Ken Cohen

By Sue Gustafson

The birding and environmental community lost a good friend with the passing of Ken Cohen on February 9, 2016. Ken was the recipient of the 2007 Outstanding Conservationist Award from the St. Louis Audubon Society. In the early 1990’s Ken assembled a group of birdwatchers in the Kennedy Forest of Forest Park to help improve the woods. He was a founding member of the Kennedy Woods Advisory Group, the group that initiated the first honeysuckle removal in Kennedy Woods, a tradition that continues each autumn.

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Ken Cohen

Ken also envisioned and led the effort to create a pond fed by a downhill stream that then flowed under an old stone bridge and through the woods to encourage birds and other wildlife. He worked with St. Louis Audubon when we received a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2005 to install this pond, overseeing the laying of stonework and the installation of piping that produced the stream. In recent years, the damn near the old stone bridge started leaking, and the pond has been reduced to a puddle. It has been Ken's hope to repair the leak and restore the pond.

Ken said: "I hope, now, that we can repair the leak and restore the pond. It could be a truly unique place: a place where people could come, sit, enjoy nature, reflect, forget pressure and anxiety for a while, and let their imaginations soar; where water would flow and be a source of life for all the creatures that live in the woods. It would be a tranquil oasis within the woods, within the park, within the borders of bricks and concrete. I mentioned this vision to a couple of life-long pals and they have exceeded the expectations of friendship by beginning the effort to turn this vision into reality. I hope you can join us. You know, I sometimes think of someone in the future walking in the woods, finding the pond, sitting down and wondering who had the generosity to make this happen. I appreciate all that you are able to do."

Forest Park Forever is working to make this happen. Donations can be sent to Forest Park Forever at 5595 Grand Drive in Forest Park, St. Louis, MO 63112. Make checks payable to: Forest Park Forever, and please put “Ken's Pond” in the memo line. Donations to Forest Park Forever are tax deductible. For more information or to make a donation on-line, go to [http://kenspond.com/](http://kenspond.com/). ◆

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Artist rendering provided by Igor Karash of Kiku Obata & Company
From the Director

Those that know me are not surprised to learn I’ve not typically been part of the “in crowd.” From books in grade school to band in high school to engineering in college and now birds and plants in middle age, you could place them all in the “nerd” category. Lately, however, I’m feeling that us thoughtful tree-huggers have found a real bandwagon with mass appeal: native plants for birds, butterflies and native bees.

Just a week ago, I had the honor of participating in a panel discussion at the Native by Design: Landscapes Beyond Beauty event at Lewis & Clark Community College in Edwardsville. Over 300 people attended this Grow Native! event, and 100 attended a dinner the night before with mayors from a number of Metro East communities. Another 200–plus have registered for the Partners for Native Landscaping Workshop for Homeowners on March 26th at Powder Valley Nature Center in Kirkwood. (The event is technically sold out, but we can accommodate a few more. Contact me at mitch@stlouisaudubon.org if interested.) And we are well into the planning for our 2016 Native Plant Garden Tour on June 18th, which we fully expect to sell-out. (Tickets go on sale April 1st through our website and several area retailers.)

Monarch butterflies. Backyard birds. Native bees. Homeowners, schools, religious groups, corporations and even our elected officials want to join the efforts to help them all. It’s truly exciting! It’s a movement! Retailers that sell native plants are watching that part of their business grow by 20 and 30% a year. Bird gardening is a hot topic at garden clubs and lunch n learns. Pollinator gardens and Monarch waystations are popping up in common grounds, parking lots, mailbox beds and even highway medians.

If you’ve not hopped on the bandwagon yet, jump on board! You don’t need a lot of space, and you don’t need to be a gardener. And you don’t need to give up your ornamental plants you love; you can have both native and non-native. To do–it-yourself, visit www.grownative.org or http://mdc.mo.gov/. If you would like some help, consider our Bring Conservation Home program at www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH. It’s a wonderful feeling—doing good for our environment and being popular at the same time! ☺ ♦

Field Trips, Etc.

March 12th at Busch Memorial Conservation Area: M. Grant & S. Gustafson 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.

March 19th Beginner Walk at Mallard Lake: This easy walk starts at 8:00 am from the south parking lot at the Creve Coeur Lakehouse, 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Rd. Bring your binoculars, if you have them; loaners are available. We should finish about 10. Check our Facebook page for any last–minute updates. The details are the same for the April 16th Walk.

March 19th to Horseshoe Lake State Park: This half day trip starts at 8 am and is good for beginners with some light walking. 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.

April 9th at Castlewood State Park: Pat Lueders leads this all day trip that starts at 730 am. From 270 or 141, take Big Bend west to Ries Rd south to left on Kiefer Creek Rd. Meet at lot on right, just after park office.

All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required, unless noted—consult our website for details. For questions, contact Mike Grant at mikecurlew@att.net.
NATIVE BEES
What Are They? Why Should We Care? How Can We Help?
Thursday March 24 at 7 p.m.

Pollination is the cornerstone of most ecosystems. 80% of flowering plants need the help of animals to move pollen for reproduction, and 75% of crop plants grown worldwide for food, beverages, fibers, condiments, spices, and medicines are pollinated by animals. The struggles of honey bees have made headlines, but we may be experiencing a loss of native bees on a much greater scale. Several species of bumble bees, masked bees, mason bees and digger bees in the U.S. have disappeared across their ranges. They may be disappearing due to pesticides, loss of habitat and the introduction of diseases.

Ed Spevak, Curator of Invertebrates at the St. Louis Zoo and Director of the Center for Native Pollinator Conservation (CNPC), will present this overview of native bees and their conservation. Of the many efforts underway, Pollinator Roadsides is a CNPC collaborative with Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Department of Transportation and the Xerces Society.

This is our annual joint program with the Eastern Missouri Group of the Sierra Club. The program will be held at their office at 2818 Sutton Blvd, Maplewood, MO 63143. For questions about this event, contact Mitch at (314) 599–7390 or mitch@stlouisaudubon.org.

The Natural History of Australia
A Strange and Diverse Continent
Tuesday, April 26th at 7 p.m.

Australia has been geographically separated from the other continents for over 45 million years. This isolation has resulted in an abundance of plants and animals that are found only on this continent (endemic). An amazing 80% of the mammal, reptile, frog and flowering plant species are endemic to Australia. About 50% of the continent’s 828 bird species are endemic, and its surrounding waters support 4,000 of the world’s 22,000 types of fish. With its temperate and tropical rainforests, deserts, grasslands and coral reefs, this unique continent accounts for almost 10% of the Earth’s biodiversity.

Dave Tylka spent a week in wild Tasmania, visiting the rugged seacoasts, and two weeks on the eastern half of the mainland, visiting the red deserts around Alice Springs and Uluru, the Daintree Rain Forest National Park and the Great Barrier Reef. Besides describing Australia’s natural habitats, Dave will discuss the remarkable natural histories of the larger, more unique animals and plants. Strange pouched and egg-laying mammals will be highlighted, such as the wombat, Tasmanian devil, koala, echidna, platypus and, of course, the kangaroo. Fascinating birds such as the laughing kookaburra, willy wagtail, emu, cassowary, bustard and fairy penguin will be featured. This informative presentation will encourage you to seek out the strange and diverse life forms “down under.”

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 Grants View Branch of the St. Louis County Library at 9700 Musick Rd, St. Louis, MO 63123, right across Gravois from Grants Farm. For questions, call (314) 599–7390.
St. Louis Audubon Spring Stewardship Projects

**Tuesday, March 8th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle removal.**
Help us continue our multi-year project partnership to create prairie, woodland and pollinator gardens! All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. The work site just south of Page/364 near the Creve Coeur Lakehouse restaurant. We will meet in the south lot at the Lakehouse, 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Road, St. Louis, MO 63146.

**Honeysuckle Sweep for Healthy Habitat—March 5th thru 13th**
For additional opportunities around the St. Louis region to remove invasive bush honeysuckle and help restore our natural areas see the BiodiverseCity St. Louis website for all the details.

**Saturday, March 19th Confluence Trash Bash. Watershed Cleanup.**
All ages welcome. For all the details, and to register:

**Saturday, April 23rd at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle removal.**
All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. The work site is in the far southwest corner of the park, but can be accessed easily from Olive Boulevard or Page/Hwy 364. Use this address in your device: 150 River Valley Dr, Chesterfield, MO 63017. You will arrive at a sharp bend in the road. Go through the gate, into the gravel lot and follow the signs from there. Parking is limited, please carpool if possible.

All projects begin at 9 am with registration starting at 8:30. All are half-day. Gloves and other supplies/materials are provided.
Volunteers are requested to register for all projects by providing their name, contact information and number attending to mitch@stlouisaudubon.org or (314) 599-7390. ◆
Riverlands Field Trip Report

By Bill Rowe

St. Louis Audubon Society hosted a field trip February 20th for 22+ people under the easiest weather conditions imaginable: temperatures from the 40's to the 70's, clear skies, and no wind, with all water surfaces like glass.

Most of the time -- all morning and an hour of the early afternoon -- was spent at Riverlands, where we had 21 of the 25 expected species of waterfowl, missing only Cackling Goose, Tundra Swan, Am. Black Duck, and Greater Scaup. Raptors included Bald Eagle, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Harrier, Am. Kestrel, and Peregrine Falcon, but oddly no Red-tailed Hawk. Land birds were relatively few but included a couple of Winter Wrens and close views of a Rusty Blackbird at the Audubon Center. Here is the eBird list, with notes on certain species:

http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27716813

One of those species was the Rock Wren, which, unfortunately, I was the only person to see, on the pavement of the equipment compound at 6:50 a.m. Three different periods of searching for it later failed to produce it again.

In mid-afternoon we proceeded on to Columbia Bottom, where, among our relatively few species, we had seven new ones for the day, including a couple of Tundra Swans. Again, the list:

http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S27717276

Thus I calculate the total at 65 species. If any participants have something else to add, please email me. And if anyone who uses eBird would like me to share these lists directly with you, please let me know. Thanks to all for coming out and taking part in this enjoyable trip! ◆

More Birds to Monitor in 2016

If you'd like to learn how to assist with monitoring new and existing Purple Martin Housing in our county parks, now's the time to consider volunteering. There's a new unit of gourds being installed in Queeny Park this year. We can use help there, as well as with the existing Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park site. It's a fine opportunity to get outdoors and enjoy our awesome parks, while observing interesting bird behavior and contributing to the conservation of this species. If you like Eastern Bluebirds, you also might consider helping with our 10 box bluebird trail at Creve Coeur Park. To assist with any of these projects or for additional information, please contact Karen Meyer at kb2bird@sbcglobal.net or (314) 602–7318. ◆
Volunteer Training Workshop
Saturday, April 9th from 9 am to 4 pm

Our Bring Conservation Home Program uses volunteer Habitat Advisors to provide on-site assistance to urban landowners in the greater St. Louis area for the restoration of native plant and animal habitat on their grounds. The Habitat Advisors will offer advice in landscaping with environmentally healthy and sustainable native plant species, the removal of invasive plant species, water conservation on the urban landscape, and other stewardship practices that promote healthy habitat for birds, native wildlife and people. For complete program details, please visit www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH.

Habitat Advisors perform Bring Conservation Home (BCH) landscape consultations and certification assessments and compile their written notes and findings. Advisors will be asked to commit to 6–12 site visits per year that average 2 hours each.

This workshop covers the BCH program, our procedures, and key native landscaping concepts. Prior experience with the program areas (highlighted above) and a long-term commitment will be essential for your success. BCH is a great way to creatively use your training and knowledge to improve our community one landscape at a time. For a description of the position, the required qualifications and an application, see http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/BCH/ha_position_description.pdf.

You will be contacted after your application is received and reviewed. Those meeting the qualifications will receive additional details about the workshop, including the day’s schedule.

Certified Habitat Advisors also receive a complete survey of their own landscape at no charge, including discounts at a variety of area retailers. ◆

Audubon Society of Missouri—Spring Meeting
Bunker Hill Retreat at Mountain View, Missouri
April 29 – May 1, 2016

This beautiful resort on the Jacks Fork River has previously been open only to members of the Missouri State Teachers Association. It is now open to the public and will be our host the weekend of April 29--May 1. www.bunkerhillretreat.com.

A diversity of full-day and half-day field trips will be offered. Many of the locations are known for the variety and abundance of warblers that can be seen. Among the field trip sites are Greer Spring on the Eleven Point River, Big Spring on the Current River, Stegall Mountain at Peck Ranch Conservation Area, and a 10–mile float on the Jacks Fork River.

Visit the ASM website for a complete description of all field trips and to register for the meeting: www.mobirds.org. Everyone is welcome, ASM member or not! ◆
St. Louis Audubon Society
P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, MO 63122–0227

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