Calendar

**Beginner Bird Walk Field Trips**
Forest Park Visitor Center
First Saturday of Every Month at 8:15 AM
Special walk just for the new and/or casual watchers.
Reservations not required, but for further info contact Chris at birding@forestparkforever.org.

**Birding Field Trip—Page 3**
Busch Woodcock and Owl Prowl
Saturday March 13th at 5p
Good trip for beginners to experience these birds.

**Birding Field Trip—Page 3**
Horseshoe Lake State Park
Saturday March 20th at 8a
All day trip looking for waterfowl and winter birds

**March Monthly Program—Page 5**
So Many Feathers Film Showing
Thursday March 25th at 7:30p
Learning Lab at Forest Park Visitor Center

**Volunteer Work Day at Creve Coeur Park**
Watershed Cleanup—Part of Confluence Trash Bash
Saturday March 27th from 9a to 1p
To register, see the details in the Wetland article on Page 2 or call (314) 599-7390 with questions.

**Birding Field Trip—Page 3**
Where the Birds Are
Wednesday March 31st at 9a
Half day trip in search of late winter birds.

**Birding Field Trip—Page 3**
BK Leach Conservation Area & Hwy 79
Saturday April 10th at 8a
All day trip in search of waterfowl and early spring

**Annual Awards Dinner—Page 9**
Orlando Gardens, Maryland Heights
Saturday April 10th—$25 per person
Awards presented for Outstanding Educator, Volunteer, Conservationist and Lifetime Achievement.
Keynote speaker Tim Barkdale on the Prairie Chicken

**April Monthly Program—Page 5**
The Birds of Forest Park Presentation
Tuesday April 20th at 700p
Learning Lab at Forest Park Visitor Center

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Avian Conservation Alliance Status Report

By Brad Jacobs

Editor’s Note: St. Louis Audubon, along with several other Audubon chapters in Missouri, is a partner organization in the Avian Conservation Alliance that works to identify and protect winter habitat for Missouri’s migratory birds. You may know of this effort by the often-referenced lead project at Pico Bonito National Park in Honduras.

The Avian Conservation Alliance (ACA) is focused on bird conservation projects in Eastern Mexico and Central America. During 2008 and 2009 we focused on a multi-faceted bird conservation project around Pico Bonito National Park (PNBP), La Ceiba, Honduras. We had initially engaged the government–authorized Fundación Parque Nacional Pico Bonito, FUPNAPIB that has the letter of authority from the Honduran Government to protect, manage, and build partnerships to help raise funds for projects in the area.

In March 2008, a group of seven ACA members representing many of the ACA organizations visited the project area on a seven day tour, making contacts with many of the Honduran partners involved in on–the–ground activities. We were very excited about working with this important bird conservation effort and returned home energized to move forward on the project.
Volunteers Work Out for the Wetland

By Mitch Leachman

Nearly twenty volunteers came out on February 20th for the fourth habitat workday at Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park since the current project began last September. Many thanks to all of them! The focus for the day was removal of woody encroachment within the Memetomwish Wetland (aka the Howard Bend Levee wetland) basin in the northwest corner of the natural areas south of Page/364. Without active management, and especially without a regular water source, willows and cottonwoods will take control of this 30 acre constructed wetland complex.

Dennis Hogan, St. Louis County Parks, again provided expert guidance to the effort. Additional coordination and leadership was provided by Karen Meyer, St. Louis Audubon, and several Master Naturalists from the local MDC chapter, including Paul Newett and Michael Meredith. After clearing several acres and working up a sweat on a surprisingly warm and sunny February afternoon, the group retreated to the Creve Coeur Lakehouse Pub and Café for a leisurely lunch.

There are two more scheduled workdays under this TogetherGreen grant project, funded by Toyota and administered by the National Audubon Society. On March 27th, we will be an official part of the Confluence Trash Bash in cleaning up Creve Coeur Park. This is a very big job and will take a great many volunteers—as many as 100! The Confluence Partnership is managing the registration process, so please sign-up via their website at http://www.confluencegreenway.org/m-events.php.

Finally, we will continue the wildlife corridor began last November, with an additional tree planting on Saturday, April 17th. To register for this workday, please contact me at (314) 599–7390 or e-mail your name, phone, and number participating to stlaudubon@charter.net. We hope you can make it for one of these projects! ◆

The volunteers at the work site

Mitch Leachman Photo
President’s Message

The banquet season is upon us. This year we are doing something a little different—separating the awards from the annual business meeting. This will allow us to really focus on our awards program. We have lined up an interesting program with local roots—nature photographer/videographer Tim Barksdale will present a program on the critically imperiled Greater Prairie-Chicken. As many of you know, Tim is a former St. Louis resident, and currently films birds in many locations around the world.

In keeping with the prairie theme, we will be honoring the Missouri Prairie Foundation with our Conservation Award. MPF has done outstanding, independent, grassroots work re-establishing prairies throughout Missouri. Their species of concern, the grasslands birds, are many of Missouri’s most threatened species. However, prairies are about more than birds, and their work ensures the preservation of an entire ecosystem for the enjoyment of future Missourians. Education, a primary focus for St. Louis Audubon, is a key element of MPF’s mission, and their four-corner approach of Acquisition, Management, Education, and Research is a model for small, local environmental groups.

We are proud to recognize the Prairie Foundation’s efforts, and hope you can join our celebration. Please see the Annual Dinner registration information on Page 9 of this issue. In addition, I am happy to say Audubon will donate to MPF 50% of the funds raised at the Dinner as a combined tribute to the Prairie Foundation and the evening’s keynote speaker Tim Barksdale.

At this time of the year we often say goodbye to long-term members of the board who have decided to step down. I have a personal relationship with these fine people, and I am saddened to lose their participation. To continue their work, we will elect a new slate of officers at the Annual Meeting on April 20th. Yet, at the Annual Dinner I will be presenting a new award, a President’s Certificate, to be given to our volunteers in appreciation of their work over the past year. It is very little to give for the very much we have been given. Good luck and God bless to all of the well-deserving recipients.

I hope you will join us for an evening of fun and companionship. And don’t forget that spring is just around the corner—look for us looking up. Stop in for one of our weekly bird walks and see first hand what we are fighting to preserve—nature’s flying miracles! ◆

Field Trips, Etc.

March 13th at Busch Memorial Conservation Area: Sue Gustafson and John Solodar will lead this evening Woodcock and Owl Prowl. Meet at 5 p.m. (note the time). Take Hwy 94 south from Hwy 40. At 1.3 miles, turn right at light for Hwy D. Go 2 miles to entrance on right. Turn left at T to Hampton Lake and meet in lot.

Mar 31st “Where the Birds Are” Trip: Pat Lueders will lead this half-day trip beginning at 9 a.m. to whatever area location has the best birding. Check the SLAS website, www.birdingonthe.net “regional specialties-Missouri” section or the MoBirds list serve a few days in advance for details.

Mar 20th to Horseshoe Lake State Park: Paul Bauer will lead this all day trip starting at 8 a.m. From St. Louis, take I-70 east to Hwy 111 (exit 6) and turn left. Go ~2 miles to Park entrance and meet in first parking lot on right inside Park.

Apr 10th to BK Leach Conservation Area: John Solodar will lead this all day trip. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Meet in the southeast corner of the Dierberg’s parking lot at the southwest side of I-70 and Hwy 79. Birding will be along Hwy 79 toward BK Leach.

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.
Avian Conservation Alliance Status Report

Unfortunately, in October 2008, we received notice that FUPNAPIB had some irregularities with its financial management, which to date have not been resolved. The Honduran government agency called the Forest, Wildlife and Protected Area Institute (ICF) is considering the activities of FUPNAPIB and will make a determination about the Foundation’s future relationship with PBNP. ICF is the government agency that authorizes nongovernmental organizations to manage, protect and build partnerships on national parks and wildlife areas. We wish to assure all ACA partners and contributors that 100% of funds contributed to date are secure and are still in the MCHF account.

As many of you know, there also has been some political turmoil within the Honduran government which has resulted in delays and unwillingness of many Honduran legislators to take any action until those issues are resolved. Unfortunately, working in many Latin American countries is not easy, but those difficulties do not negate the conservation need. The project is still very urgently needed to protect critical habitats for migrant and resident birds.

After great effort, we have been unable to find and engage a viable partner to continue the project work in the biological corridor between the Honduran Emerald Reserve and PBNP. This ACA project involved land acquisition, protection, education and many other areas of activity. We have decided to postpone our efforts on this project until such a time that the Hondurans have reorganized and can give ACA and other world partners all the necessary assurances of fiduciary responsibility and capacity to carry out the project. Funds contributed and managed by The Nature Conservancy are currently being used on an assessment of the project area in Honduras so we will better understand the project landscape and potential for future accomplishment. We thank Dr. David Wiedenfeld of the American Bird Conservancy for his many discussions and visits to Honduras on our behalf. He is maintaining contact with activities in the region and will let us know if and when we might proceed with this critically important project.

In October 2009, ACA members met in Jefferson City and discussed next steps. Several Audubon chapters, the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and the Missouri Department of Conservation were represented. As a result, we decided to move forward with two other project areas. We are shifting our PBNP funds to a land acquisition and protection project in Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Mexico. The north coastal region of the Yucatan is a critical stopover site for billions of migrant birds that use the area to build up body fat for the long flight across the Gulf of Mexico to the shores of Texas and Louisiana. Native bird and wildlife habitat is rapidly being converted from coastal mangroves, lagoons and inland woodlands to urban development and shrimp farms.

An ACA flier is available on the Yucatan project. Our first project activities in the Yucatan will be to acquire and protect approximately 250 acres of land as part of a larger effort by our Yucatan partners from the Bird Alliance of the Yucatan Peninsula (AAPY in Spanish). The long-term project is a $50 million, multi-decade effort to protect, restore and establish a biological corridor between Yum Balam APFF (Protected Area for Flora and Fauna) on the north coast of the Yucatan Peninsula in Quintana Roo with Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve to the south. This area vital to migrant birds is also under great pressure from urban development and shrimp farm conversion.

David Wiedenfeld will be travelling to the area in February 2010 to meet with the partners and determine how we might be involved over the next five or more years. We will pass on the information David gathers as soon as we know more.
So Many Feathers: Bird Watching Without Binoculars!
Thursday, March 25, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

This hour–long documentary showcases a host of birds found throughout North America and right here in Missouri. All of it produced by Steve Maslowski, second–generation documentary film–maker and cameraman for the Amazing Birds of America production.

From the birds in your own backyard to birds of the prairie and desert, you are sure to see something new—nesting, soaring—it’s all captured here. For you birders, just a few of the treats include: long–billed curlew, white–headed woodpecker, black skimmer, snowy owl and Swainson’s warbler. This is just in time for warmer weather and the start of spring migration.

This program continues a partnership between St. Louis Audubon and the Eastern Missouri Group of the Sierra Club. The evening is open to all, members or not.

The Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor Center, at 5595 Grand Drive, is just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere and easily accessed via the Forest Park MetroLink stop. The program will be held in the Learning Lab.

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314) 599–7390. ◆

The Birds of Forest Park
Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

If you’re new to birding, an experienced birder, or simply wondered what those people with binoculars were gawking at, please join Randy Korotev on Tuesday, April 20th for a great talk and picture show about the birds of, and birding in, Forest Park. With over 220 bird species documented, Forest Park rivals some of the largest state parks and conservation areas in the region for bird diversity.

Randy has been birding in Forest Park since 1979. He has completed surveys of migrant and breeding birds in the Park for the Missouri Department of Conservation and to establish a baseline prior to implementation of the habitat improvements of the Forest Park Master Plan. The program will include lots of photos, many of which Randy took himself.

Randy Korotev is a research professor at Washington University, having earned his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Wisconsin. He has studied lunar samples and their chemical compositions since 1969. He studied the first lunar meteorite to be recognized, and has studied most of the subsequently found lunar meteorites. In his spare time, Randy is an avid birder who likes to do Breeding Bird Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts.

The Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor Center, at 5595 Grand Drive, is just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere and easily accessed via the Forest Park MetroLink stop. The program will be held in the Learning Lab. Questions, call Mitch Leachman at (314) 599–7390. ◆
Conservation Corner

By Karen Meyer

A good number of concerned citizens traveled to Jefferson City on February 3, 2010 to take part in Conservation Lobby day. We visited Missouri legislators to encourage their support for proposed legislation on state park funding, clean water, energy efficiency, and green building measures. Visit the Missouri General Assembly page at www.moga.mo.gov for insight on what your elected representatives are working. Learn about pending legislation issues at www.movotesconservation.org, and let your legislators know what is important to you. Many legislators are at the end of their term this year. Plan your vote for the fall and start investigating those running in your district that best address your issues.

As a reminder, the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, at www.moenviron.org, is a great resource for local conservation information, as well as www.missouri.sierraclub.org, or their national site at www.sierraclub.org. At our own National Audubon site, www.audubon.org/campaign/index.html, read how “Quick action by Audubon supporters and our allies helped us put the brakes on this threat to the Clean Air Act, (though) Senator Murkowski still has plans to force a vote on this in March.” Thanks to all for your interest and support!

Spring is so around the corner, and we are very excited about our Bluebird Nest Box Project at Creve Coeur Park. We received a generous donation of six locally-crafted Bluebird/Tree Swallow boxes from Scott and Georgene Collier, owners of the Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop. We have selected the locations for the boxes, and the County Parks Department and other volunteers will help install the poles and baffles this month. Spring fever has brought out a nice showing of volunteers to monitor the birds’ nesting activity. Watch for updates about the Bluebird project on our website and in our newsletters.

Though the weather brought some snow and sleet during the Winter Bird Festival in Creve Coeur Park on February 14, we had a good turnout of birdwatchers and birds. Everyone enjoyed the booths and activities in the warm accommodations at the Lakehouse Restaurant. A total of 32 species were seen that day, including various waterbirds, sparrows, woodpeckers, Bald Eagles, and Eastern Bluebirds. We have reported this data on the Great Backyard Bird Count site. Thanks to all who came out to enjoy and count the birds. ◆

Avian Conservation Alliance Status Report

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A second ACA project is in El Cielo Biosphere Reserve (El Cielo) near Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, just south of the Texas/Mexico border in the eastern range of the Sierra Madre. There is a flier available on this project also.

El Cielo is a 558 square mile mountainous region with four main altitudinal zones: lowland semi-deciduous tropical forest, pine-oak forests, pine woodlands, humid mixed forests (cloud forest), and dry shrub lands, arrayed generally from east to west. This project involves protections of the resource, education, and a comprehensive monitoring effort to determine what and where the biological resources are located and how critical areas might be conserved. The Missouri Department of Conservation has been participating in this project for five years, and there are many Missouri connections and local partner organizations. As we proceed with these projects, interim updates and annual project reports will be made available. ◆

This report was submitted by: Kelly Gillespie, Brad Jacobs and Rick Thom.
Baldwin Lake Trip Report—February 13th

By Torrey Berger

On Saturday February 13th, eighteen hardy souls traveled to Baldwin Lake and Peabody River King State Fish and Wildlife Area in southern Illinois. With the help of “co-leaders” Pat Lueders, Mike Thelen and Mike Grant, we had one of the most productive Baldwin Lake trips ever.

Things started early, as a few noticed an Osprey in a tree as we zipped by on I–255, just after crossing the J.B. Bridge. At Baldwin Lake, we saw Cackling Geese with Canada’s, and Ross' Geese with Snows, for great comparisons. We completed the Geese Sweep with Greater White-fronted fly-overs in the afternoon. Surprisingly, there were virtually no ducks or gulls at Baldwin. On leaving Baldwin, we stopped to watch the bird feeders at the first house on Risdon Road. Mike T. spotted a Harris’s Sparrow feeding on the ground. It perched in a bush where everyone was able to get good scope views.

At Peabody, most of us stopped for lunch at the end of the main drive, while Pat L. wandered off and spotted a Shrike. After much observation and reference to three different field guides, it was determined to be definitely a Northern Shrike. Mike and Mike bushwhacked in order to get closer looks and photos, and observed, among others, the following field marks: prominent hook on bill, white patch above bill, almost no black between eye and bill, top of eye extended above mask, prominent thin barring on underparts from upper breast to belly, white upper tail coverts, crown, nape and back uniformly light pale blue. Another Shrike was found across the main road from the Kid’s Lake gate, which was a Loggerhead—another good comparison.

We finished off a beautiful 37 degree, sunny day watching thousands of snow geese pass north overhead while we hoped for Short-eared Owls to appear. At Last we had seven of these stars of the evening show up, with one perching long enough for all to have great scope views. Some recorded good numbers of lifers, we had a trip count of 58 species, and we didn't lose any birders. A Good Trip! ◆
President’s Budget Request Supports Wetland Restoration

WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Obama’s fiscal year 2011 budget released Feb. 1 asks Congress to fund coastal wetlands restoration in Louisiana, the first time a presidential budget has included this request. The president’s budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provides $35.6 million for Gulf Coast restoration, including $19 million for wetlands construction projects and $16.6 million for wetlands pre-construction studies. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service request is $5 million for Gulf Coast restoration.

Audubon’s Legislative Director Brian Moore: “We applaud President Obama for including funds to restore Louisiana’s coastal wetlands in his fiscal year 2011 budget. These wetlands are vitally important for birds and other wildlife, for human well-being, and for our national economy, and we all stand to gain from swift, decisive action to halt their alarming and rapid disappearance.

“Audubon staff in Washington, D.C., and in Louisiana – and our partners at Environmental Defense Fund and National Wildlife Federation – have been working closely with key administrative officials at all levels of government to secure a strong federal investment in Louisiana coastal wetlands restoration. This year, we feel that we’ve been successful because for the first time, the president has asked Congress to fund authorized restoration programs and further scientific analysis in coastal Louisiana.

“The president’s request is one of only two new starts included in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers budget, which experienced a 10 percent decrease overall. Though the request is relatively small, it sets an important precedent and is a crucial first step toward saving and restoring one of our nation’s largest and most important wetland ecosystems.”

Please watch our website and the April TaleFeathers for details on how you can write your Congressmen in support of this appropriation. In the meantime, here are the links to restoration partner websites that we promised you last month.

Audubon Mississippi River Initiative http://mri.audubon.org/
Environmental Defense Fund http://www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=500
Mississippi 1 www.1mississippi.net
St. Louis Audubon Society

Annual Awards Dinner
Saturday, April 10th

TIMOTHY R. BARKSDALE, BIRDMAN PRODUCTIONS, LLC

We are pleased to announce our 2010 Annual Awards Dinner will take place at Orlando Gardens at 2050 Dorsett Village Plaza in Maryland Heights on Saturday, April 10th. Awards will be presented for Conservation, Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Volunteer, and Lifetime Achievement. The evening will conclude with our keynote speaker, Tim Barksdale, principal cameraman for Birdman Productions, LLC. Tim will deliver an engaging, multi-media presentation on the current plight of, and hope for, the Greater Prairie Chicken—the subject of his current film project for PBS.

Tim Barksdale has been filming birds and other wildlife for nearly 20 years and has built the largest stock footage library of North American birds in the world. His past collection, of more than 1,200 species, formed the foundation of the Macaulay Library video archive at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. His current passion, the Greater Prairie Chicken, is listed red on the 2007 Audubon Watchlist and critically imperiled by the Missouri Department of Conservation. With less than 1/10\(^{th}\) of 1\% of native prairie left in the State, the Prairie Chicken has just a few, intensively–managed breeding locations remaining. Tim has traveled to the bird’s strongholds in Minnesota, Nebraska and Kansas while also documenting the restoration efforts of the Missouri Prairie Foundation and MDC here at home. He is distressed, yet upbeat having witnessed in his youth flocks of over 200 birds—sustaining populations are possible!

Please join us for this viewing of Tim’s stunning work and learn about this amazing prairie emblem.

6:00 p.m.—Registration / Open Bar
7:00 p.m.—Dinner Service and Award Presentations
8:30 p.m.—Keynote Presentation by Tim Barksdale

Please note there will not be a business meeting at this year’s event. We have scheduled our annual business meeting, including the election of officers, prior to the April program on Tuesday, April 20\(^{th}\).

The cost is just $25 per person. Reservations are required—please use the form below.

Space is limited, so please register by April 1\(^{st}\) to insure you can enjoy this wonderful evening!

Orlando Gardens is at 2050 Dorsett Village Plaza in Maryland Heights, just off I–270 and Dorsett in St. Louis County. Take I–270 Exit 17, Dorsett Rd and go west on Dorsett 1/3 mile to McKelvey. Turn right on McKelvey (at the Walgreen’s) for quick jog to main Plaza entrance on your left (opposite the Dairy Queen). ◆

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Saturday, April 10\(^{th}\), 2010 Annual Dinner Registration Form

Please mail this form or a copy by April 1\(^{st}\) with payment to: Mitch Leachman, 2728 Lakeport Drive, Maryland Heights, MO 63043. Make checks payable to St. Louis Audubon Society.

$25.00 x ______ = ______

Name(s) Fee No. Total Enclosed
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.

**Memberships are Tax Deductible**
*Less the $10 Cost of the Book*

**□ $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!

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