

Taking Flight





Birding. Conservation. Education.

This is how the St. Louis Audubon Society distinguishes itself as a regional leader and builds a community centered on nature.

Birds

With our historic emphasis on field trips, led by skilled volunteers, we promote birding as an entry point for appreciation of the natural world for people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and interests. We place special emphasis on bird walks for beginners, in collaboration with partner organizations, but our longer trips are popular with experienced birders as well. Our participants visit a wealth of parks, refuges, and conservation areas, where they see for themselves what environmental stewardship means. And we help people explore the opportunities for citizen science as they monitor migration patterns and track the effects of climate change on our world.

Conservation

We serve as a regional leader in advocating for the protection and restoration of habitat for birds and other wildlife. Our nationally recognized Bring Conservation Home program has worked with over 1,400 area homeowners to create native ecosystems on their own properties—an important conservation resource for the region. We take pride, as well, in our partnerships with like-minded organizations, including other nonprofits, municipalities, universities, environmental groups, and government agencies.

Education

Our volunteers become public spokespersons on birds and natural habitats. We design and deliver engaging presentations for children and adults, and we facilitate nature-based activities at community outreach events. Our two professional staff are leaders in conservation and education with decades of administrative and field experience. We are always on the lookout for more young members, volunteers, and board members, and we seek greater engagement with underrepresented groups in our community.





Background

The St. Louis Audubon Society began in 1915 as the St. Louis Bird Club.

For over a century, we have connected our community to the natural world by advocating for birds and their habitats. The world has changed since the early days of the 20th century, and much of this is for the better; yet old challenges persist while new threats have emerged.

Our organization includes two professional staff members, a Board of Directors, committees organized around our Vice Presidents for Education and Outreach and for Conservation, hundreds of local members, and over 3,000 area members of the National Audubon Society who are considered members of our local chapter. We have a large contact list of several thousand friends and supporters with whom we regularly connect via email and social media. A dedicated group of volunteers supports our work by contributing expertise and time to field trips, conservation projects, education, and outreach. Our volunteers contribute thousands of hours each year to these activities.

Current Efforts

Early in our second century of operation, we find our work is more relevant and urgent than at any point since our founding. We must address global threats and challenges as best we can while continuing to focus on local issues that the St. Louis region faces.

The loss of wildlife habitat continues as our human footprint expands into small woodlots, open fields, and remnant wetlands. The effects of climate change are pervasive: it has been tied to shifting ranges of many bird species, changes in plant blooming and fruiting cycles, and expansion of breeding seasons for some pest organisms. Just as serious is the often-weak public response to environmental problems. In part, this is due to a failure to teach our citizens, and especially our children, about the natural world.

Conservation, habitat restoration and birdwatching have become more popular and important than ever before as ways to personally connect with nature.

With this backdrop, we have identified specific areas for local focus over the next few years.

Increasing diversity is a challenge for the St. Louis Audubon Society. As we look to the future, we need more young members, volunteers, and board members, and we seek greater engagement with underrepresented groups in our community.

We are committed to developing our educational programming, with a focus on implementation, an expanded volunteer base, and school partnerships.



Achievements

Our work has never been easy. Yet through the contributions of our dedicated volunteers and staff we have many successful initiatives to be proud of.



Bring Conservation Home, a nationally recognized program, has helped over 1,400 area homeowners recreate nature in their own landscapes, resulting in an estimated 700 acres of improved plant and animal habitat.



Bird of the Week is our highly popular weekly publication. We send email and Facebook posts to over 5,000 members and friends to educate our community about our birds, their habitats and characteristics.



The establishment of **BirdSafeSTL**, a project focusing on making our urban and suburban areas safer for birds.



We designed and installed an educational **pollinator garden** at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park.

Going Forward

Our mission is simple: creating a community connection to nature through education and conservation. St. Louis Audubon Society unites people with varied skills and backgrounds through their common interest in appreciating and understanding nature. We are committed to expanding this connection to nature across the broader community of the St. Louis area. This mission rewards us every day.

Words From Our Friends

"Birding is an activity that St. Louisans can enjoy their entire lives, and connects them to the natural world no matter where they enjoy birds—in their backyards, parks, or other urban or suburban areas. The work of the St. Louis Audubon Society is critically important in helping people of the St. Louis region learn about birds and how to make human spaces as bird-friendly as possible—through the group's Bring Conservation Home program, guided bird hikes, and other educational endeavors. The Missouri Prairie Foundation's Grow Native! program is proud to partner with St. Louis Audubon in promoting native plants to benefit birds, pollinators, people, and urban living."

~ Carol Davit, Executive Director
Missouri Prairie Foundation & its Grow Native! program

"St. Louis Audubon's "Bring Conservation Home" is a force of human nature, transforming our home environments and personal awareness. Growing biodiversity instead of just turf is a bloomingly popular regional you-can-do, thanks in great part to the customized expert service BCH provides. Coupled with Audubon's leadership in Partners for Native Landscaping educational programs and practical ecological advocacy, this work seeds the what-how-why of native planting. Benefits to birds, insects, animals - including us -also sustain Audubon's operations and growth. Resourceful! Delightful! Imperative!"

~ Jean Ponzi, Green Resources Manager
EarthWays Center of Missouri Botanical Garden

"The work the St. Louis Audubon Society has long done and continues to do has been invaluable to the birds and people of our region. We know them to be formidable leaders in protecting the best places for birds in the St. Louis Region and engaging communities in these critical efforts. Their conservation, education and advocacy mission is as important today than ever in light of the pressing environmental challenges we face."

~ Ken Buchholz, Center Director
Audubon Center at Riverlands



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