



Director's Message

Amy Weeks

It's about that time when we begin to bid adieu to our beloved Ruby-throated Hummingbirds as they migrate south to Central America for the winter.

Many wonder when exactly they should take down their feeders or, if keeping them up will delay a bird's journey south. Rest assured, your feathered friends will indeed head south when the days grow shorter, even if food is still abundant.



In Missouri, some Ruby-throated Hummingbirds begin their journey as early as mid-August and most are gone by the end of October. We suggest leaving your feeders up a few weeks after you've seen your last hummingbird. And, who knows, you could be one of the lucky ones to spot another hummingbird migrant who might be passing through, like the Rufous Hummingbird.

Many of us will surely miss their vibrant colors and zippy behavior this winter, but we also know there are many other backyard beauties to enjoy. With the colder weather coming, your backyard birds will appreciate the extra energy boost from a [winter feeding routine](#).

If you're looking for a refresher on general backyard feeding, check out the [Audubon Guide to Birdfeeding](#). If you prefer a book we recommend [The Joy of Birdfeeding: The Essential Guide to Attracting and Feeding Our Backyard Birds](#), by Jim Carpenter. You can find it online or at your local Wild Birds Unlimited store.

We are so grateful to be part of a community of people who love and support nature!

President's Message

Bill Rowe

A note for users of eBird

The Missouri Birding Society (MBS), our sister organization, has joined Birding Hotspots, a volunteer effort to augment eBird hotspot information by collecting landscape photos and tips for birding from local birders. If you go to birdinghotspots.org/region/US-MO, you can see examples, and you can upload your own habitat photos of any area and, if you like, write some text to help other birders. To upload a photo for a site, open the list and click

on that site; you can then click on Upload Photos and a space appears to place your photo. It will be reviewed by an editor before it shows on the website. The St. Louis area has well over 200 sites designated as hotspots, and most of them have no photo yet.

Travel with St. Louis Audubon

Our recent venture into ecotourism—a week’s birding tour of south Texas last February—went very well, and we are working on possibilities for 2024 and beyond with our partner company, Naturalist Journeys. At this point, a trip to southern Arizona looks very likely for the first week of August, 2024, but before we can firm up the dates and open registration, we would like to hear from anyone who likes that idea and believes they would probably sign up, to give us an approximate preliminary count of how many are interested. If that includes you, please drop a line to Amy Weeks at amy@stlouisaudubon.org.

Unfortunately we can’t guarantee you a place on that basis, but if we run the trip and you were among those who contacted us, we will send you an early email announcement that registration is open.

In addition, we are contemplating another possibility that comes up sooner: a short trip to New Mexico, likely the first week of March. Again, if this interests you, let us know!

Photo above: Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Ornithological Forecast, October 2023

Bill Rowe

Besides being often a beautiful month for any outdoor activities, October is an exciting crossover period for birds. The migration of small passerines to the neotropics is winding down, but many of them will still be coming through, especially in the early part of the month, when migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, cuckoos, tanagers, and flycatchers can still be found. Another cohort, the shorter-distance migrants that may winter in the southern U.S., like Indigo Buntings, Orange-crowned Warblers, Eastern Phoebes, and many more, are still numerous, and brushy and grassy areas will host the many kinds of sparrows that reach us only when the weather gets cooler. Wetlands will be filling up with ducks in ever-increasing numbers and variety, along with some early loons and grebes and growing flocks of gulls; Greater White-fronted Geese will be passing overhead. The movement of raptors will make sky-watching always worthwhile, as the accipiters, buteos, harriers, falcons, and eagles move through (or arrive to stay for the winter, in some cases). Shorebirds, whose diversity provided a challenge in August and September, will remain wherever their habitat remains, though in somewhat reduced numbers. And no matter what the weather, the possibilities for an unexpected rarity are high, as occasional individuals of almost anything can get diverted from their usual routes. In every way, October can be the most invigorating month!



Photo above: Northern Harrier



Although it may not feel like it quite yet, we have made it past summer. You may notice the bright purple and yellow blooms of asters (*Symphyotrichum spp.*) and goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*) as they make the final floral appearance of

the growing season. Autumn weather is quickly approaching, and with it, our gardens begin to prepare for the dormant season. The first image that comes to mind is that of falling leaves. What was green turns shades of red, yellow, orange, and brown before layering across the ground.

If you do just one thing to best support wildlife through the winter, **leave the leaves.**

Leaf litter, especially underneath the canopy of native trees, is vital habitat space for many native insects, which require leaf litter to complete their metamorphosis. Not only does this practice lead to the increased population of mature pollinators the following spring, but it also contributes to an often overlooked winter food source for birds: grubs and pupae. To round out the winter diet of native birds, remember also to let those seed heads and berries persist. The best bird feeder you can have is a native garden full of seeds and bugs!

As we watch our neighbors spend time, energy, and money removing leaves from their yards, remind yourself that leaves are nutrients meant to feed the soil. Ecosystems are meant to cycle nutrients, with everything benefitting from the breakdown of the next. Our urban and suburban landscape has become sterile and disconnected from this process. Right now is the perfect time to reconnect it. **Leave the leaves.**

Photo above: New England Aster



LEAVE THE LEAVES

THE BIRDS WILL THANK YOU

St. Louis Audubon's Rich History: Preserved and Online

Gail Saxton

Interested in learning about St. Louis naturalists and how they were helping promote a better environment years or decades ago? November 11, 2023, marks the 108th anniversary of our organization, which began in 1915 as the St. Louis Bird Club. In celebration of this milestone, we are pleased to announce the online availability of St. Louis Bird Club/St. Louis Audubon newsletters published between 1932 and 2008.



As part of our effort to create a permanent archive, volunteers have begun to assemble key documents from throughout our long and distinguished history. Despite the lack of a physical "home," members in every generation saved important materials, enough to fill a couple of file cabinets. Among the treasures: the minutes of the very first club meeting. We have undertaken the task of digitizing items of general interest, focusing first on our newsletter collection. While it is not totally complete, it represents every era, and the issues contain accounts of varied Bird Club/Audubon activities, often written by members whose names today's readers will recognize as prominent early conservationists.

The newsletters are now available for anyone to review on the nonprofit digital library site "Internet Archive." To access the collection, you may use this

link: <https://archive.org/details/stl-audubon-news>. Alternatively, on the home page of Internet Archive, type Saint Louis Audubon Society Newsletters in the search box. Either way, you'll see that our grandparents and great-grandparents were engaged in lots of birding trips, Christmas bird counts, and other solid conservation work.

Our thanks go to Cliff Saxton, who scanned thousands of bulletin pages one-by-one; and Mark Heiman, who provided the technical expertise for linking up with Internet Archive.

We invite your help in furthering Audubon's historical preservation efforts. If you find relevant materials in your attic or basement, contact our volunteer archivist, Gail Saxton, at saxton.gail@gmail.com. We are especially interested in obtaining digital copies of post-2008 newsletters. Any format is welcomed -- we can still read small or large floppy disks!

Take a minute to check out newsletters from years gone by. They make fascinating reading.

WE'VE BEEN HAVING SOME FUN...AND SO HAVE YOU!
Check out some pictures from our most recent event.

Bring Conservation Home's Native Plant Sale: October 1, 2023





Photo credit: Shannon Bucklin

Online Auction

BID FOR THE BIRDS



Auction Opens:
Thursday, Nov 16



*Save
The
Date*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join others who share your interests in nature, birds and wildlife!

[October 7 - Beginner Bird Walk - Forest Park](#)

[October 7 - Field Trip - BK Leach CA](#)

[October 14 - Field Trip - Little Creve Coeur Lake Area](#)

[October 15 - Beginner Bird Walk - Tower Grove Park \(Youth & Family\)](#)

[October 28 - Beginner Bird Walk - Dardenne Greenway](#)

[October 28 - Field Trip - Carlyle Lake](#)

[November 4 - Beginner Bird Walk - Forest Park](#)

[November 4 - Field Trip - Busch CA](#)

[November 11 - Field Trip - Riverlands](#)

[December 2 - Field Trip - Two Rivers NWR](#)

[Beginner Bird Walk - December 2 - Forest Park](#)

[Field Trip - December 9 - Riverlands](#)



Full Calendar

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD MEETINGS

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 10

Please Note: Board meetings will be held by Zoom and will not meet in person until further notice. If you have an interest in joining our volunteer Board, please contact one of the officers or staff members.

Officers & Staff

Bill Rowe, President
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