Oh, For the Love of Birding!

By Brenda Hente

I know that some people just “don’t get” what others find so exciting about birding. Let’s face it; there are well over 400 fully accepted bird species in the state of Missouri, all with their own particular call. You will find each with a specific field mark, perching and nesting under leaves near the ground, in the thickness of trees and vines of the woodland forest, up high in the canopy, and everywhere else in between.

So, just what is it that makes this determined endeavor of identifying bird species and checking them off a list so appealing? If you would have asked me that question four years ago, I would not have had an answer. Up until then, the thought of birding becoming a favorite pastime of mine could not have been further from my mind. One day, however, I discovered a pair of Great Horned Owls living in my backyard and it changed my life. After observing them in their daytime roost, perched in my tree, and hearing them hoot back and forth each evening, affection for all their feathered friends just blossomed. Soon, I found myself looking in trees while walking, or even driving in my car, for any bird I

See Birding on Page 4
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.

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

Thanks to All Our Volunteers!
We had another fantastic year made possible by thousands of hours of service given by hundreds of volunteers just like you! Teaching, planting, leading, surveying, monitoring, advising, restoring and so much more. The Education Team alone delivered 180 programs in 72 school visits that engaged over 3,700 kids! Nearly 600 folks came out for 14 stewardship projects including the installation of over 1,600 native plants!

Carlyle Lake “Pelagic” Trip
The SLAS Carlyle Pelagic Trip will be held on Saturday September 13, 2013. Meet at the McDonald’s in Carlyle, on highway 127 near highway 50 at 7:30 am. We will spend the morning watching for abundant migrant land birds in Hazlett State Park and will search the lake for Sabine’s Gull, Jaegers and other rarities from the boats and from shore in the afternoon, with further possibilities for shorebirding. The boat ride will begin after a break for lunch and will run from 12:00 noon–3:00 pm, but you MUST arrive by 11:45 am to board the boat. SABINE’S GULL is often seen on this trip and we’ve had a great run with RED PHALAROPE in recent years, often seeing this great pelagic bird as close as 25 feet! Another highlight (not seen every year) is BLACK–THROATED BLUE WARBLER. The extra 50 miles to the east makes this bird just a little more likely! The day list will likely run around 100 species.

The land–based portion of the trip is free as always. The Pelagic Trip is $30 per person. Make your reservation for the Pelagic by sending an e-mail to joseph.w.eades@monsanto.com. Your reservation will be confirmed once your check is received. Send your check, made payable to Joe Eades to 517 Willow Lane Kirkwood, MO 63122. There will be no refunds as the proceeds must cover boat rental and gas. Bring a hat, sunscreen, water, snacks, insect repellant (if you desire), and comfortable walking shoes. We also need as much popcorn as we can get our hands on! This really brings the gulls in around the boat for great views. Expect several hours of walking. Confirmed trip participants will receive further information as the trip draws near. Trip Leader/Coordinator: Joe Eades: joseph.w.eades@monsanto.com. ◆
From the Director

By Mitch Leachman

The St. Louis Audubon Society has quite a history having become the first local chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1945. Our chapter number is quite telling—N01! Yet, our roots go back much further to our founding as the St. Louis Bird Club in 1915. That's right, we’re about to begin our Centennial Year! How exciting! To participate in the leadership of an organization with such history! To walk in the path of visionaries that joined with others across the country at the vanguard of wildlife conservation efforts at the beginning of the 20th Century. And to realize the fundamentals of what we do have changed very little as we charge through the 21st Century. In its first few years, the St. Louis Bird Club was directly involved with the passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, created an education committee to encourage teaching about birds in the public schools, and of course led regular field trips at city parks to introduce the public to the wonders of birds. I think our founders would not only recognize our efforts today, but be very proud of our volunteer Conservation Committee, Education Team, field trip leaders and more. I hope you are, too!

We also hope you will help us celebrate our history, our current successes and plans for the future. We have a variety of special activities and events planned across our Centennial Year, most free and open to the public as usual. We will kick it all off with our Annual Dinner on Saturday, November 1st at the Crowne Plaza in Clayton (see the details on page 6 of this newsletter). The event will be a celebration of who we are, what we do, and the impact we have had on individuals. Please spread the word.

Jim Holsen, past president of our Board of Directors, initially compiled a history of the chapter up to 2006. Paul Bauer, with the assistance of Dave & Karen Tylka, will be bringing that document up to date for use in our Centennial activities. In addition, we're looking for personal stories about our history—anecdotes, letters, photos and such that bring to life individual moments. We would like to display some of your finds at the Dinner but make as much as possible available on-line over the next year. Copies that can be made public and do not need to be returned would be best, but let us know if you need other arrangements. Our address is PO Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122. Call me at (314) 599-7390 with questions.

St. Louis Audubon has been connecting our community to nature through education and conservation for nearly a century, and we’re so excited about the next hundred! ◆

Field Trips, Etc.

**Sep 20th Hawk Watch at Shaw Nature Reserve:** Christian Hagenlocher will lead this day trip to experience fall migration through hawks. Meet at 9am at the entrance. Take I-44 west to Hwy 100 (Gray Summit exit). Turn left back over 44 and then turn right. The entrance is on the immediate left. ($3 entr. fee w/out MOBOT garden membership)

**Oct 1st at St. Stanislaus Conservation Area:** John Solodar will lead this half day trip. Meet at 9:00 am. From I–270 take McDonnell Blvd north 1.3 mile to Teson Rd. Turn left and follow to a “T” at Aubuchon.

Turn right and follow to conservation area. Meet in first lot on left.

**Oct 4th BK Leach Rail Walk:** Josh Uffman will lead this all day trip. Meet at 8 a.m. in the SE corner of the Dierberg’s parking lot at the SW side of I–70 and Hwy 79. Caravan/carpools arranged from there. Registration required. Contact Josh at (314) 387–8037 or birdsandbugs@sbcglobal.net.

All field trips are FREE. Reservations not required, unless noted—consult our website for details. For questions, contact Mike Grant at mikecurlew@att.net.
Oh, For the Love of Birding!

I suppose most birders have an “Aha!” moment when they find themselves hooked on birding. After observing the owls for several months, my journey of bird watching began. I began to read literature pertaining to bird identification and behavior while spending hours in the field observing birds, trying to identify them and recognize the sometimes subtle differences among species. My “Peterson Field Guide” and “Birds in Missouri” by Brad Jacobs, became habitual, nighttime reading, as well as my go-to sources for identifying and learning about Missouri’s avian marvels.

I soon joined and became active in different birding groups in the area, such as the Forest Park Forever and St. Louis Audubon Society beginner bird walks, which are held the first Saturday of each month in Forest Park. During this vital part of my learning process, I met folks such as Mark Glenshaw, Bob Bailey, Dave Garcia, Karen Meyer, Amy Witt, Danny Brown, Jim Wilson, Linda Tossing, and many others who helped mentor me along the way. I was astonished to find so many people who shared my passion and were more than willing to help me learn. I couldn’t believe I had never before discovered bird watching as a source of such joy in my life! Of course, with any subject, the more you learn, the more you realize there is to know and therefore, my journey and love of birding continues.

This spring, I was fortunate to volunteer at the World Bird Sanctuary and participate in their Migration Blitz. This great opportunity allowed me to observe birds up close, as they were evaluated. I learned to determine their age, if they are nesting, if they have brood patches, and other pertinent characteristics to document. Being able to hold and help release the birds after they were banded was extremely gratifying. After banding over 100 birds one day, I was more determined than ever to learn how to identify, by sight and sound, as many different bird species as possible. I wanted to transition from a beginner to a more intermediate birder during the spring and summer months ahead.

Just this summer a birding friend of mine, Barb Brownell, and I planned our first overnight birding trip with exciting results! We traveled four hours south of St. Louis to Greer, MO in search of a Hooded Warbler. We knew this bird was in the area as noted by other birders on MO Birds, a list serve for birders in the region. Finding this little gem was going to the challenge. Shortly after we began walking along the Greer Spring trail we heard a little “chip.” Noting previous words of advice by a well-respected birder, Bob Bailey, to never ignore a chip, we walked back up the hairpin trail and searched for what we were hoping was our Hooded Warbler.

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Warbler. Much to our amazement, it was indeed a striking male in brilliant yellow and black plumage. He began singing his somewhat slow and rich song and flying very near to us. We were sure he must have had a mate nesting nearby. In disbelief of finding this stunning beauty, we held our binoculars glued to our faces for the next several minutes before we dared to whisper to each other. The tiny warbler graced our presence for the next hour. We could have happily watched and listened to him sing all afternoon. However, we had other birds to find and observe, including the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

By the end of our trip, we had identified 35 different species. Bird watching continues to bring much joy to me, whether I am watching warblers, shorebirds, waterfowl, birds of prey or even backyard birds. I continue to volunteer and learn, most recently monitoring Eastern Bluebird boxes and Purple Martin houses in Forest Park and Creve Coeur Park. I encourage all of you to continue making time to observe winged beauties as often as you can. As with most anything, the more time you give, the more you will learn. So, what are you waiting for? Go, find a trail this weekend, grab your binoculars, bring a friend, and let the world of birding become your favorite pastime.

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**Habitat Restoration Workdays**

**Saturday, September 27th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle kill.**

Help us celebrate National Public Lands Day. All ages welcome, but those under 18 must have parental/adult supervision at all times. Bring your favorite lopper or saw. Meet in the upper park—west of I–270 and north of Dorsett. Take I–270 Exit 17 for Dorsett Rd and go west about 1.5 miles. Enter Park on right, just before light at Marine and take Streetcar Drive north. Continue past park office, ball field and tennis court to gravel parking lot on right. Parking is somewhat limited, so please carpool if possible.

**Saturday, October 11th at McKelvey Woods Park. Restoration Day.**

All ages welcome. We continue our partnership with the City of Maryland Heights! We may be clearing for a trail, planting or removing honeysuckle. All necessary tools provided. Meet at Dogport, just north of Aquaport at 2344 McKelvey Road, Maryland Heights, 63043. Lunch will be provided.

**Saturday, October 25th at Creve Coeur Park. Honeysuckle kill.**

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 remote west region of the park, near Waterworks Road. From I–270, take Hwy 364/Page west to Exit 17 at the Maryland Heights Expressway and go north to the first light at River Valley Drive. Turn left and follow for approx. 2.5 miles to 4–way stop. Turn left again, drive into gravel lot, past concrete barriers, just as road turns right. Follow signs from there. Parking is rather limited, so please carpool if possible.

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.

All projects begin at 9 am. All are half–day. Gloves and other supplies/materials are provided.
Please join us at the Crowne Plaza in Clayton for our 2014 Annual Dinner and Centennial Kick–off. Founded in 1915 as the St. Louis Bird Club, we have a whole year of special activities planned to celebrate a century of connecting the St. Louis community to nature through our education and conservation programs. We will release the plan at the Dinner. Also, we will hear personal stories from several folks that have benefited from one of our programs in recent years. The evening will close with award presentations for Outstanding Conservationist, Educator and Volunteer.

At 99 years young, St. Louis Audubon is stronger than ever! Our all-volunteer Education Team has engaged over 70,000 students and adults since 2001; they performed over 400 school programs in just the last two years. Our field trip leaders routinely lead 30 walks a year, sharing the wonders of birds with folks across the region, including beginners through our collaborations with Forest Park Forever and Chesterfield Parks. Our Bring Conservation Home native landscaping program has enrolled nearly 400 landowners with over 200 acres of potential new habitat in less than 3 years. There is much more, but we hope that’s enough to show why we’re so excited about our future and so looking forward to celebrating with you in November!

Jean Ponzi, Green Resources Manager at the Missouri Botanical Garden’s EarthWays Center, will be our Master of Ceremonies. For 25 years, she has produced and hosted the weekly environmental radio talk shows, "Earthworms," on St. Louis independent radio FM–88.1 KDHX, and more recently “Growing Green St. Louis” on AM–550 KTRS. In just the last year, she received the Population Institute’s Global Media Award for Best Radio Show and the Missouri Coalition for the Environment’s Kay and Leo Drey Environmental Stewardship Award.

6:00 p.m.—Registration & Social Hour / Silent Auction Begins
7:00 p.m.—Dinner Service Begins
The cost is $65 per person. Reservations are required; space is limited. Don’t delay!

The Crowne Plaza is at 7750 Carondelet Avenue, Clayton 63105. Free parking available on location.

Saturday, November 1st, 2014 Annual Dinner Registration Form

Please mail this form by October 20th with payment to: St. Louis Audubon at P.O. Box 220227, St. Louis, MO 63122. Make checks payable to St. Louis Audubon Society. If you would prefer to pay by credit card, a PayPal account is not required at: www.stlouisaudubon.org/fwd/2014AnnualDinner.html

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Entrée Selection—Number of Each:
Chicken ______  Beef ______  Veggie ______

Special Dietary Needs: ____________________________________________________________

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St. Louis Audubon Society
2014 - 2015 Calendar

Details are subject to change. For latest info, check newsletter, visit website at www.stlouisaudubon.org, or call contact individual below.

MAIN CONTACTS — COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Board of Directors
Linda Tosching  M-(314) 495-3063
Conservation Committee
Jean Favara  M-(314)-603-9462
Education Committee
Marty Smigell  M-(314)-640-0897
Field Trips
Mike Grant  H-(636) 519-0208
Membership
Nikki Davenport  M-(314) 566-3445
Other inquiries, call Mitch Leachman, Executive Director, M-(314) 599-7390

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON ONLINE

To view our newsletter TaleFeathers, the latest information about chapter activities, other contact info and links to a variety of bird and wildlife info, visit www.stlouisaudubon.org. You can also find us on Facebook by searching for “St. Louis Audubon.” For questions regarding the website, contact webmaster Chuck Kirkpatrick via webmaster@stlouisaudubon.org.

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP WORKDAYS

St. Louis Audubon will continue their work to improve habitat for birds and other wildlife thru volunteer habitat restoration works. Registration is requested: call Mitch Leachman at 314-599-7390 or email mitch@stlouisaudubon.org.

Sat Sep 27: 9 am-12 pm (All ages) Honeysuckle Kill. Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. No tools required.

Sat Oct 11: 8 am-1 pm (All ages) Trail Day and Honeysuckle Kill. McKelvey Woods Nature Park. Lunch provided.

Sat Oct 25: 9 am-12 pm (All ages) Honeysuckle Kill. Creve Coeur Lake Memorial Park. No tools required.

BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

Forest Park Beginner Walks: First Saturday of most months at 8:30 am. Meet at Visitor Center, 5595 Grand Drive. For details or questions, e-mail Amy Witt at birding@forestparkforever.org.

Regular Bird Trips: Most half-day trips end by noon. Bring binoculars and bird books. Detailed directions follow the trip list.

Date  Time  Place  Leader
Sep 13  730a  Carlyle Lake Trail - ad/w/bl  Joe Eades
Sep 20  9am  Shaw N/R Hawk Watch - C. Hagenlocher
Oct 1(9)  9am  St. Stanislaus Conserv Area-1/2 d/w  J. Solodar
Oct 4  8 am  BK Leach Rail Walk-ad/w/bl/gb  J. Uffman
Oct 18  730a  Two Rivers NWR – ad/w/bl  Mike Thelen
Nov 1  8 am  Busch/Weldon Spring CA  Mike Thelen
Nov 8  8 am  Riverlands Bird Sanctuary-1/2 d/w  TBD
Nov 22  8 am  Riverlands Bird Sanctuary-1/2 d  TBD
Dec 13  8 am  Riverlands Bird Sanctuary-1/2 d  TBD
Jan 10  8 am  Riverlands Bird Sanctuary-1/2 d  TBD
Jan 31  8 am  Riverlands/Columbia Bottom-ad/w/gb  TBD
Feb 7  9 am  Baldwin Lake IL-ad/cvp/bl  P. Luiders
Feb 21  8 am  Riverlands Bird Sanctuary-ad/w  Joe Eades
Mar 7  5 pm  Busch Woodcock/Owl Prowl-ad/gb  Grant/Gustafson
Mar 14  8 am  Horseshoe Lake IL/RMBS-ad/w/gb  M. Grant
Apr 11  730a  Castlewood SP-ad/w/bl  Luiders/Gustafson
Apr 18  7 am  Lincoln Co. Driving Tour-ad/cvp/bl  J. Solodar
Apr 18  8 am  Mallard Lake/LCC-1/2 d/h/gb  M. Dueren
Apr 25  730a  Forest Pk/Tower Grove-1/2 d/h/gb  Bailey/Garcia
May 9  730a  Tower Grove Park-1/2 d/w/gb  P. Luiders
May 16  730a  Shaw Nature Reserve-ad/h/gb  C. Alwood
May 23  630a  Blue Grosbeak/Lost Valley-1/2 d/h/gb  B. Bailey
Jun 6  7 am  Columbia Bottom/Riverlands-ad/h/gb  TBD

FIELD TRIP LOCATIONS

Baldwin Lake (CVP): Meet at the commuter lot at Hwy 270 and Hwy 30 west at 9:00 am if you wish to car pool. Take Hwy 270 across the Jefferson Barracks Bridge to IL. Take Hwy 3 south to Redbud. Go east on Hwy 154 to Baldwin, IL. Follow the signs to town to Lake Baldwin. Meet at the parking lot inside the gate.

Blue Grosbeak Trail (Busch): Take Hwy 94 south from Hwy 40. About 3/4 mile down Hwy 94, meet at parking lot on left.

Busch Conservation Area: Take Hwy 94 south from Hwy 40. At 1.3 miles, turn right at the light for Hwy D. Go 2 miles to entrance on the right. Turn left at the T to Hampton Lake. Meet in the lot.

Carlyle Lake: Take I-64 east across the Poplar St. Bridge. Exit I-64 at Hwy 50 east toward Carlyle. Follow Hwy 50 to Hwy 127 and turn left at the junction. Turn right and meet at the McDonald’s lot.

Castlewood SP: From 270 or 141, take 270 west to Ries Rd south to left on Kiefer Creek Rd. Meet at lot on right, just after park office.

Forest Park (Kennedy Forest): From Skinker & Clayton intersection, take Skinker north to first right at Wells Drive. Take second left at John F. Kennedy Memorial Forest—MDC sign.

Follow drive to parking/restrooms.

Horseshoe Lake area: Take I-70 east across the Poplar St. Bridge. Exit at Hwy 111 (exit 6) and turn left. Go about 2 miles to the State Park entrance. Meet at the first parking lot on the right.

Mallard Lake Trail: Meet at the Creve Coeur Lake House at 2160 Creve Coeur Mill Rd. From I-270, take Hwy 364 west to the Maryland Heights Expressway exit. Go north to Creve Coeur Mill Rd. Turn right and go south, cross under Hwy 364, and look for the restaurant/parking lot on your left.

RMBS (Riverlands): Hwy 367 north from I-270. Right on last road before the Alton Bridge. Then right on 1st road to the Teal Pond lot.

Shaw Nature Reserve: Take I-44 west to Hwy 100 (Gray Summit exit). Turn left back over 44 and then turn right. The entrance is on the immediate left. ($3 entree fee w/out MOBOT garden membership)

St. Stanislaus Conservation Area: From I-270, take McDonnell Blvd (turns into Howdershell) north ~1.3 miles to Teson Rd. Turn left and follow to a “T” at Aubuchon. Turn right and follow to conservation area. Meet in first lot on left.

Tower Grove Park: From I-44, take Kingshighway south to Magnolia. Turn left on Magnolia. Follow to park entrance on right. Take first right on Northwest Dr and follow to Gaddy Bird Garden on right. Meet at entrance.

Two Rivers NWR: From Alton, take Hwy 100. The River Rd, north thru Grafton to the Gilbert Lake lot just after the Brussels Ferry.
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.

[ ] $20  [ ] $30  [ ] $50**  [ ] $100  [ ] Other_______

** Memberships of $50 or more may choose from four gifts:

- *Bringing Nature Home* by Douglas W. Tallamy
- *Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People* by Dave Tylka
- *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern & Central North America*

Please indicate your choice.

100% of your dues stay in St. Louis supporting our local efforts. Thank you very much!

Memberships are Tax Deductible

*Less the $15 Cost of the Gift*

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