IN THIS ISSUE:

- What can you do about climate change? Support birds by making the right coffee choice
- Director’s Report: Government works. The political process is essential. Politicians can be responsive to your needs.
- Volunteer Spotlight
- Public Meeting: St. Louis County Parks

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Saturday, February 8: Birding Field Trip
Thursday, February 13: Great Missouri Birding Trail: Ethic of Conservation Presentation
Saturday, February 22: Birding Field Trip
Saturday, March 7: Beginner Bird Walk; Owl Prowl

Well, so is this bird! Males will perform a “sky dance” February through March to attract a mate. Conservationist Aldo Leopold characterized their call as “peents” and described their dance in his book, A Sand County Almanac:

*Up and up he goes, the spirals steeper and smaller, the twittering louder and louder, until the performer is only a speck in the sky. Then, without warning, he tumbles like a crippled plane, giving voice in a soft liquid warble that a March bluebird might envy. At a few feet from the ground he levels off and returns to his peenting ground, usually to the exact spot where the performance began, and there resumes his peenting.*

Can you name this bird?

If you know the common name of this bird, email Amy at operations.stlaudubon@gmail.com for a chance to win a 12 oz. bag of bird-friendly coffee from Birds and Beans!

- Email your answer by Monday, February 10. All correct answers will be placed in a random drawing.

Hint: Check out the February issue of the Missouri Conservationist magazine to learn more!
What can you do about climate change?  
Support birds by making the right coffee choice

By Jean Favara

Coffee is one of the most popular beverages in the world with more than 400 billion cups consumed each year. Coffee is often grown in the areas of the world such as Central America that provide important overwintering habitat for many bird species, including Baltimore Orioles, Prothonotary Warblers and Ovenbirds. Sun-grown monoculture coffee plantations destroy native habitat and do not support the needs of overwintering birds or other wildlife. With the many challenges that birds already face (such as climate change) and scientists revealing the continuing decline of bird populations, it is now even more critical that every habitat that supports a bird's life cycle is protected.

If you are a coffee-drinker (and so many of us are) purchasing Bird-Friendly ® Coffee is an easy way to support our feathered friends and their habitat needs. Bird Friendly ® Coffee is a shade-grown organic certification program managed by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. The program requires coffee farms to meet criteria that include USDA organic certification as well as regulating canopy height and structural diversity while utilizing native tree species. Thanks to the ever-increasing environmental awareness of consumers (a good thing!), this coffee product is certainly not the only shade-grown coffee available on the market today. Audubon also provides information on how to wisely choose other shade-grown coffee sources.

Drinking coffee grown using bird-friendly techniques is one of the seven simple actions to help birds developed by Cornell Lab or Ornithology. I encourage you to do your homework and think of birds and their global habitat needs before making your next coffee purchase. It is the accumulation of individual actions that can make a big difference in creating a future where birds continue to thrive. Then, sit back and enjoy a wonderful cup of coffee that supports important bird habitat as you watch the feathered beauties in your own yard!
Government works. The political process is essential. Politicians can be responsive to your needs.

By Mitch Leachman

I know. Almost sounds like ‘fighting words’ given the rhetoric of all stripes for years about government being too big, the system is broken, and politicians are evil, greedy and power-hungry. That’s really too bad, since many of us know better. Yet, we’ve allowed the claims to go unchallenged. That must stop, especially in a presidential election year and with municipal elections right around the corner.

Yeah, I said municipal elections. Your city or county council. Your school board. Your mayor or county commissioner. SO much work gets done at the local level. From streets and traffic to school construction and planning and zoning decisions, so much of the health, safety and look of the community in which you live is determined at the local level. Who are your candidates? Ask them questions about what matters to you in your backyard. If you don’t like their answers, run for their office.

In just the last few years, us nature-lovers have had a number of victories here in our own community. The St. Louis Ice Center, intended for 40 acres of Creve Coeur Park in 2017, was forced to relocate to private property by a public information and pressure campaign on our county officials. In 2018, the Yes for Our Parks campaign committee facilitated a change to the St. Louis County charter that now requires a vote of the people before public park land can be sold or altered for non-recreation purposes, and nearly 80% of voters were encouraged to support it. Then, just one month ago, the Maryland Heights Tax Increment Financing Commission voted down a $151 million proposal to use tax subsidies to build out the ‘bottoms’ around Creve Coeur Park, after significant vocal opposition at multiple public hearings.

You get the idea. Government works when you work it! Really!

We are a representative democracy. You elect people to represent your interests at various levels of government. Obviously, should they not satisfy you, vote them out. But long before that happens, talk to them. Write, e-mail, call them. Attend hearings and council meetings and speak out. Make sure they know what you care about. Tell them how to vote. Demand they represent you.

Our political system is not broken. We took it for granted, thought voting was enough, and in many cases even gave up on that. Get engaged. Demand representation. Make government work for you!
Volunteer Recognition ~ Celebrating your service!

In Grateful Recognition of Your Outstanding Dedication and Commitment to Providing Quality Educational Experiences for Children, Families and the Community

Awarded to: Bobbie Poor

When asked what has made the Education Team so special, Bobbie replied:

The teamwork, the feeling of being family, the exceptional dedication to purpose, and always, the willingness to do more than is asked. The power of volunteer ethics and dedication is a moving force in Audubon. You will find that in abundance on the Ed Team!

Audubon is all about teaching. Bringing Conservation Home is...teaching! Member-led bird walks are...teaching! Habitat rescue and restoration is ...teaching! Outreach programs are...teaching! I am humbled and I am honored to have been a part of this.

YOU'RE INVITED!

PUBLIC MEETING

St. Louis County Parks is seeking public input for use of former proposed ice site in Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park

TUESDAY, FEB 11, 7-9 PM

Maryland Heights Community Center
2300 McKelvey Road, Maryland Heights, MO 63043

The Parks Department encourages individuals, park user groups and environmental groups to attend and provide feedback during this public meeting.

A pre-meeting survey is available at:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SLC_Parks

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

http://www.stlouisaudubon.org