conservation

Areas: This all day trip meets at 8:00 am. Take Hwy 94 south from Hwy 40 1.3 miles and turn right at light for Hwy D. Continue 2 miles to entrance on right. Turn left at the "T" and meet in lot on right for Hampton Lake.

Nov 13th Day Trip to Central Missouri: We will join the Columbia Audubon Society and tour Little Dixie Lake, Bradford Farm, and Eagle Bluffs. We will meet at a Hwy 70 rest area at 6 am and caravan and carpool to Little Dixie Lake. This is an all day trip. We hope to return to the meeting spot before 6 pm. Reservations required—e-mail Pat and details will be sent prior to the trip: plueders479@aol.com.

Birds we have seen in previous years include Short-eared Owls, Smith's Longspurs, and American

Pipits. We will stop for lunch at a local restaurant, but you can also bring your lunch, snacks, and water.

Nov 20th to Horseshoe Lake area in Illinois: Pat Lueders will lead this half-day trip that begins at 8:30 am. Take I-70 east across the Poplar St. Bridge. Exit at Hwy 111 (exit 6) and turn left. Go about 2 miles to the State Park entrance. Meet at the first parking lot on the right.

Dec 11th to Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary: All day trip that meets at 9:00 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.

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.

California Birdin'

by Lynne Breakstone

In July my husband and I traveled west, beginning with a 2-day train trip to Glacier National Park. On our first morning in a rushing stream next to our lodge we spotted 2 ducks we had never seen before. They were Harlequin ducks, which for us were life birds. Because we did not see the eye-catching male, it took us a while to identify them. What surprised us was that they chose a waterfall area in a stream with very heavy water flow: amazing that they were not washed downstream by the intense force of the water.

Later in our trip we went to San Francisco where we hired a nature guide Eddie Bartley and his partner, Noreen Weeden. If you ever want superb birding coupled with a wealth of natural history information about northern California, we highly recommend them—Naturetrip. Eddie and Noreen picked us up and drove us to three excellent birding sites, and we had a wonderful half-day trip for a very reasonable price.

Our first stop was very near where we were staying with our son in Potrero Hill, in the southern part of San Francisco. To our surprise Heron's Head Park, an exciting wetland restoration project, was just minutes from Potrero Hill in a tidal wetlands area that is still quite industrial. SF Bay is a major stopping point for migratory birds, however, in the early 1990's, a scientist with the US Geological Survey found that it had been altered more by mankind than any other estuary in the US, creating unhealthy conditions for fish, wildlife and human populations. When people finally began to recognize the sad state of the bay, local and federal agencies and local conservation groups (including Audubon with 8 chapters in the Bay Area) started looking for solutions. Slowly tidal mudflats and wetlands are being restored, and Heron's Head Park is a success story. We saw oystercatchers, plovers, whimbrels and a delightful Black-necked Stilt family among other birds. Eddie explained that the white-crowned sparrows there are developing different songs from those a few miles away, which may eventually result in speciation, the evolutionary process by which new biological species arise.

We really discovered what a good find our Naturetrip guides were when discussing our solo birding of the previous day. Armed with our Sibley's Western birds we had explored wetlands in the Sonoma area. We thought for sure we were seeing dowitchers, but Sibley puts them in the Bay Area only in the winter and this

was July. Eddie Bartley confirmed we probably had seen dowitchers which were some of the very first individuals to arrive for the "winter." By ourselves with the Sibley, we had no way to know this. He also got very excited about a semi-palmated plover because it was the first one he had seen since last spring, something else we wouldn't have known. Other life birds for us were the Ash-throated Flycatcher and the Nuttall's Woodpecker.

Eddie and Noreen, both affiliated with Golden Gate Audubon, are two of the authors who published *A Field Guide to 100 Birds of Heron's Head*. It is a pleasure to spend time with them, and we highly recommend their company Nature Trip (www.naturetrip.com) for anyone visiting California. ◆



Long-billed Dowitcher

Al Smith Photo

Honeysuckle Removal Key to Restoration Work

Experts across the Midwest agree that Asian bush honeysuckle is an aggressive, non-native plant that should be removed from the landscape whenever possible. Forming dense stands in a variety of habitats, bush honeysuckle leafs out very early in spring and retains its leaves far into the fall. This extensive shading often results in a complete loss of the ground layer, most native shrubs and even some understory trees. Some large stands can also stop forest growth as canopy tree seedlings fail to germinate in the intense, early shade. Finally, native songbird populations are affected by a severe reduction in insect food as our native species of plant-eating insects do not eat bush honeysuckle.

Many groups and agencies around St. Louis are tackling this problem, and fall is a popular time of year to cut honeysuckle stands. We hope you can find time to participate in one or more of these very worthwhile habitat projects. Specifically, consider our own project at Creve Coeur Park on Saturday, November 13th from 9a to 1p. Lunch will be provided as will gloves and a limited supply of tools. Please register by calling Mitch at (314) 599-7390 or e-mail at stlaudubon@charter.net. Also, on November 6th, Forest Park Forever and the Kennedy Woods Advisory Group will conduct their 12th annual cut at Forest Park from 9a to 12p. Contact Anne Grossmann to register at volunteer@forestparkforever.org or (314) 367-7275, ext. 14.

If you would like more information about bush honeysuckle, conducting your own eradication campaign and, especially, what to plant in its place, visit <http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/conservation/honeysuckle.php>. The site includes links to a number of online resources. ◆

Lakeshore Cleanup Nets 600 Gallons of Trash



Doug Durham & Others at Work

STL Audubon Photo

17 volunteers, including six members of the local chapter of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association, showed up on Saturday, October 23rd to remove trash from the Creve Coeur Creek watershed in Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. The group's efforts were focused at Mallard Lake, the sediment basin which Creve Coeur Creek flows through just before reaching Creve Coeur Lake.

After just three hours, the group had cleaned nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of lakeshore and filled 53 bags. County Park staff estimated the haul at over 3 cubic yards.

This was the fifth cleanup in the Park since fall 2008 and the third supported by a National Audubon TogetherGreen grant. Combined, the last three work days involved 187 people and removed over 50 cubic yards of trash. ◆

Trip Report from BK Leach

By Josh Uffman

A hardy group of about 20 individuals worked hard trying to flush a Yellow Rail the morning of October 2nd at the B.K. Leach Conservation Area–King's Lake Tract for the 4th Annual SLAS Yellow Rail Walk. This is always a fun, but tiring fieldtrip, so thanks to each of you for giving your best effort. However, after walking pools 8 and 5 extensively we did not encounter a Yellow Rail. But, by noon we had recorded approximately 50 species. I say “approximately” because I am not sure if I recorded everything that everyone saw. Bird numbers seemed very low compared to the previous year’s results, especially sparrow numbers. However, it was quite windy most of the morning, possibly hampering their activity. By the end of the day we had observed the following highlights (all sightings were in Lincoln County).

B.K. Leach CA – King's Lake Tract:

An American Bittern with great views for all as it flushed from the marsh in front of us. 2–3 Northern Harriers, and a Peregrine Falcon seen from Norton Woods Road as it chased through a flock of blackbirds (west of pool 11). 10+ Sora—a very low count compared to previous years. 1 probable King Rail. This bird flushed quite far out in front of us. The rufous and darker brown back was quite apparent, and many in the group commented on the very large size, especially in comparison to the Sora we were seeing.

3–4 Wilson's Snipe, and 3–4 Marsh Wren. 2+ Palm Warbler and at least 2 Dickcissels were seen near the headquarters building.

Sparrows included: Savannah, Song, LeConte's (2 and a lifer for at least one in our group), Song, Swamp, and White-crowned. As mentioned above, sparrow numbers overall were very low, and this is also the first year we have not recorded a Nelson's Sparrow during this fieldtrip.

Prairie Slough CA:

1 – Cooper's Hawk allowed for a short discussion on the difficulty of identifying accipiters no matter how long you have been birding. A couple of Chimney Swifts still overhead were pointed out by Mike Thelen. The only group of birds we encountered included: Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Palm Warbler. Yellow-rumps were notably missing.

Thanks to all who called out birds for us today and hope you can join us next year! ◆



Wilson's Snipe



Palm Warbler

Photos by Al Smith

Trip Report from Two Rivers NWR

By Mike Grant

The Audubon trip to Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, October 16th, was very successful. It was a beautiful day to spend outside in some great habitat, but the summer birds were mostly gone and the winter birds weren't really in.

At Gilbert Lake we had a few Wood Ducks and Mallards, Kingfisher, a vocal Greater Yellowlegs fly by, a Great Blue Heron perched high in a tree, Great Egrets, Pileated, Red-headed and Downy Woodpeckers, and Yellow-rump Warblers high in cottonwoods. In the Mississippi River we saw an otter, and several schools of Asian Carp would all jump out of the river making quite a commotion.

The road leading to Lower Stump Lake was closed for construction, so we crossed the ferry to Calhoun County. At Swan Lake we saw a great many coots, Ruddy Ducks and Pelicans, a few Ring-necked Ducks, Cormorants, herons and Great Egrets, Ring-billed Gulls and Barn Swallows. A distant shorebird went unidentified, but a Common Loon was found.

A walk along the lake yielded a large flock of Grackles moving through the woods. We were able to drive a normally closed road thanks to the volunteers and picked up first year Shovelers and a couple more Greater Yellowlegs.

We had a real treat for lunch at the HQ; Pam, a volunteer from Treehouse Wildlife Center, had a kestrel and four owls for us to see.

At Riverlands we saw lots of mudflats without any shorebirds. Although late in the afternoon, we found more Greater Yellowlegs, two Snipe and a probable Semipalmated SP in Heron Pond. A short drive on the Confluence access road added Horned Lark and American Pipit.

Hope you can join us next year, and best wishes for a speedy recovery to Mike Thelen! ◆



Clockwise from above: American White Pelicans, American Kestrel and Barn Owl

All Photos by Mike Grant

2010 Whitney and Anna Harris Conservation Forum
*Global Climate Change: Environmental Impacts, Human
 Society, and Policy*

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

5:30 p.m. Registration and View Exhibits

6:00 p.m. Program Begins

Shoenberg Auditorium at Ridgway Center (Main Entrance)

Missouri Botanical Garden

4344 Shaw Boulevard

Session 1: 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Dr. Stephen Jackson, Professor of Botany
 University of Wyoming

“Ecological and societal consequences of climate change: Forecasts from the past”

Dr. Patricia Parker, E. Desmond Lee Professor in Zoological Studies
 Department of Biology, University of Missouri–St. Louis

“Public health and climate change: Who, when, and where?”

Refreshments and View Exhibits: 7:00 –7:40 p.m.

Session 2: 7:40–9:00 p.m.

Dr. Lea–Rachel Kosnik

Department of Economics, University of Missouri–St. Louis

“The two most important economic implications of climate change”

Dr. David Robertson

Department of Political Science, University of Missouri–St. Louis

“Why is it so difficult for the American government to deal with climate change?”

Registration required: Call: (314)516–6203 or email: hintonpa@umsl.edu

Event is free and open to the public

Co-sponsored by the Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center, University of Missouri–St. Louis,
 Missouri Botanical Garden, Saint Louis Zoo, and Academy of Science–St. Louis

Audubon Nature Walks for Kids

Consider our Nature Walks for children ages 6 and up. Bring your kids (or grandkids) to see and learn about our amazing birds and their surroundings. The walks are level, easy and begin at 10 am.

Sunday, Nov 14 at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. From I-270, take Dorsett Rd west to “T” at Marine and turn right. At base of bluff, take first left and follow lot along lake to shelter at turn-around.

Wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather. Don’t forget your water bottle, sunscreen and bug spray. If you have binoculars, bring them along. Reservations not required. Walk will only be canceled for severe weather. If you have questions please contact Nikki Davenport at (314) 566–3445 or nikiastro@att.net. ◆

Myths, Folklore and Legends

By Craig Lanham

I am always in awe of owls. They are really amazing birds of prey. They have fascinated man for thousands of years, becoming mythical and legendary.

In a matter of a few weeks I had the great pleasure of being told that if you see an owl, someone is going to die. I heard this on three separate occasions, and having seen owls almost on a weekly basis, I can honestly say no one around me has died—I think. Owls have had the misfortune to be the messengers of death in a lot of folklore.

The last occasion I was sitting at an informational table with the Chapter's two display owls—a Great Horned Owl and an Eastern Screech Owl. I was having a blast talking to people about owls and their unique place on our planet. A young woman walked to the display and gasped at the sight of the Great Horned Owl. Not the gasp a seasoned birder would make, but one more of horror. Then she asked the question, "If you see one of these things doesn't someone die?"

"That's an old myth," I responded. "You don't believe that do you?"

"Yes," she said, as she stared into the two glass eyes of a thoroughly dead and beautiful taxidermy owl.

I tried to explain to her that there is no truth to the myth, and how incredible a Great Horned Owl was, especially if you see one in the wild. She responded with "That's creepy." I looked at the young man who accompanied her. He had the biggest grin on his face—the grin of "You can talk all day if you want to pal, she isn't listening."

I asked her if she had seen one before. The one word, "Yes," was still her response as she continued staring into the owl's fake eyes almost like she was waiting for a sign.

"Did anyone die?" I asked. "Yes," again she responded.

The young man couldn't take it anymore and burst out laughing telling her that no one has died and it was time to go. I dared not embarrass her by laughing. People will be people. Owls will be owls.

I truly hope the young lady has not spent any time worrying about her loved ones because of her encounter with these two stuffed, glass-encased, former nocturnal hunters. I could only wonder if someone had seen an owl before these two made the trip to the taxidermist. So in her honor, here are some fun owl facts.

- The Great Horned Owl is one of the only predators that will hunt skunks--yes skunks.
- During winter months, owls plan ahead and will cache their food in times of plenty, and if they find it frozen they will sit or brood on it until it thaws.
- Owls have a unique outer toe on each foot. It has a special joint that can be positioned to the front when in flight or when catching prey, and to the rear when perched or carrying prey.
- Owls keep rodent populations in check.

I heard another modern myth. A casino in the City of St. Louis south of the Chain of Rocks Bridge is a good idea. This is the City's bid to add one more casino to a casino saturated area. The North St. Louis County proposal has died for now. (Any owls sighted?) The Missouri Gaming Commission once again needs to hear your voices and receive your letters. No more casinos in the ever diminishing spaces that St. Louis has for migratory birds! ***(See Karen Meyer's update on the next page regarding both casino proposals.)***

Conserve and share our Natural world! ◆

Trumpeter Swan Observations Wanted

By Peg Abbott

Preparations are underway for the second season of Trumpeter Watch, a program to track wintering Trumpeters as breeding populations expand in the northern states. We hear from them that Trumpeter Swans are getting restless and moving around quite a bit. I would really appreciate your help with sightings on these birds throughout the fall and winter. Arrival records for any location will be much appreciated. Comments on number, age (gray or white birds), and good location data – county or GPS coordinates, name of lake or refuge, etc.

Hoping to streamline the reporting process this year, Trumpeter Watch has partnered with eBird. So, if you send records there, we will see them. You may also just send us an email (peg@trumpeterswansociety.org) with your data. We also have a Trumpeter Swan Society Facebook page where you can report your findings and post photos if you wish. Finally, you can even mail in forms found on the Citizen Science section of our website www.trumpeterswansociety.org.

The program is only as strong as the reporting effort, and Missouri and Illinois are key states. It is going to be an exciting fall and winter, and I hope to hear from many of you. Thank you. ◆



Trumpeter Swans at Riverlands Bird Sanctuary

Photo by Al Smith

Columbia Bottom Victory!

By Karen Meyer

All you've done has made a difference! Many of you have sent letters and postcards to the Missouri Gaming Commission in opposition to the proposed casino on 370 acres south of the Columbia Bottom Conservation Area near the Confluence. The good news is that North County Development LLC is now out of the running for the 13th license due to funding issues and constraints of the Gaming Commission deadlines. Thanks, in part, to all of your efforts, that area is safe from development for now. See http://www.savetheconfluence.org/?page_id=6 for links to all the recent news coverage.

Regrettably, there is another more recent proposal to place a casino at the Chain of Rocks Bridge, which will involve some of the same issues with regard to wildlife. Migrating and resident birds would be threatened with injury and death from window strikes if a multi-level building is constructed on the river at this location. Lights from a large structure can disorient and disrupt the migration patterns of hundreds of species of birds and waterfowl that use the Mississippi Flyway. Tell the Commission you also oppose the Chain of Rocks casino proposal—planned in a historic area, as well. For a current update on how you can help, visit www.savetheconfluence.org. ◆

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

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!

If already a Chapter-Supporting member, you need do nothing but accept our thanks!

Memberships are Tax Deductible
Less the \$15 Cost of the Book

St. Louis Audubon Society
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