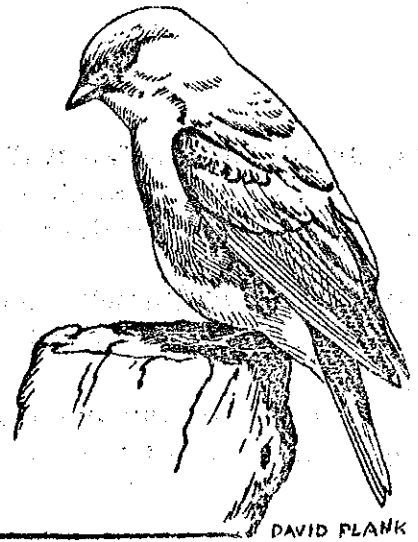


# The Bluebird

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI



Vol. 40, No. 4

November, 1973

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S ROOST

By James P. Jackson

Some of our members feel The BLUEBIRD should devote itself mainly to news and information about birds; others feel the emphasis should be more on environmental matters. We need both, of course, but by choice, I'll continue to devote my modest efforts these days to environment.

But where to start? How many environmental issues can be discussed, even briefly, on these pages? Since there are so many issues and so little space, it might be best to concentrate on issues vital to the Missouri scene.

For instance, how many of us have written to our Missouri members of Congress to express ~~our~~ views on damming our rivers, channelizing our streams, or preserving unique natural areas from mass development? One letter by an individual on a single issue may influence someone in Washington more than a whole series of resolutions submitted by an organization. The reasoning behind this is that congressmen feel obligated to respond to individuals, though not to organizations. Though they might hedge in their responses, they know as politicians that you will not long be deceived -- neither by vague responses nor by their voting records. In other words, congressmen do listen to voters.

With this in mind, let's estimate what impact would result if each Society member were to write a single letter to his congressional representative and his two senators. Our five-hundred members would thereby swamp the House and Senate with a total of 1,500 letters.

If you go along with this philosophy, then here are some specific issues to write about, each of them directly related to the Missouri scene. Choose one, investigate the facts, and then sit down to write your three letters.

- (1) OPPOSE any funding to the Army Corps of Engineers which would permit them to start work on damming of the Meramec River.
- (2) OPPOSE any further channelization by the Soil Conservation Service, a federal agency now convinced that the modern way to conserve our soil is by straightening our streams.

- (3) SUPPORT Senate Bill 316 which seeks to set aside mini-wilderness areas in the east and midwest, including several outstanding areas already under jurisdiction of the U. S. Forest Service in Missouri.
- (4) SUPPORT the wild and scenic rivers legislation and efforts to include our lovely Gasconade River within its jurisdiction.

The above issues are presented in brief outline form; check your facts regarding them. Get involved. Write! Write! Write!

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## SUMMER SURVEY - JUNE-JULY, 1973

By Dick Anderson

June weather was cool and dry, except in western Missouri where St. Joseph rain was 9.4 inches above normal for the year on July 31. Springfield recorded a low of 57° on June 21. July was hot and dry, except for heavy rains during the last week. These rains helped maintain much of the water habitat left by the spring floods. The floods obviously affected some ground nesting species, especially Bobwhite, but many species nested in trees standing in six feet of water. There was an absence of Mississippi Kites in southeast Missouri.

Grebes through Herons - Stragglers were two very late Eared Grebes at the Maryville Sewage Lagoons June 2 and 17 (M.R.). Pied-billed Grebes enjoyed a very good breeding season due to an increase of habitat. Many young were at Trimble W.M.A. (S.P.), 12 young were seen at Squaw Creek July 14 and several others were also seen during this period (M.R.). They were much above normal in the greater St. Louis area. (D.A.). Up to 12 Double-crested Cormorants were at Squaw Creek through June and until mid-July (F.L.). Herons were down in northwest Missouri (M.R.) and were below normal, especially Great Blue, at St. Louis (E.C.). An exception was an increase in Least Bitterns at Kansas City (Trimble, etc.). (S.P.) and were common at Squaw Creek and Bigelow Marshes (M.R.). Two Snowy Egrets were at Schell-Osage on July 21 (J.R.). Ten Yellow-crowned Night Herons were seen at Duck Creek in mid-August by Bob Gaede.

Waterfowl - Many more ducks were reported this summer due to excess water habitat. Blue-winged teals were very common and also successful breeders at St. Louis (E.C., D.A.). A pair of Gadwalls and one Green-winged Teal were near the Missouri River June 15 and two American Wigeons were at Trimble July 28 (S.P.). Twenty juvenile Wood Ducks were seen at Lake Springfield in July (I.F.). Two pairs of Black Ducks nested at Schell-Osage with broods of 5 and 8 (J.R.). At Squaw Creek and Maryville Sewage Lagoons, there were four Gadwalls June 17-23, one until July 4, four Redheads June 17, a Ring-necked throughout the period, six Ruddy Ducks June 17 and two remained until July 4 (M.R.). At Mark Twain Refuge several broods of Mallards were present and two Lesser Scaups appeared July 18 (S.V.). Mallards and Blue-winged Teals were common nesters on the Missouri River, but Wood Ducks were "way down" (R.W.).

Hawks through Rails - Now for the bad news! Most observers report hawks down or missing. Bread-winged and both accipiters were especially scarce. Red-shouldered were down along the Missouri River (R.W.). Only one Mississippi Kite was seen in the Charleston area (floods?) by M. Southard. Sparrow Hawks were greatly reduced at Dexter (B.G.). Unusual were 66 Turkey Vultures at Honey Creek Wildlife on June 20. This was the highest count in northwest Missouri in Floyd Lawhon's 21 years' experience. Several summer Swainson's Hawks were seen by many in western Missouri from Springfield to Schell-Osage.

Fifty-two Greater Prairie Chickens were seen on four booming grounds on July 9 by Sebastian Patti. Both King and Virginia Rails were successful breeders at St. Louis (E.C.). A Purple Gallinule was found dead in front of a factory at Dexter, Missouri. Bob Gaede reports no sign of shot, so it presumably flew into the building during the night. Coots were more common as breeders in the flooded areas.

Shorebirds through Woodpeckers - There were no unusual reports for shorebirds, mainly because the main migration had not yet come through. (However, seven species were at Schell-Osage on July 8 M.R., F.L.). Six Upland Plovers were counted on Floyd Lawhon's Breeding Survey near St. Joseph on June 10. A Sub-adult Franklin's Gull was at Maryville July 28 and over 50 Black Terns were there July 14 (M.R.). Two Least Terns were at Schell-Osage June 24 and one on July 26-27 (J.R.). There were no reports of breeding Least Terns due to high water.

Good details of a White-winged Dove were reported by Jim Rathert. The bird was present at Schell-Osage July 3-9 and was also seen by Jim Burrow, Sam Lewis, and Don Poage. The only shadow of doubt is the possibility that it could be an escapee from a dove raiser in Springfield.

Roadrunners were common near Table Rock Lake, but not near Springfield (I.F.) After a bad winter, woodpeckers, especially Red-headed, were reported to have a very successful breeding season.

Perching Birds - Flycatchers were generally down. Western Flycatchers were as numerous as usual, but more restricted in the St. Joseph area. Western Kingbirds were common at Kansas City. Twelve were at the MKC Airport July 28 and six at Big Lake August 1. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were less common near Springfield, but were increasing in Vernon County (J.R.). Seven were counted in that area July 8 (F.L., M.R.).

A large colony of Bank Swallows nested near Rhineiland, Missouri (R.W.). Purple Martins were up at St. Louis (D.A.) and were abundant in the Dexter area (B.G.). House Wrens were considered down by many observers. Carolina Wrens were found to have returned to their breeding grounds after the flood-waters receded. Sally Vasse reported that by count there were as many Carolinas breeding after the flood as in a normal year. Robins enjoyed a banner year in most areas.

An interesting report was received from Kevin McHugh on nesting warblers at Roaring River Park in southwest Missouri. His report includes: Black & White Warbler increasing, two families of Blue-winged Warblers, Parulas were abundant, Yellow-throated common, young Ceruleans being fed, Prairie quite common, Oven-birds down because of floods, Chats - the most successful warbler, Kentucky more common than usual, two families of Hooded and Redstarts the most common breeder at the park.

Bobolinks were more numerous in northwest Missouri (M.R.), and bred southeast of St. Joseph (F.L.). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were in good numbers at Squaw Creek (F.L., M.R.). A Painted Bunting was seen at Duck Creek in southeast Missouri on August 5 by Tome Parmeter. Painted Buntings apparently do compete with Indigo Buntings in southwest Missouri. Dr. Wayne Davis reported them fighting near his home - School of the Ozarks (I.F.). Extremely late Pine Siskins were at Rolla, Missouri June 18, seen by Jim and Marilyn Pogue. Grass-hopper Sparrows were much more common in northwest Missouri this summer (F.L.) At least 12 Henslow's Sparrows were noted at Taberville Prairie July 8 ;(M.R., F.L.). Henslow's were found nesting at Busch Wildlife for the first time (E.C.). Song Sparrows were more common in northwest Missouri this summer (F.L.). Song Sparrows are not normally breeding birds in central Missouri, but were plentiful on Missouri River bottomland (R.W.).

D.A. - Dick Anderson	S. P. - Sebastian Patti
E.C. - Earl Comfort	J. R. - Jim Rathert
I. F. - Irving Fay	M. R. - Mark Robbins
B. G. - Bob Gaede	S. V. - Sally Vasse
F. L. - Floyd Lawhon	R. W. - Rea Windsor

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### THE BIRD BREEDING SURVEY

The Cooperative Breeding Bird Survey of North America, sponsored by the U. S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, is about to enter into its eighth year. It involves the sample censusing of breeding birds in particular areas, by counting on particular routes, during one morning in June of each year. One morning during June -- that's all the field work you need to do as a contributor to this nationwide effort. We have several designated routes in Missouri which have not been censused.

If you wish to contribute one day's work -- a half-day for the field work and a half-day or less for tabulating and submitting data -- then please write to our Missouri coordinator, Mr. Keith E. Evans, 3418 Valencia, Columbia, Missouri 65201. He will send you specific information or will submit your name to the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife as a potential volunteer. All that is needed is for you to know your birds and become a willing census-taker.

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## WISCONSIN AUDUBON CAMP!

Melvin Taeller of Bunceton, Missouri, reports his thirteen day trip to Wisconsin Audubon Camp, in the summer of '73 was a very rewarding and educational experience. He expresses his thanks to the Missouri Audubon Society for sponsoring him. The field trips included: One to Lake Superior; one to a brook and bog; and one a river float trip. All were memorable ones for him!

On his free Sunday, he chose to join a group going to Apostle Islands, accompanied by his geology instructor. Wish he'd told us more of the details!

What was his favorite activity? Well, I quote: "I assisted the waterfront director in preparation for the float trip. An Osprey nest was located at the edge of the lake. I spent many hours watching these birds. I learned a great deal that will be helpful to me at Missouri State University and much that I will never forget!"

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## THRILLS ON THE PRAIRIE

Is prairie birding no good? As a child I lived on rolling land at the woodland's edge. My parents felt the prairie lacked much. At first, naturally I agreed with them. However, as I grew older, my viewpoint changed.

During the past ten years, while driving across the prairie en route to the school where I teach, I've identified many birds which prior to that time I'd seen only in pictures.

Along a 300 yard strip of highway, near the Prairie Home television tower, there is a continuous Multiflora Rose hedge on the west side of the road. Last winter fields of milo, corn and soy beans stood unharvested until late spring because of wet weather. It was here on November 6th that I drove within ten feet of a Prairie Chicken! He was standing in the road. I stopped the car and watched him for about ten minutes. Thinking he was either injured or sick, I opened the door and got out to investigate. He rose immediately into the air and whirred away through the fence and out of sight into the milo field.

One evening last winter, during a severe ice storm, I saw a Snowy Owl as I neared this area. He was sitting in a small tree at the side of the road. His huge size, his big round head, slightly flattened on top, his large, rather comical eyes and his brown markings etched on the forehead and wings made him easy to identify. My father had shown me a Snowy Owl sitting on a post in 1915. I was a small child, but I've never forgotten that owl sitting very still with a rabbit clutched in his claws.

In May, as I drove this same stretch of road, near Prairie Home, I saw a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher sitting on a power line near the T. V. tower. The extremely long forked tail and the beautiful coral color beneath the wings (wing linings) was easily seen contrasted against the pearly gray body. WHAT A THRILL!

Two Mockingbirds, flocks of Robins, Black-capped Chickadees, flocks of Slate-colored Juncos, Doves and Meadowlarks waited out the storm in the Multi-flora Rose hedge. The ice on the pond was broken daily for the cattle that might drink. This water, the abundance of food and shelter provided the "necessities of life" for birds probably driven this far south by storms north of us.

I always slow down as I approach this rewarding area. I never know what surprise may be in store for me.

By Estelle Snow . . . . . Bunceton, Missouri.

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TUCSON AUDUBON SOCIETY - - INSTITUTE OF DESERT ECOLOGY

The Tucson Audubon Society, in cooperation with the University of Arizona, announces that registration is open for the 4th Annual Spring Institute of Desert Ecology, to be held on two consecutive week-ends: May 3, 4, 5 and 10, 11, 12, 1974.

The program will provide first hand experience with nature, with emphasis on ecological relationships, through an integrated sequence of morning and afternoon field trips conducted by a distinguished faculty from the University of Arizona and Arizona State University. Mr. William N. Goodall, whose experience includes Regional Representative, Camp Director, and Convention Manager for the National Audubon Society, will be the director. Extension credit (graduate and undergraduate) is available from the University of Arizona for the Institute.

The Institute will be held at the Tanque Verde Guest Ranch, located at the foot of the Rincon Mountains in the desert east of Tucson, in an area rich in plant and animal life. The enrollment fee is \$60.00, with lodging and meals extra. The Institute has been given a special rate of \$116.40 for the two week-ends (four nights and fourteen meals). For those staying at the Ranch for the Interim Period as well, the rates are \$251.40 (nine nights and twenty-eight meals). Enrollment is limited to 60; therefore it is wise to register early.

For complete details, write Tucson Audubon Institute of Desert Ecology, Dept. F, P. O. Box 17253, Tucson, Arizona 85731.

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A CALL FOR HELP

In another part of this issue, your president has made a plea for writing letters to congressmen, urging you to get involved. Several issues were suggested but they were presented in hasty, abbreviated form. Perhaps, within our membership, we have someone interested enough to volunteer as our conservation reporter. This would involve submitting capsule reports on all sorts of environmental issues which apply to Missouri; these would be printed quarterly in The BLUEBIRD. As he has already urged, let's get involved! DO WE HAVE ANY VOLUNTEERS?

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(Reprinted from K. C. Audubon News by permission of editor and author.)

### PEREGRINE FALCON

An immature peregrine falcon, sex undetermined but probably male (by weight), was found with an injured left wing at 93rd St. & Hillcrest on 23 September by a Hickman Mills high school student. It appeared weak and was unable to fly. There is a 100 plus foot tower about 150 feet from where it was found. The boy thought it was an "eagle" and took it to Frank Lewis, a biology and taxidermy teacher at the School. Frank called me for advice, knowing it was an endangered species and illegal to possess. I picked up the bird and took it to the Zoo vet, Dr. Hertzog, to have its wing X-rayed. The left wing was swollen and "rotating" excessively at the "elbow". The bone was not broken but apparently badly sprained. Dr. Hertzog said that the bird had a mild calcium deficiency as indicated by the low density of the bones as they appeared in the X-rays.

He gave the bird an injection and prescribed a high calcium diet. He said the wing should be re-X-rayed after 30 days. I put the bird in isolation to keep it quiet and fed it a daily ration of 50 grams ZU-PREEM Bird of Prey Diet, 1 gram Vionate, and one adult mouse. I immediately called John Hague, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service agent for our area, to let him know that I had the bird. A federal permit is required for even the Zoo to keep it. He was anxious that the bird be released as soon as possible but left it up to Dr. Hertzog to say when it was healthy enough to go.

In the meantime, I met John Snelling at the AAZPA Conference in Houston in early October. For the past four years John has been a student at Cornell and has raised both Lanner and Peregrine Falcons. He gave me advice on how to care for the bird to keep it from further injuring itself and has offered to help rehabilitate it when it is to be released. No attempt is being made to take the bird and only a limited amount of human contact will be allowed until it is decided what will be done with it. This decision will primarily be up to the Fish and Wildlife Service. (Ed. note: Permission has been granted to keep it until spring.) Harry Gregory, Educational Director of K. C. Zoo.

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### LOOKING AHEAD TO 1974

March 30 marks the dedication of a National Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary at Gibbon, Nebraska. Many of our members will want to be there.

May 4-5 are the dates for the West Central Audubon Regional Conference at Wichita.

National Audubon conducts Workshops at camps in Connecticut, Maine, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. For information regarding the 1974 sessions write: Audubon Workshops, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022. One must be at least 18 to attend but does not have to be a member of the National Audubon Society.

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## SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL MEETING

Officially 75 intrepid converts ignored the heavy rains Thursday and Friday and gathered at Camp Rising Sun on the week-end of October 13 and 14 for the annual meeting of the Audubon Society of Missouri. Fortunately, clearing weather returned on Saturday which contributed to a most successful meeting. The hard core of persistent regulars was augmented by a sprinkling of very welcome newcomers. The cliché "seen one you've seen 'em all" is not applicable to our annual meeting! There's always a surprise or two. With few exceptions, I found that most people are well satisfied with the present format. Florence and I, being unencumbered by day-by-day responsibilities, arrived at the camp with our self-contained trailer Thursday afternoon. It had rained most of the way from our home in Webster Groves and we encountered particularly heavy showers in the Jefferson City area. We found the gate to the camp locked which resulted in our parking in the circle just outside the official camp area. A let-up of the rain allowed us to take a long walk followed by an ample dinner. We were outside again loafing and enjoying the night sounds for a couple of hours time, then inside for a handful of cookies and a nip of sherry and to bed. Screech and horned owls called sparingly but the singing insects seemed as plentiful as they are in mid-summer.

Friday morning, we were off on the gravel road leading west from camp, but we soon branched off on a little used trail that had all the appearances of an old abandoned logging road. This trail, after about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles, ended at a rather secluded cove on the lake. As usual in the fall and winter, we found the birds were bunched in mixed groups rather than being evenly dispersed as they are in spring and summer. I find that when I meet a scolding chickadee or titmouse, other species soon gather and this proved to be the fact on this trip.

During the afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh Diggs, members from the northwest corner of the state, and their guests, Mr. and Mrs. Ott, arrived. The Diggs are among the States most active bird banders and we had a long chat. The gates were finally opened after other arrivals went to the park headquarters to stir them up a bit. We moved our trailer to a spot a short distance from the dining hall (no fools those Comforts).

Within a matter of hours more carloads arrived including the most welcome kitchen staff - Missouri National Guard men from Jefferson City. This was Friday night and the rain once again began, but this time it was in earnest. From about 7:30 P.M. until near daylight, a veritable deluge descended. By morning, clearing skies appeared and this being the Ozarks, runoff was fast and all roads were open.

Bird scouting expeditions, all informal, occupied most of Saturday morning. A meeting of the Board of Directors was held in the afternoon followed by a general meeting Saturday night.

I have attended well over 25 State meetings but must state that Dave Easterla's talk on Big Bend was one of the very top programs I have experienced. Dave's status as a naturalist at Big Bend for several years has enabled him to become extremely knowledgeable of this area. His fascinating photography, particularly of the bats, was superb. Mammals, reptiles, insects, flowers, magnificent panoramas of the desert and its mountains and shots of Patty, Dave, Jr., and Todd, were



put together in a very professional-like manner.

Sunday brought continued fine weather and several semi-organized field trips. Hard working Lyle Jeffrey, led an all-around nature study group and several other groups centered on bird finding took to the field. Most of us found the total number of birds observed was not up to par, but when 150 active eyeballs are constantly scanning every likely spot, it is almost a certainty that a respectable list will develop.

For the entire week-end, 88 species of birds were counted. I do not think it is necessary to itemize each bird: I am sure everyone knows we saw bluejays, crows, robins, cardinal, etc. Therefore, I will try to enumerate some of the highlights. A common egret in the marsh area; pintails on the lake, Caspian terns, one on the airfield strip and several flying over lake; a Forster's tern on the lake; a yellow-billed cuskoo on the road to Pin Oak; Five verios were counted including the rare Philadelphia. We also listed 9 species of warblers. Perhaps the two most exciting finds were five wild turkeys seen several times on the hillside back of camp and a rather late summer tanager, very obvious in the camp area.

It was indeed a very pleasant meeting. Attendance was not as large as it has been in the past. Many reasons for this were expressed. I am sure President Jackson would appreciate any suggestions you may have on ways in which interest could be rejuvenated. One suggestion that was adopted was that we hold the meeting a few weeks earlier. It was felt that we would have better birding and that it would perhaps not be too cool for swimming.

It is my firm belief that for a pleasant week-end with congenial people, plus excellent entertainment and hearty meals, you will find no better bargain than the annual meeting of the Audubon Society of Missouri. Plan now to attend next year.

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### GOOD NEWS

I'm happy to report that, after this issue, our new editor of The BLUEBIRD will be Mrs. Rebecca Matthews, Route #2, Box 128, Springfield, Mo. 65802. Please don't lose her address!

We hope you'll be generous in furnishing Rebecca with written material, especially news about forthcoming meetings, screen tours and field trips in your area; Audubonites from all parts of Missouri should be interested in such items, as well as news about the birds.

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Those members of the Society who would like to help us economize - that is - save on postage - then please do this: Check to see if you have submitted your dues for 1974. If you have not, then please pay now so we won't have to mail you a series of reminders. While you're at it, you might wish to pay the additional \$3.00 and receive a lovely print by Missouri artist David Plank. And tell your friends about the introductory print offer; this is how we get new members.

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## K. C. HOT-LINE

By Kelly Hobbs

Western Missouri birding was the worst in history. Disasterous flooding for three weeks during prime warbler migration vetoed birding during that time. Other migrants were of poor quality and quantity.

Carolina Wrens, Titmice and Mockers proved to be the hardest hit species during last winter's severe ice storms.

A BAR-HEADED GOOSE was found at Trimble by Seb Patti. It was seen by several area birders. This is no doubt an escapee from somewhere. A freshly shot and killed GOSHAWK was found between Reed and Lake Jacomo by Nan Johnson November 12. An immature, it is now in a Harry Gregory freezer. An interesting, unanswered question is posed by this find; so early in the year and a young? Two GOLDEN EAGLES over Independence October 15 seen by the Hobbs was an unusual date for an unusual bird. Crossbills and siskins arrived in mid-November. Bob Fisher found a BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK at Reed September 8 which was located by others later that day and the next. Jo Garret found what she believes to be a NORTHERN SHRIKE 7 miles north of Cleveland, Missouri November 13. We had 2 pair of SWAINSON'S HAWKS and 2 WESTERN KINGBIRDS this summer. Mick McHugh had a late BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER in his yard October 26. (Maybe the same one MLM had last year?). Very few migrant sparrows arrived prior to Thanksgiving, except for Leconte's.

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### MONARCH

About 4:30 P.M. on October 3, I noticed an unusual number of Monarch butterflies in our yard. (We live in the southern part of Kansas City, Mo.) Then I looked up. The sky was full of them. There were many groups of a dozen or more, with lots of stragglers in between. My daughter and I watched them for over an hour. The bigger flocks passed early in that period, but there were small groups of three or four and stragglers until dark. We were amazed at how high they flew. Just tiny specks, fluttering high in the sky. Occasionally, a few would come down and light on flowers, but most of them passed over without stopping. We made no attempt to count, but there must have been thousands. Wanda Beades.

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### FLASH!!! FROM K. C. AUDUBON NEWS

BEN KING, former Kansas Citian, world traveler, author, and birdwatcher extraordinaire, will present "Birds of India", a slide lecture, at the Community Christian Church on Friday, December 14, at 8 P.M. Sponsored by the Burroughs Audubon Society, this special program will be open to the public. As with the Audubon Film Series, donations will be gratefully accepted. Ben is too young to be referred to as legendary, but his fame has been broadcast by the birders of the area to the extent that he is high on the list of people most birds would want to meet. Mark the date now, and don't miss a real treat.

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