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

Birding Field Trip—page 3
Creve Coeur Park’s Mallard Lake
Saturday April 18th at 8A

Birding Field Trip—page 3
Forest Park & Tower Grove Park
Saturday April 25th at 730A

Stargazing at Riverlands
Audubon Center at Riverlands
Saturday April 25th from 715P
http://riverlands.audubon.org/events/stargazing-apr-25th-riverlands-0

Forest Park Earth Day Festival
Sunday April 26th from 10A to 6P
http://www.stlouisearthday.org/events/festival/

Bat Program—page 2
Thornhill Branch of STL County Library
Wednesday April 29th at 7P

Stewardship Project
Restoration Day at McKelvey Woods Park
Saturday May 2nd from 9A to 1P

Birding Field Trip—page 3
Tower Grove Park
Saturday May 9th at 730A

Shaw Wildflower Market
Shaw Nature Reserve
Saturday May 9th from 9A to 4P
See event calendar at www.mobot.org

Birding Field Trip—page 3
Shaw Nature Reserve
Saturday May 16th at 730A

Riverlands Bird Blitz—page 6
Audubon Center at Riverlands
Saturday May 16th from 10A to 2P

Thank You!

Throughout the year we try to thank our many caring and passionate volunteers, without whom we would simply not exist. From board members to birders and habitat advisors to educators, we try not to miss an opportunity to express our appreciation.

In addition, early each year, we pause to thank all of our financial supporters, whose contributions are equally critical to our success. This past year each of you again showed your amazing generosity, with over 200 separate donations, totaling nearly $18,000! Our year-end appeal continues to be our single most important effort with over $12,500 received. This is in addition to in-kind donations, your memberships, Bring Conservation Home service fees and grants. See pages 8–9 for a complete listing of donors since February of 2014, and thanks so much! ✦
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 your interest and our need. If you have thought of serving in such a way, stop by or call one of us.

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

Proud Member of the

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Bats of Missouri
Wednesday, April 29th at 7:00 p.m.

Shelly Colatskie, Cave Ecologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation, will discuss these shy and intelligent creatures—14 kinds of which live in Missouri. Although they are sometimes referred to as flying mice, bats are not rodents. They belong to a group of mammals called chiroptera, meaning “hand-wing,” and are the only mammals that can fly. Bats occupy almost every habitat worldwide and are a primary predator of mosquitoes and many other insects that cause damage to farms and forests annually. Summer concertgoers at Forest Park at the Botanical Garden might even learn about the bats frequently seen flying over their heads!

Shelly received her Master of Science in Biology from Missouri State University and joined the Conservation Department in 2010. She helps coordinate annual hibernating bat surveys, summer mist netting surveys, pink planarian and Tumbling Creek Cave Snail surveys, cave gating, and private land surveys.

A short business meeting, our Annual Meeting, will precede the program and will include the election of the board of directors. All are welcome to attend, but only members may vote.

The event begins at 7 pm at the Thornhill Branch of the St. Louis County Library at 12863 Willowyck Dr, St. Louis, MO 63146, not far from I-270 and Hwy 364. For questions, call (314) 599-7390.

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Eastern Pipistrelle Bat
MDC Photo
President’s Message

By Linda Tossing

Spring is here! Spring is here! All one has to do is go outside and listen. The birds are singing and actively pairing up to start the nesting season. The winter residents like the White-throated Sparrow are heading north to stake out their breeding territories. The migrants, like the Tennessee Warbler, are starting to move through the area and the summer residents, like the Summer Tanager, are starting to arrive to set up their territories here in the St. Louis area and beyond.

I love the spring especially with the warming of the ground and the awakening of the plants that had gone dormant during winter. Today, while walking the woods, I saw Mayapples starting to pop up. The Redbuds and Serviceberry are starting to open and soon we will see Dogwood blooming.

Spring always reminds me that the seasons are so important to our wildlife and their habitat. The winter season is important to plants so they can regenerate in their dormancy and start to grow in the spring. Summer and Fall follow with other stages critical to their life cycle.

One of the programs the St. Louis Audubon Society offers is Bring Conservation Home (BCH), which helps homeowners and other urban landowners improve their landscape for our native birds, butterflies and such. Our BCH Habitat Advisors work year-round, but spring is especially busy as folks just like you look to make changes in their landscape before all the birds arrive and the summer heat comes on. If you would like to apply or simply get more information, simply visit www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH.

Field Trips, Etc.

**April 18th to Creve Coeur Park's Mallard Lake:** Mary Dueren leads this half day trip that includes easy walking and is great for beginners. Meet at 8 am in the lot at the Creve Coeur Lakehouse at 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Rd, 63146.

**April 25th to Forest Park/Tower Grove Park:** Bob Bailey & Dave Garcia lead this half day trip that includes moderate hiking and is good for beginners. Meet at 7:30 am in the lot of the Kennedy Memorial Forest off Wells Drive, just west of the Zoo.

**May 9th 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 16th 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.

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

Friday Mornings: April 24th, May 8th, June 12th
Group Gathers: 7am at trailhead/base of drive to The Barn at Chaumette
Birding Time: 7:30am – 9am
Brunch: 9:15am – 10:30am
Fee: $35.81 per guest; includes brunch, tax, gratuity and $18 donation to St. Louis Audubon

Chaumette Vineyards & Winery will be hosting three birding brunches this spring, in celebration of our 100th anniversary! The winery is in beautiful St. Genevieve, Missouri, nearly adjacent to the John J. Audubon Trail and the Mark Twain National Forest! What a fantastic way to celebrate the centennial of the St. Louis Audubon Society ~ hosting birding walks, while considering the likelihood of seeing the same species that John J. Audubon saw during his years there in Ste. Genevieve more than 175 years ago! We hope you’ll consider one of these fantastic events. For complete details and to register, visit http://chaumette.com/spring-birdwatching-with-st-louis-audubon-society/.

Going Forth and Being Enchanted

By Chrissy McClarren

Along with my partner, Andy Rea, I led a beginner bird walk on February 14th, during which I delighted in sharing our “backyard” (Carondelet Park is only a block from our home) with a throng of seven other hardy folk who were immediately commanded to go forth and be enchanted – and they were! As they willingly followed us despite the very cold and mighty gusty day, they marveled at the colors of a Wood Duck, oohed over the sudden swooping flight of a Red-tailed Hawk, wondered over the subtle detail of the powder blue eyelids of the Mourning Doves, gazed shyly into the intense orange eyes of the Great-Horned Owls, and thrilled to the mysteries lying inside the face of a Barred Owl.

The Barred Owl was a particular thrill for all of us, since we weren’t sure at first what was causing such an upset of the Blue Jays and Dark-eyed Juncos making alarm calls. Exciting everyone, I told them that the Blue Jays almost always led us to interesting birds of prey. So, drawn like detectives to the thicket from which all this ruckus was occurring, we sleuthed our way around the thicket and spotted the Barred Owl as it flew out and high into a tree very close by. Andy was carrying a spotting scope so everyone was able to take a dip into those dark swirling pools for eyes. Andy and I find opportunities to share our love of the birds to be a gift like none other, so we owe a big thanks to our companions: Matthew, Elaine and Richard Fook, Linda Tossing, Kathy Hull, Laura Belarbi and Victoria Caswell.
Baldwin Lake Trip Report

By Pat Lueders

Spring fever brought out 40 birders to the annual Baldwin Lake & Peabody Coal Conservation Area field trip on February 7. A strong wind all day did not dampen spirits as record temperatures kept the group warm and active. Everyone met at Baldwin Lake State Park. Thousands of Snow Geese were loafing on the banks allowing close scope views. A Ross's Goose was singled out and easily compared with Snow Geese so all could see its small size and diminutive bill. At the end of the road, a small group of Greater White-Fronted Geese stood on the levee with Canada Geese and 2 Cackling Geese, again for nice comparisons. In the lake swam a flock of 40 Cackling Geese, American Coot, one female Scaup, and at a distance Redhead and 2 American Pelican on the far bank. Otherwise, there were very few gulls or other ducks seen.

We drove side roads to the IL DNR World Shooting Complex, with some members of the convoy seeing a Merlin, and all seeing many Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrel, Horned Lark and Eastern Meadowlarks. The shooting complex habitat is similar to that at Peabody Coal Conservation Area and home to numerous Northern Harriers and Red-tailed Hawks. One of the ponds had Gadwall and 2 American Wigeon.

After a picnic lunch, we drove farm roads to Peabody Coal Conservation Area. Last year all of the ponds were frozen. This year many visitors were fishing and enjoying the area which we usually have to ourselves. We walked the road towards the Kaskaskia River looking for shrikes and finding a few American Tree and White-throated Sparrows, a few year-around residents, and seeing a number of Ring-billed Gulls on the water. Ribbons of Snow and Greater White-Fronted Geese flew overhead all afternoon, vocalizing loudly.

Our persistence to find a shrike was successful when Mick Richardson spotted, and Bernie Favara confirmed, the spotting of one across from the pit toilet parking lot. Long scope views of the very cooperative bird confirmed the identification as a Northern Shrike; a narrow mask, white above the barely visible eye, buffy breast with light streaking, a large white wing patch.

Short-eared Owl is a target bird for this trip, but the habitat condition made us apprehensive about success. A large area along the road appeared to have been cleared or burned, and we saw no Northern Harriers, always present in past years. Our fears were confirmed when we waited till dark but saw no Short-eared Owls. As we were leaving after enjoying a beautiful sunset, Paul and Barb Johnson did find a Great-horned Owl at the top of a distant tree.

Enjoying the annual spectacle of thousands of Snow Geese alighting into the air together is always the highlight of this trip, and we were rewarded for our efforts on this beautiful day! ◆
Celebrating International Migratory Bird Day and Kids to Parks Day

Riverlands Bird Blitz

Free Public Event
Native Habitat Plantings
Family-Friendly Activities

May 16th 10am-2pm
Audubon Center at Riverlands
West Alton, MO
Guided Bird Hikes:
9am, 11am and 1pm

For more information, visit: riverlands.audubon.org or call: 636-899-0090
St. Louis Native Plant Garden Tour

Saturday, June 20th
9 am to 3 pm

Various Locations in Brentwood, Clayton, Glendale, Kirkwood, Webster Groves and more

A self-guided tour of 10 residential native plant gardens in central St. Louis County.

Sun, shade, butterflies, birds, dry sites and wet.

Traditional and natural designs.

Take pictures. Ask questions.

Cost: $20 per person
Proceeds benefit tour organizers. St. Louis Audubon’s Bring Conservation Home program and Wild Ones — St. Louis Chapter.

TO REGISTER VISIT
www.stlouisaudubon.org/NPT

www.stlouisaudubon.org
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Many Thanks to All Our Donors!!

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