

TALE FEATHERS

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

BEGINNER BIRD WALK FIELD TRIPS

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER
FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH, EXCEPT JULY, AT 815 AM
For info contact Chris at birding@forestparkforever.org.

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

SHAW NATURE RESERVE
SATURDAY MAY 7TH AT 730 AM

NATURE WALK FOR KIDS—PAGE 7

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER
SUNDAY MAY 8TH FROM 10A TO 12P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

TOWER GROVE PARK
WEDNESDAY MAY 11TH AT 730 AM

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

FOREST PARK AND TOWER GROVE PARK
SATURDAY MAY 14TH AT 730 AM

MAY PROGRAM—MISSOURI'S WILD MUSHROOMS—PG 6

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER
TUESDAY MAY 17TH AT 700 PM

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

SHAW NATURE RESERVE
SATURDAY MAY 21ST AT 730 AM

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

BLUE GROSBEAK / LOST VALLEY
SATURDAY MAY 28TH AT 630 AM

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

MERAMEC STATE PARK
SATURDAY JUNE 4TH AT 730 AM

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

COLUMBIA BOTTOM / RIVERLANDS MIGRATORY BIRD SANCTUARY
SATURDAY JUNE 11TH AT 7 AM

NATURE WALK FOR KIDS—PAGE 7

FOREST PARK VISITOR CENTER
SUNDAY JUNE 12TH FROM 10A TO 12P

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

BLUE GROSBEAK / LOST VALLEY
SATURDAY JUNE 18TH AT 545 AM

BIRDING FIELD TRIP—PAGE 2

BK LEACH / HWY 79
SATURDAY JULY 23RD AT 7 AM

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NO TaleFeathers in June or July

Please note that *TaleFeathers* will not be published over the summer months of June and July. August will be our next full issue. Do not be alarmed or feel you have been dropped from our mailing list during this time. We will keep our website up to date and will not hesitate to use our mailing list to update you on any significant Society or related news.

This has been our standard procedure for quite some time. With very limited activities over the summer, such as monthly programs and field trips, eliminating the newsletter for the period is a wise use of our limited resources.

Thanks and have a GREAT summer! ♦



Board Meetings

Open to All. 2nd Tuesday of Every Month at 7 pm. Powder Valley Nature Center at 11715 Cragwold.

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.

Field Trips

Spring migration and early summer are great times to experience the diversity of our native birds. If you're new to birding, we have created a schedule perfect for you. Every trip below, except the June 4th and July 23rd excursions, is very good for beginners. Please join us!

May 7th to Shaw Nature Reserve: Josh Uffman leads this all day trip that includes moderate hiking over some rough terrain. 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.

May 11th at Tower Grove Park: Pat Lueders leads this half day trip. Meet at 7:30 a.m. From I-44, take Kingshighway south to Magnolia. Turn left and go ½ mile to entrance on right. Right again on Northwest Dr and follow to Gaddy Bird Garden on right. Meet at entrance.

May 14th at Tower Grove Park: Pat Lueders and Bill Rudden lead this half day trip. Meet at 7:30 a.m. Take directions for May 11th trip.

May 21st to Shaw Nature Reserve: Connie Alwood leads this all day trip that includes moderate hiking over some rough terrain. Meet at 7:30 am. Take directions for May 7th trip.

May 28th at Blue Grosbeak & Lost Valley: Mike Grant leads the half day trip that includes moderate hiking over some rough terrain. *Meet at 6:30 am.* From Hwy 40, take Hwy 94 south ~ ¾ mile to the Lot on left.

June 4th at Meramec State Park: Josh Uffman leads this all day trip that includes moderate hiking over a rough terrain. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the MODOT commuter lot in the southwest corner of I-44 and Hwy 109.

June 11th at Columbia Bottom and Riverlands: Bob Bailey leads this all day trip. Meet at 7 a.m. From I-270 in north St. Louis, take Riverview Blvd exit and go north about 2.5 miles to entrance on right. Meet in Visitor Center parking lot.

June 18th at Blue Grosbeak & Lost Valley: Mike Grant leads the half day trip that *meets at 5:45 am.* Take directions from May 28th trip.

July 23rd at BK Leach and Hwy 79: Dave Rogles leads this all day trip that includes some moderate hiking. Meet at 7 a.m. in the southeast corner of the Dierberg's parking lot at the southwest side of the I-70 and Hwy 79 interchange.

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. ♦

From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

A very exciting thing happened about six weeks ago when Fred Weber, Inc. became our first corporate sponsor and made a significant financial contribution. Torrey Berger, past president of St. Louis Audubon, arranged a meeting in early March with Doug Weible, President and Chief Operating Officer at Fred Weber. Our two organizations found common ground with St. Louis County's Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. Fred Weber, with its headquarters adjacent to the Park, has provided material support to several large restoration projects there, and the chapter is in the second year of hands-on conservation projects at the Park that utilize community volunteers (see recap of our spring activities on page 5).

"Supporting our local community has always been important to the Fred Weber family," said Weible. "We were impressed by what St. Louis Audubon had accomplished with their all-volunteer projects on very little funding. Becoming an Audubon sponsor gives us a new role in the community, and it provides them with project resources to continue their work at Creve Coeur Park and grow other important efforts."

I hope you share my excitement with this partnership. The Fred Weber support helps insure our hands-on activities at Creve Coeur Park continue into a third year. Further, their assistance will benefit the chapter, in general, including new projects like Bring Conservation Home (see the April *TaleFeathers*). All of us look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with the Fred Weber family. For more info on the partnership and Fred Weber, visit http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/news/media/Content/FW_sponsor.pdf.

Fred Weber is intended to be only the first of many corporate sponsors. Please stay tuned as we expand the idea over the next year. Also, let us know if you own, work for or have a relationship with a company you think might want to partner with us; it all starts with a relationship.

Thanks for all your support! Have a great summer, and "see" you in August! ♦



Audubon Nature Walks for Kids

St. Louis Audubon continues our Nature Walks for children ages 6 and up. Bring your kids (or grandkids) to see and learn about our amazing birds and their surroundings. Led by volunteers experienced with children, groups and our natural environment, the walks are level and easy. All walks begin at 10 am and include:

Sunday May 8th at Forest Park. Meet in front of the Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor Center at 5595 Grand Drive just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere.

Sunday June 12th at Forest Park. Meet in front of the Dennis & Judith

Jones Visitor Center at 5595 Grand Drive just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere.

Wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather. Don't forget your water bottle, sunscreen and bug spray. If you have binoculars, bring them along. Reservations not required. Walk will only be canceled for severe weather. If you have questions please contact Nikki Davenport at (314) 566-3445 or nikiastro@att.net. ♦



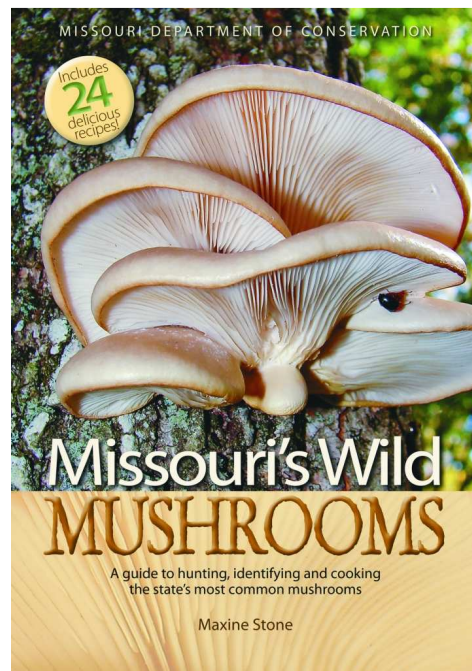
Missouri's Wild Mushrooms: But Are They Edible?

Tuesday, May 17th at 7:00 pm, Forest Park Visitor Center

Mushrooms are a source of great fascination for outdoor enthusiasts. What can I eat? Is that one poisonous? Will I die if I eat a bad one? Maxine Stone, author of the long-anticipated and newly published *Missouri's Wild Mushrooms--A Guide To Hunting, Identifying, and Cooking the State's Most Common Mushrooms*, will share information and answer your questions.

Maxine Stone, past president of the Missouri Mycological Society (MOMS), is a passionate mycophile (someone who is fascinated by mushrooms) and loves studying and teaching mycology. She is on the board of MOMS, the St. Louis Master Gardener Program, and the Great Rivers Chapter of the Missouri Master Naturalists. A happy day for her is one spent in the woods hunting mushrooms with family and friends.

The Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor Center, at 5595 Grand Drive, is just east of the Missouri History Museum at Lindell and DeBaliviere. The program will be held in the Learning Lab. Questions, call Karen Meyer at (314) 602-7318. ◆



Rain Garden Block Party

Sunday, May 15th from Noon till 3 pm

Join us in a springtime celebration! Last fall, a whole neighborhood in University City installed rain gardens to help improve water quality in Deer Creek. The festivities of the Rain Garden Block Party will be held in Oakbrook Park (at Oakbrook Lane and Cornell Avenue). Attractions will include tours of the new gardens, on-hand master gardeners, native plant giveaways, informational booths, music, barbeque, and activities for the whole family.

A rain garden allows stormwater runoff from roofs, driveways, and other impervious areas to be absorbed into the ground. This reduces erosion, water pollution and flooding. Native plants are recommended for rain gardens because they generally don't require fertilizer, are more tolerant of our local climate, soil, and water conditions, and provide food for native wildlife. The plants take up excess water flowing into the rain garden, and water filters through soil layers before entering the groundwater system.

This event, hosted by the River des Peres Watershed Coalition and U. City in Bloom, is free and open to the public. Parking is available on-street and in the medical/dental parking lot at 8500 Delmar Boulevard.

For additional details, visit http://ucityinbloom.org/Rain%20Garden%20Block%20Party%20Flyer_May2011.pdf. For info about rain barrels, another easy way to combat stormwater issues, visit <http://www.thegreencenter.org/rdp/>. ◆





Creve Coeur Park Thanks

We have come to the end of another season of habitat projects at Creve Coeur Park. Our success continues and is evidenced with some very large numbers—over 300 volunteers, 678 tires, 9,000 pounds of trash, and hundreds of bush honeysuckle plants cut.

Two of the three workdays were dedicated to the battle against bush honeysuckle that was begun last November. The two efforts combined cleared nearly three acres of the plant, including part of the upland forest edge along the bluff near the corporate shelters in the upper park. This area is the focus of a MO Dept of Conservation grant to restore the upland forest. We will return to the area in the fall to plant native shrubs and small trees. It was satisfying to see a number of native wildflowers blooming in early April where bush honeysuckle had ruled just a month earlier.

Our other workday was participation in the 3rd Annual Confluence Trash Bash on March 26th. Nearly 200 volunteers came out in the cold (the snow held off until after lunch) to remove trash from the Creve Coeur and Fee Fee Creek watersheds. Nearly 15 tons of trash was collected that morning, including the tires mentioned above and 3,600 pounds of scrap—largely discarded car gas tanks. Groups participating included the Boy Scouts, Lafayette High School Key Club, Loyola Academy Middle School, Great Rivers Chapter of Master Naturalists, MO Stream Teams, Boeing, Happy Trails Quadracycles, JM Family Enterprises and Missouri American Water.

Thanks to ALL our nearly 450 volunteers that helped out this year! We hope you will be one of them this fall! ◆

From the top

March 5th honeysuckle team ready for action

Mallard Lake "canoe crew" with Trash Bash haul

Thawing out after the Trash Bash at the Tremayne Shelter

Richard Spener attacks VERY tall bush honeysuckle on April 30th

All photos courtesy of St. Louis Audubon

By Craig Lanham

Year-end Conservation Wrap-up

The last year has seen many successes, non-traditional partnerships, and conservation methods to bolster the conservation mission of the Society.

The spring/summer of 2010 started with conducting surveys of Bluebird nest boxes in Creve Coeur Park. Volunteers, including a college intern, provided us with detailed reports of activity in and around the boxes to include the successful hatching of House Wrens.

An important part of the Mississippi Flyway at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers was under serious threat by a proposed casino project in north St Louis County and another in north St Louis City. St. Louis Audubon joined forces with many others to become part of the Save the Confluence Coalition. The Coalition defeated both proposals, with the Missouri Gaming Commission awarding the one open casino license to a project in Cape Girardeau. The citizens of St Louis stood up against the powerful gaming industry to show they value the environment more than another casino.

Much work remains to protect these areas from future development. Consider checking out the Columbia Bottom Appreciation Day on May 14th from 1p to 4p. The Becherer Family farm is hosting an afternoon of activities and opportunities to learn about the floodplain next to the Columbia Bottom Conservation Area. For details <http://action.sierraclub.org/site/R?i=gqWfhhl4eeR4l4yrldUkYQ> or call (314) 645-3394.

The issue of Patch-Burn Grazing with Cattle on Missouri's prairies and natural areas is in the forefront. The Missouri Department of Conservation is experimenting with this idea, and members of our Society have raised serious concerns about its environmental impact. The Society has determined that the practice degrades the biological diversity of these important natural areas and will oppose the practice.

A second year of National Audubon TogetherGreen grants funding has allowed us to perform more habitat restoration work in Creve Coeur Park. Deer deterrents, honeysuckle eradication, trash cleanup as well as a partnership with the Greenway Network planting native Missouri plants in Portage Des Sioux, are some of the many projects conducted.

This year has seen the Society become an affiliated member of the Conservation Federation of Missouri. The affiliation allowed us to pursue, and receive, grant money to supplement the TogetherGreen funding.

Two outdoor retail stores, the Alpine Shop and REI, helped us promote volunteer events and the Society itself. Our Society is the only "wildlife society" to repeatedly be a part of the Alpine Shop's special events. REI has nominated us for a company grant that would help our conservation mission. We will continue to develop these unique relationships.

The St. Louis Audubon Bring Conservation Home program will provide homeowners with advice and assistance to make their property more bird and wildlife friendly. A limited pilot stage has been initiated with a full roll-out planned for early 2012.

Many of the Society's members have been involved in our conservation efforts. Hundreds of volunteers and thousands of hours were devoted to conserving our region's impressive array of birds and wildlife. I would personally like to thank everyone involved, and assure you all our efforts make a difference in our natural world! ◆

Hawn State Park Recap

By Pat Lueders

Believing the weather forecast and ignoring the early rain, a group of nine birders left for Saint Genevieve County's Hawn State Park early Saturday morning, April 9th. In route, we saw a Cooper's Hawk and Wild Turkey from the highway and an early Green Heron and Eurasian Collared-dove from the side roads.

We first stopped at the park office and heard an Eastern Towhee, many Chipping Sparrows, and got looks at a beautiful Pine Warbler and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. We chose to hike the Pickle Creek Trail first and to return on the Whispering Pine Trail, both of which were good choices. After escaping the vocalizations of the numerous Chipping Sparrows, we heard and found our first of many Louisiana Water-thrushs. Along the creek there was a singing water-thrush probably every 1/4 mile. We also heard Yellow-throated Warblers, Black & White Warblers, numerous Northern Parulas, and Carolina Wrens.

Near the end of the Pickle Creek trail, we were treated with a mixed flock of birds including Yellow-rumped Warbler, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and finally good looks at a Yellow-throated Warbler. After a tricky crossing of the creek, we joined the Whispering Pine trail which parallels the creek at tree top level. We were treated with wonderful looks at a Northern Parula, a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers, 3 Black & White Warblers feeding near the ground, 2 male and a female Hairy Woodpeckers, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. While watching the Parula, we thought we heard a Yellow-throated Vireo. Upon closer inspection, we discovered it was actually a beautiful Blue-headed Vireo; which, according to Robbins & Easterla "Birds of Missouri," would be a very early record and was a life bird for some of our group. We were lucky to watch it fairly low in the trees eating bugs with more Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. We had a very low fly-over by a Broad-winged Hawk which we thought we had heard vocalize earlier. We watched the numerous Turkey Vultures but did not find a Black Vulture. Both of these trails provided beautiful views of the diverse natural landscape of Hawn State Park.

We ate our lunch in the picnic area and Bernie Favarra found a late Red-breasted Nuthatch. After lunch we drove to Pickle Springs Conservation Area and birded there. Along the drive we heard Field Sparrows and saw Tree Swallows, Eastern Bluebirds and heard Eastern Meadowlarks. By the time we arrived at Pickle Springs it was around 90° and very quiet. We did hear a Barred Owl, Northern Parulas, and saw a male and female Pine Warbler, with the female collecting nesting material, and more Yellow-rumped Warblers.

After arriving back in St. Louis, some of the birders finished the day at Emmenegger Park in Kirkwood. We didn't add any new species but did see another Broad-winged Hawk very high in the sky migrating, ending a very enjoyable day of birding! ◆

*Northern Parula (left)
and
Blue-headed Vireo*

Mike Grant Photos



An Island I Remember

by Rachel Carson

Editor's Note: Karen Meyer produced these excerpts from “An Island I Remember” by Rachel Carson, from the book “Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson,” edited by Linda Lear in 1998.

I particularly like this piece by Rachel Carson, written while on a month leave from her federal government job in 1946. She is observing the sights and sounds in Maine during a stay at a cottage on the Sheepscot River, a place she fell in love with. Seven years later, she bought her own place there. After observing gulls and osprey...

“And then there were the sounds of other, smaller birds — the rattling call of a kingfisher that perched, between forays after fish, on the posts of the dock; the call of the phoebe that nested under the eaves of the cabin; the redstarts that foraged in the birches on the hill behind the cabin and forever, it seemed to me, asked each other the way to Wiscasset, for I could easily twist their syllables into the query, ‘Which is Wiscasset? Which is Wiscasset?’”

A bit later, she continues with the songbirds...

“And indeed the woods there on the hillside were bright with the moving, flitting forms of many warblers—the exquisite powder-blue parula with his breast band of orange and magenta; the Blackburnian, like flickering flames in the spruces; the myrtle, flashing his yellow rump patch. But most numerous of all was the trim little black-throated green warbler, whose dreamy, nostalgic song drifted all day long through the woods, little wisps of song lingering like bits of fog in the tree tops. Perhaps because I so invariably heard it in those woods, when I now recall the song in memory, it always brings with it a vivid picture of that sunny hill splashed with the dark shadows of the evergreens, and the scent of all the heady, aromatic, bitter-sweet fragrances compounded of pine and spruce and bayberry, warmed by the sun through the hours of a July day.”

This should prepare us for what's in store during the next several weeks here in Missouri and Illinois. Many migrating warblers are being seen already, so grab your binoculars and get out there between the raindrops!! ◆



Black-throated Green Warbler

Al Smith Photo

Help Wanted at Wild Bird Rehabilitation

The nesting season is upon us here in St. Louis, and we are approaching our busy season at Wild Bird Rehab. Our current volunteers are in urgent need of help on their shifts. We are seeking volunteers to work 4-hour shifts at the center this spring and summer. Bird volunteers help in all aspects of bird care. Starting with the basics, we will show you how to clean and set up cages for our bird patients. As you gain more experience you may move on to feeding birds and working with the youngsters. There is always a great deal to do during spring and summer months. During our off season (Oct—March) you can take advantage of the extra time and reduced patient load to become more deeply involved with bird care through classes and one on one training. For more information regarding volunteer opportunities please send an email to volunteer@wildbirdrehab.org or call the center at 314-426-6400. ◆



In Memoriam

Jenni Malie Higashiguchi, a doctoral student in biology at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, was born in Hawaii on March 24, 1981, and passed away on April 4 after a brief but catastrophic illness.

Jenni received her undergraduate degree in biology from the University of Hawaii, where she studied some of the Hawaiian forest birds that occur nowhere else. She joined the large number of researchers interested in understanding why so many Hawaiian forest birds have become extinct. She joined the Ph.D. program in Evolution, Ecology, and Systematics in the Department of Biology at the University of Missouri–St. Louis in 2007 to work with Dr. Patricia Parker, the E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor of Zoological Studies. Working with Parker’s group she applied what was learned in Hawaii in order to help Galapagos birds escape the same sad fate.

She had identified the study of the mosquito vectors of bird diseases as a critical piece of the puzzle that she would solve, and one that would contribute importantly to the goal of preventing extinctions of Galapagos birds. Jenni received the 2008 John Denver Memorial Scholarship in Tropical Ecology, the 2010 Stephen Mitchell Doyle Memorial Scholarship in Tropical Ecology and the 2011 Antoinette McGrath Memorial Scholarship from the Center. She was in her third Galapagos field season, and second on this project, when she fell ill. Parker said the mosquitoes Jenni caught before her illness may provide the understanding that will help preserve the birds in one of nature’s most famous wild places.

Jenni was brought to Miami for treatment, and then to Cleveland, where she passed away. She did not have any infectious diseases, but died of acute liver failure of unknown cause. “Jenni Malie Higashiguchi was a gentle and caring person who would make beautiful leis for her student colleagues in celebration of each of their successes and bring delectable homemade sushi to any gathering,” said Parker. “She always preferred talking in person to email or phone and we will forever continue to see her face peeking around our doors. Her contributions to the University and to Galapagos have been enormous.”

A fund has been created in her name at the Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center. Memorial donations should go to: Jenni Malie Higashiguchi Fund of the Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center, University of Missouri–St. Louis, One University Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63121. ◆

Editor’s Note: Jenni Malie Higashiguchi was a 2008 recipient of the St. Louis Audubon Society Graduate Scholarship.

St. Louis Audubon Society Donation Form

Mission: to create a community connection to nature through education and conservation.

Your support will allow us to maintain and expand our efforts in the St. Louis Metro Area. All our programs are free to the public. Thank you very much for your past support!

Name:

Address:

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E-Mail or Phone (if desired):

Make checks payable to:
St. Louis Audubon Society

Mail Checks to:
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P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, MO 63122-0227

5/11

\$20 \$30 \$50** \$100 Other _____

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Conservation Only

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All Contributions are Tax Deductible

If you prefer credit card, visit our online donation page at
<http://www.stlouisaudubon.org/giving/giving.php>.

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