

The Bluebird

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI



DAVID PLANK

Vol. 42, No. 4

December, 1975

VIEWS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S PERCH

by Paul E. Bauer

Each of our members--no, each registered voter of our state has a unique opportunity to help conservation in Missouri, and very little work is required. Of course I am talking about the petition drive for a constitutional amendment to support the Conservation Department's Design for Conservation. A balanced program has been proposed that is designed to serve the outdoor interests of all citizens, and in turn, this program is to be supported financially by all citizens. This is an outstanding and unique concept set forth by what is considered to be the best state conservation agency in this country. We should be proud to support this bold concept. The Commission needs and deserves our best support, and all that is required now is your signature on a petition. Better than one signature, write to Citizens Committee for Conservation, 312 East Capital Ave., Jefferson City, Mo. 65101, and request a petition, so that you may obtain signatures from your friends and others who share your interests and concern for wildlife. Please don't let this initial effort fail because you did not take part.

During our annual meeting at Camp Rising Sun, a number of other conservation issues were seriously addressed. The afternoon program on endangered birds of prey by Mr. Jim Rathert of the Conservation Commission, was coupled with the pros and cons of falconry by Mr. Dan Cover of the Falconry Federation. This experience was educational and provided a springboard for many questions by members and some meaningful resolutions in the subsequent business meeting. More details on the various resolutions and conservation business are given on another page. Our thanks to Dr. William Goodge for planning and hosting such a worthwhile program.

Two other aspects of the fall program were outstanding: the weather and the food. We certainly had the most perfect weather anyone could desire--good fall color, no wind, temperature in the 70's, a crisp, clear sky with every star at arm's length, and a good number of birds, including hawks. We had a busy schedule with two program sessions and a business meeting, but a few even found time for canoeing and swimming. The real change in this year's event was the food which was prepared by different caterers and served in smorgasboard, take-all-you-want style. Our thanks to Katherine Wade for finding these new cooks. The quality and quantity of food provided may have stolen the entire show, based on the many

comments that were heard. Mrs. Wade has promised to make every effort to obtain this same food service in the future.

The membership confirmed the nomination of a new director, Dr. James H. Shaddy, who is a professor of biology at Northeast Missouri State University at Kirksville. I met Dr. Shaddy at the Conservation Federation's fall conference on land use planning. When I found that he was active in forming the new local Audubon chapter in Kirksville, I asked if he would serve as our director. We welcome his willingness to serve and the opportunity to have directors that represent all segments of our state.

In honor of over 30 years of service as one of our directors, Mr. Nathan I. Fay was voted an honorary director. Nathan had requested to resign because he believed others should have a chance to serve. Our sincere thanks for the many efforts he has made in the functioning of our Society. We hope he will continue to offer his support because he has set such a fine example of sustained and dedicated service.

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ACTIONS TAKEN AT THE FALL MEETING

During the annual business meeting on October 4, 1975, the Society membership present voted for the following resolutions concerning several important conservation issues. For your information these resolutions are provided below. As an individual you can lend important support by writing a personal note to the Conservation Department, Governor Bond, or your State Senators and Representatives to express your own specific feelings on these issues.

1 - We proposed that the minimum age for falconry permits in Missouri be increased to 18 years, which is consistent with the recommendations of The North American Falconry Association. This recommendation is made because of the extensive education and DAILY care required to properly raise and maintain these birds of prey.

We further propose that the practice of falconry in Missouri be currently restricted to only the red-tailed hawk and the sparrow hawk species until additional studies can be completed to establish a knowledge of the total breeding population for birds of prey in Missouri, and the extent of utilization that can be allowed and properly regulated for falconry. (The studies and regulations recommended for falconry are parallel in concept with those presently in practice for waterfowl.)

2 - We continue to oppose the Meramec Park Dam in its present location and urge that an alternate site be located that avoids (the strongly divisive and ecologically disastrous) conflicts with: the Huzzah Wildlife Area; the Indiana bats (an endangered species protected by Federal Law); and unique cave formations (such as Onondaga Cave).

3 - We propose that steps should be taken to permanently protect the forest undercover and to survey the existing population of the Swainson's warbler at Big Oak Tree State Park. A positive program should be developed to combine protection of the total forest with the specialized habitat required by the Swainson's warbler. (Based on present knowledge, the Swainson's warbler breeds in Missouri only at Big Oak Park, but destruction of the forest floor habitat by cutting and use as picnic areas has reduced breeding to ONE pair in 1975! Urgent action is needed!)

4 - We endorsed modified Senate Bill No. 520 that would add the following named wilderness areas to the National Wilderness Preservation System:

Hercules Glades, Taney County; Irish, Oregon County; Bell Mountain, Iron County; Rockpile Mountain, Madison County; Paddy Creek, Texas County; and Piney Creek, Texas County.

5 - We donated \$300 to the Nature Conservancy toward the \$2200 needed to complete the purchase cost of Lichen Glade in St. Clair County, as a memorial to Dean Cole.

6 - We pledged a donation of \$300 to help in eventual purchase of Mastodon Park in Jefferson County.

7 - The purpose of our Society was defined as follows: "The Audubon Society of Missouri is a non-profit, statewide society organized in 1901 and affiliated with The National Audubon Society. It is dedicated to the preservation and protection of birds and all wildlife forms and habitat, to the education of the citizenry toward appreciation of the natural world; and to working for wise conservation practices related to people and wildlife."

If you wondered what we are doing, the above will illustrate the scope of our interests and actions. When you have special problems in your part of the state that should have our support, contact your director or any of the Society's officers. Letters to the appropriate organizations are being sent to express the will of the Society on the above resolutions. However, you can greatly enlarge the attention on these issues by sending additional letters expressing your personal viewpoints. Please care enough to provide that small but important helping hand.

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SEPARATION OF BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS FROM COMMON GRACKLES

by James F. Comfort

This past August I spent about two weeks in northwestern North Dakota where both the Brewer's blackbird and common grackle are summer residents. At first I spent much time trying to separate the species. I found that in late summer the tail length was not a reliable feature as many grackles had rather short tails, and color of head was of little value unless light was favorable.

I did find a key that proved nearly 100% accurate--shape of head and length of bill. Grackles have flattened heads and a comparatively long thin bill; Brewers have a round head and a shorter, thicker bill. This difference is constant for all ages, sexes and seasons and can be picked up very quickly on birds even at a considerable distance.

Perhaps this field mark is not needed for many observers, and some may wonder about my uncertainty in separation of the two species. However, I did discover that others shared my problem. I hope to employ my new method--head shape and bill length--this fall when blackbirds once again descend on us in uncountable numbers. Perhaps I will be able to confirm or deny my belief that the Brewer's are not as scarce in Missouri as records indicate.

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CONSERVATION COMMENTS

by James P. Jackson, Conservation Editor

Item 1 - For several years there was hope among many Missourians that four small wilderness areas would be created in our state by act of Congress. But the Eastern Wilderness Bill, when finally passed by Congress last January, did not include the Missouri areas. Why not? Simply because certain landowner groups objected to having any private acreage incorporated in the planned wilderness areas. They persuaded our representative in the House to delete all four Missouri areas from the final version of the bill. Since then Missouri environmentalists have revised the four area boundaries to exclude private acreage from the proposed areas. Now a new Senate bill (S 520) has reintroduced the originally proposed Missouri areas with essentially the same boundaries as before; in other words, the objectionable private acreages are still included.

We need to let our representatives, both in the House and Senate, know our feelings in this matter, or we will never get wilderness areas set aside in Missouri. Do write to your Senator and your Congressman letting them know we need these wilderness areas in Missouri even if necessary to delete all private acreages from within their boundaries. For your information there are six Missouri areas currently believed to be worthy of wilderness consideration. They are:

AREA	ACREAGE	LOCATION
Bell Mountain	8,533	Clark Nat. Forest, Iron Co.
Rockpile Mountain	4,170	Clark Nat. Forest, Madison Co.
Paddy Creek	6,888	Clark Nat. Forest, Texas Co.
Hercules	12,605	Mark Twain Nat. Forest, Taney Co.
Piney Creek	8,432	Mark Twain Nat. Forest, Barry & Stone Co.
Irish Wilderness	17,562	Mark Twain Nat. Forest, Oregon Co.

The two areas above which were not among the original four but are now considered worthy of wilderness status are Paddy Creek and Piney Creek. This writer has visited three of the six areas and is much impressed with their wilderness potential.

Item 2 - When the controversial dam proposed for the Meramec River was originally authorized by Congress in 1964, it was part of a "package" Basin Plan which included designs for a number of other dams, including one on the Bourbeuse River, a tributary of the Meramec. Now the Missouri Conservation Commission has publicly decided to oppose the dam on the Bourbeuse because of its unique wildlife values. This river, little known to many Missourians, boasts some of the least disturbed and highest quality wildlife environment in the entire state. The loss of this resource could not be replaced or mitigated in any way.

The same Conservation Commission which opposes the Bourbeuse dam has not yet, however, seen fit to oppose the Meramec dam. It remains painfully neutral. Sophisticated wildlife censusing methods may be able to compare certain aspects of wildlife habitat between the two rivers, yet how convincing can such methods be? Who would feel convinced if the biologists tell us that the Conservation Department's own Huzzah Wildlife Area is worth less in scenic vistas, deer and wild turkeys, and in song-birds and other wildlife forms than is the valley of the Bourbeuse? I know both rivers well and wouldn't dare make such a comparison. Nevertheless, I feel sympathy for the Conservation Commission's current stand; they cannot but be bothered by its inconsistency.

Item 3 - Regardless of how we might feel about the Department of

Conservation's position on dams, we should all agree that its Design For Conservation is a worthy effort. Petitions are right now available for anyone who wants to work for the future of Missouri's Wildlife heritage-- to get a 1/8 of 1¢ sales tax for the Design For Conservation on the November, 1976 ballot. Yet the signatures are coming in too slowly. We do not want the whole effort to lose out because we did not solicit signatures. I have secured some signatures and have learned that very few people will refuse to sign--most everyone is for the tiny tax for wildlife. Now, what are you waiting for? Please help us get those signatures. If you need petitions or information, write to Citizens For Conservation, 312 East Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City, Mo. 65101.

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AUDUBON AND THE BICENTENNIAL

by Estelle Snow

[We who are nature oriented cannot but look back with nostalgia to the time two centuries ago when our country was wild and untamed. In celebration of its birthday perhaps each of us should personally undertake some project, however small, to preserve the memory of "how it was", or engage in some activity whose goal is to restore some part of the natural beauty of the land.

Mrs. Snow has made some suggestions along these lines. They may give you an idea to start you on your project. Our readers will be interested in knowing of the special activity you or your local group is planning in honor of our country's birthday. Write a note about it to...The Editor.]

There is much that members of our Audubon Society of Missouri can do to celebrate the Bicentennial. For two reasons work on such projects should start immediately. First, the older citizens, old letters, records, books, and newspapers are disappearing. Historic locations are becoming harder and harder to locate. Second, 1976 is near at hand. The following are suggestions for Bicentennial projects.

Talk with "old settlers" to learn the location of prairie (buffalo and deer) saltlicks along streams, beaver dams, pigeon roosts, etc. If possible, plaques could be placed at these locations designating the name and nature of the spot, and when and what kind of birds or animals inhabited them. Sketches might be written of these places, for publication along with present-day pictures.

Stories of pigeon and parakeet flocks, hunting adventures, and other animal and bird stories (from older citizens, old books, diaries, newspapers, county histories) could be collected and published.

Involve youth groups in these activities.

Collect old natural histories, diaries, public records and wildlife books for displays at local libraries.

See that schools and libraries have copies of the history of conservation in Missouri.

Encourage use of films dealing with Missouri's natural resources.

Other Audubon members can, no doubt, suggest many projects which might be pursued. The important thing is that we must start now. We surely want to be counted among those who make some lasting contribution to our state and nation during 1976.

THE 76TH ANNUAL AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

December 20, 1975, through January 4, 1976, is the period selected by the National Audubon Society for the nation-wide annual Christmas Bird Count. This event has grown in popularity each year until now over 1100 groups take to the field. Last year over 300 Missourians took part in 25 counts, this being the largest participation ever. Of these counts, 17 reports were sent to the national organization and were subsequently published in the April issue of American Birds.

Listed below by geographical areas are counts which were taken last year. If you live near one of these count areas, contact the coordinator and offer to take part. There remain many good areas of the state which are not covered, and if you wish to organize a census, your results would be welcome. If you need any information on this contact the state coordinator: Jim Comfort, 27 N. Iola Drive, St. Louis, Mo. 63119.

Results for our state counts will be published in the March, 1976, issue of The Bluebird. Your report should be in the hands of the state coordinator by January 20.

Each year several of the counts manage to find 70 to 80 species of birds during one winter day. This year some group may top 100--it could be yours!

NORTHWEST:

Maryville - Dr. David Easterla, 1420 North Dewey, Maryville, 64468.
St. Joseph - Floyd Lawhon, 3327 Burnside Ave., St. Joseph, 64505.
Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge - Dr. David Easterla (address above) or Mark Robbins, 941 West 2nd, Maryville, 64468.

WEST:

Kansas City (27 Dec.) - Harry Gregory, 9505 Bennington, Kansas City, Missouri 64134.
Kansas City (20 Dec.) - Harry Gregory (address above).
Trimble Waterfowl Area (21 Dec.) - Christopher Hobbs, 3307 S. Cedar, Independence, 64052.

SOUTHWEST:

Newton-MacDonald County - Norma Crews, Route 4, Box 310 A, Neosho, 64850.
Springfield (20 Dec.) Nathan Fay, Ozark, 65721 (or Clyde Johnson, 847 N. Lone Pine, Springfield, 65802).
Branson - Wayne Davis, School of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, 65727.

CENTRAL:

Columbia - William Goodge, 1017 S. Glenwood Ave., Columbia, 65201.
Montrose Lake Wildlife Area - John Belshe, Biology Department, Central Missouri State University, Warrensburg, 64093.
Sullivan - Jim Irvine, 624 Jane Street, Sullivan, 63080.
Mineola - Rae Windsor, Route 3, Montgomery City, 63361.
Salem - David Plank, Route 2, Box 178, Salem, 65560.
*Jefferson City area - Sydney Wade, 2202 Missouri Blvd., Jefferson City, 65101.
N. C. Lake Area - Jim Rathert, 1308 Wilson Ave., Columbia, 65201.

SOUTH:

Birch Tree - Lee Center, Birch Tree, 65438.
Eminence, Sadi Negaard, Eminence, 65466.

NORTHEAST:

Hannibal - William Dierker, 5042 Pulliam, Hannibal, 63401.

EAST:

Gray Summit - Donald Hay, Route 3, Box 4, Union, 63084.
 Orchard Farm (21 Dec.) - Richard Anderson, 1147 Grenshaw, St. Louis,
 63137.
 Weldon Spring (28 Dec.) - James Comfort, 27 North Iola Drive,
 St. Louis, 63119.

SOUTHEAST:

Big Oak Tree State Park - Jim Haw, 306 East Market, Charleston, 63834.
 Mingo Wildlife Area - Jim Haw (address above).
 *Cape Girardeau - Paul Hay, 1651 Perryville, Cape Girardeau, 63701.
 Dexter - Robert Gaede, 321 West Elk, Dexter, 63841.

*Potential Counts for December, 1975.

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"THE BIRDS OF THE MIDWEST" TO BE EXHIBITED

A collection of bird portraits by David Plank has been chosen by the Missouri State Council on the Arts for a year-long tour of cities in Missouri. The group of more than forty works includes watercolors, drawings and prints. Most are owned by private collectors, and have been loaned for this special exhibition.

Although the artist is a native of Salem, Missouri, where he now lives, he is well known far beyond the borders of our state for his lovely and realistic paintings. Choosing to limit his artistic talents to painting and drawing birds, he has become an ardent birdwatcher. But he is more than that. He is a student of bird behavior, and his aim is to make each picture depict a moment in the life of his subject. For this reason he spends many hours afield, sketching from nature. The results combine accuracy and beauty.

The schedule of cities to be visited by this special showing is given below.

October: Columbia; Daniel Boone Regional Library
 November: New Madrid; New Madrid Historical Museum, #1 Main St.
 December: Cape Girardeau; Kent Library
 January: Hillsboro; Jefferson College
 February: Kansas City; Hallmark Card Research Library
 March: St. Joseph; St. Joseph Museum, 115th and Charles
 April: Troy; The Citizens Bank
 May: Mexico; Audrain County Library
 June: Springfield; Empire Bank, Glenstone and Sunshine
 July: open
 August: open
 September: Fulton; William Woods College.

The months of July and August, 1976 are still open for booking. For information regarding the possibility of scheduling the tour in your city for one of these months, contact Joseph O. Fischer, Missouri State Council on the Arts, Suite 410, 111 South Bemiston, St. Louis, Mo. 63105.

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RARE SWALLOW-TAILED KITE SIGHTED

by Charles Collins

My family and I live on a farm four miles north of Willard in Greene County. To call it a farm is in slight error, for we more correctly live on land we share with wildlife. We feel so strongly the need for wildlife habitat in our man-made twentieth century environment that we have dedicated the land to nature instead of to the plow and livestock.

Our interest in wildlife, especially from a conservation point of view, has caused us to devote considerable time to observing the birds and animals which frequent the land around us. In doing so, we have become familiar with most species, and are aware of the critical elements which affect wildlife. This interest and awareness has prompted me to report an important and unusual sighting which occurred at our home.

It was about 10:00 A.M. on the morning of August 24, 1975. A brisk south wind was blowing, but the sky was mostly clear with only a few puffs of cumulus clouds present. I was working in my garden approximately two hundred feet southeast of my home. My attention was drawn toward the house, probably by several birds in flight over a gully behind the structure. One individual in the group was unique. Floating into the wind was a bird as large as a red-tailed hawk. A crow, certainly behaving in an unkind manner, offered an excellent size comparison. Several blackbirds and a flock of starlings were also present. Although I am familiar with a crow or hawk being aggravated by blackbirds, I have never witnessed birds so persistent in molesting another. This continued throughout the sighting, but the larger bird seemed to accept the attacks as a part of life. It emitted no audible sound.

As the action drew nearer my position, I realized that the larger bird was one completely unfamiliar to me. The striking coloration was probably the first thing that caught my eye. The head and breast were white, as was the underside of the wings. However, a distinct black fringe was present along the trailing edges of the wings. The subject slowly moved near enough that its most outstanding feature became apparent. A long, jet-black, forked or v-shaped tail was being used to change direction frequently. Like a porpoise in water, a slight tilt of the tail in either direction provided instant, graceful maneuvering.

My visual contact with this magnificent bird continued four or five minutes. It would glide down wind only to resume flight into the wind. Several times I considered hurrying to the house so my wife and children could see it, but fear that it would frighten it, plus my total fixation, halted such action. Shortly, it disappeared behind the forest cover to the north of my home.

I often look up with the hope of again catching a glimpse of the bird. I have seen both the bald eagle and the golden eagle, which can be observed around the lakes in our region, but neither, in my opinion, compares in beauty with this one.

I am totally convinced that I have experienced my first contact with a swallow-tailed kite.

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UNUSUAL FALL TOWER KILL

by Harry Gregory, Curator of Education,
Kansas City Zoo

On the night of 14-15 October, 1975, at least 4 radio/TV towers in the Kansas City-Lawrence area were responsible for a number of birds killing themselves. A total of 98+ dead and injured birds were found. The largest number, 67+, were found within a block in all directions from the KCMO TV tower at 125 E. 31st St., K.C., Mo. Other towers involved were WDAF radio/TV, 31st and Southwest Trafficway, K.C., Mo., - 2 birds. KCPT TV, 26th and Stark, Independence, Mo. - 4 birds and a tower in Lawrence, Kans., 25 birds. A number of birds were flattened in the street and were counted but not picked up.

There were several things that made this kill unusual, that is, different from most tower kills.

1. It was late in the season. Most fall tower kills occur in September.
2. The KCMO tower is free standing - no guy wires - birds crashed into the tower itself as well as the sides of buildings in the area.
3. There were large numbers of mourning doves killed, 44+ at the KCMO tower, 12+ at the Lawrence tower. Doves are rarely reported in tower kills.
4. The cloud ceiling was 5,000 to 10,000 ft., not nearly as low as reported in most tower kills.

All of the K.C. area towers were over 1,000 ft. tall with a mean sea level elevation of 2,049 ft. The Lawrence tower is about 500 to 600 ft. tall.

The following is a complete list of birds found:

<u>KCMO</u>	<u>LAWRENCE</u>
32 Mourning doves	5 Lincoln's sparrows
7 Lincoln's sparrows	2 Savannah sparrows
4 Yellow-rumped warblers	1 House wren
1 Golden-crowned kinglet	1 Ruby-crowned kinglet
1 Orange-crowned warbler	1 Orange-crowned warbler
1 Indigo bunting	1 Tennessee warbler
2 Yellowthroats	1 Philadelphia vireo
1 Dark-eyed (slate-colored) junco	13 Mourning doves
1 White-crowned sparrow	
1 Grasshopper sparrow	<u>WDAF</u>
2 Chipping sparrows	1 Grasshopper sparrow
1 Clay-colored sparrow	1 Lincoln's sparrow
1 Blackbird (species)	<u>KCPT</u>
	2 Lincoln's sparrows
	1 Yellowthroat
	1 Dickcissel

There were still large numbers of live birds in virtually all the trees and bushes near the base of the KCMO tower throughout most of the next day, 15 October. Some appeared to be slightly injured, but evaded capture. Others were still confused. I saw a brown creeper fly across an open yard and directly into a screened window. He then recovered and returned to the tree about 10 ft. from me and seemed to be searching for food.

There were large numbers of Lincoln's sparrows with several other species mixed in. All seemed to be feeding or at least searching frantically for food on the ground. Any time they were flushed, they returned to the ground almost immediately.

Also seen live in the area were white-crowned sparrows, white-throated sparrows, clay-colored sparrows, chipping sparrows, dark-eyed (slate-colored) juncos, house wrens, a winter wren, a long-billed marsh wren, ruby-crowned kinglets, yellow-rumped warblers, and orange-crowned warblers.

Except for five injured birds, there were no other mourning doves around. Of the five injured birds, one had a crushed head and was euthanized, 2 had sprained wings and 2 had broken wings. They were taken to the Kansas City Zoo for care. In 2-1/2 weeks, the two with no broken bones were released. The other two will probably have to be euthanized.



ADVENTURE IN AFRICA

Kansas City's Burroughs Audubon Society is becoming more adventure-some with their field trip schedule. In cooperation with the Kansas City Friends of the Zoo, they are co-sponsoring a 17-day Wildlife Safari to East Africa, leaving 28 May, 1976.

The trip will cover 11 National Parks and Wildlife refuges in Kenya and Tanzania. Over 300 species of wildlife (mostly birds) may be seen. Highlights of the trip include Tsavo National Park, Amboseli Game Reserve, Lake Manyara National Park, Ngorongoro Crater, tent camping in the Serengeti National Park, Lake Naivash bird sanctuary, Lake Nakuru's flamingo colony, Thompson Falls and scenic view of Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro.

All of this and more for only \$1740, from Kansas City. The cost includes a \$50 tax deductible contribution to either of the co-sponsors.

The trip leader will be Harry Gregory, Curator of Education at the Kansas City Zoo and past president of the Burroughs Audubon Society. This will be his second trip to this area of Africa.

For a complete itinerary or answers to any questions concerning the trip, write to: East African Wildlife Safari, Kansas City Zoo, Swope Park, Kansas City, Missouri 64132.

WINTER AUDUBON EVENTS

December, 1975 - February, 1976

Saturday, December 20 through Sunday, January 4 - CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS
See details on page 6.

Thursday, January 8, 8:00 P.M. - Burroughs Audubon Society, Kansas City
Audubon Screen Tour: "The Marsh - A Quiet Mystery"
Community Christian Church, 4601 Main Street

Mid-January through mid-February - Rare and uncommon gulls frequent Alton Dam on the Mississippi River north of St. Louis. This is the best spot in the state for unusual gulls. Consider this trip with several of your friends to save on gasoline; add some new birds to your state list. Drive east on Interstate 270 to U.S. 67 (now State 367); turn north toward Alton, Ill. across the Missouri River. Continue north until the very last road before crossing the Mississippi River at Alton. Turn left at West Alton Public Access Area sign and enter Corps Engineers area; proceed to parking lot at Alton Dam picnic area. Information: Dick Anderson (314-868-2009) or Paul Bauer (314-921-3972) can report on status or answer questions.

Saturday, January 24, 9:30 A.M. Squaw Creek Refuge - N.W. Missouri.
Burroughs Audubon Trips for "stout-hearted" to see ducks, eagles, and owls. Meet at the refuge. Information: Phil Foster (816-561-1774).

Monday, January 13, 7:30 P.M. - Columbia Audubon Society, Columbia
Audubon Screen Tour: "Sky Island: Arizona's Chiricahua Mountain Range." Windsor Auditorium, Stephens College.

Wednesday, February 4, St. Joseph Audubon Society, St. Joseph
Audubon Screen Tour: "Wildlife by Day and Night."
by Steve Maslowski

Thursday, February 5, 8:00 P.M. - Burroughs Audubon Society
Audubon Screen Tour: "Wildlife by Day and Night."
Community Christian Church, 4601 Main Street

Friday, February 6, 8:15 P.M., St. Louis Audubon, St. Louis County
Audubon Screen Tour: "Wildlife by Day and Night."
The Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road.

Saturday, February 7, 7:30 P.M., Columbia Audubon Society
Audubon Screen Tour: "Wildlife by Day and Night."
Windsor Auditorium, Stephens College

First or Second Saturday in February - Eagle Count on Upper Mississippi
Sponsored by St. Louis Audubon. Date not yet established;
contact Anderson or Bauer (phone numbers above)
Excellent chance to see fifty or more bald eagles in one day!

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MORE ON SWAINSON'S HAWK

[Editor's note: Following are excerpts from letters from Leonard Confer of Springfield to Jim Comfort whose article in the June issue of The Bluebird on the Swainson's hawk prompted the correspondence.]

"The article on Swainson's hawks leads me to call attention to the lead article on the same subject in American Birds, 28(5), October, 1974.

"It contains a tabulation of Christmas Bird Count reported sightings from 1968-1972. It largely discounts these and then researches other sources with much the same conclusions as the article in The Bluebird.

"I do believe that in recent years the Swainson's has been somewhat more numerous in the Springfield area in spring and fall than the 'infrequently reported' category of the 1971 Checklist of Missouri Birds, although this description rather lends itself to a subjective interpretation. Also, I have had four to five sightings in the summer, including two at one time in two different summers.

"Frankly, with my eyes and binoculars, I am seldom certain of the banded tail. I like to see the contrasting white of the wing linings with the dark flight feathers, the dark chest, the slight dihedral, and an occasional glimpse of the small white area at the base of the tail.

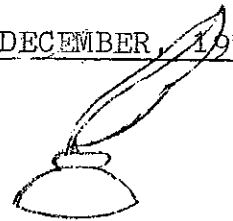
"Last fall (1974) about mid-October, my wife and I saw four perched in one of the few trees in a large field which was being mowed. The birds were little disturbed when the mower, making considerable noise, went almost directly underneath. Two of the birds I probably would never have identified as Swainson's except for their presence with the other two. In the 20X scope at about 50 yards, their facial markings resembled somewhat the peregrine falcon. In flight they gave me the contrasting black and white impression of a Swainson's, but in checker-board fashion, and in no definite pattern. They did soar with the slight dihedral.

"While watching in the scope, others would disappear. After perceptible periods one could be seen rising from the ground to disappear again or return to the tree. I assumed the grasshoppers were easy to find. They were still there the next day. About a mile further on, two more Swainson's were on a fence beside a field which was also being mowed. They quickly took off in the wrong direction--to the north--but seemed to be yielding to the migrating instinct by describing small circles as they disappeared from sight in the sky." . . .

". . . On August 31 of this year I was birding about 10 miles east of Springfield. Two birds with dihedrals were soaring in circles. Out of the car and with binoculars the "turkey vultures" quickly became Swainson's hawks.

"It was a calm, clear day, and the birds did little tilting; I never did get flashes of white at the base of the tail, nor the banded tail, except for the narrow white band at the end when the birds were at the lowest altitude. On one bird the dark chest and contrasting white of the wing linings with the dark flight feathers were well marked. On the other bird the dark chest was bisected by a fuzzy whitish stripe; the demarcation between the white and dark of the wings was also fuzzy.

"As they described the small circles over almost the same area, leisurely, almost imperceptible, but surely, they gained altitude, but they never got too high for good viewing. Briefly I lowered my binoculars and my head to rest eyes and neck. When I looked up again they were gone."

NOTES AND FEATHERS
(that fall on the Editor's desk.)

CHECK YOUR CHECKLIST

Not all birding is done out of doors. The time and effort put into our homework often is reflected in the accuracy and reliability of our field work.

As the Christmas Bird Count approaches several hundred of us in Missouri will be gathering together our wool socks and warmest jackets in preparation for the big day's activity. As a part of our preparation, let's take time for a close look at the Checklist of Missouri Birds prepared by Easterla and Anderson.

Any bird on this list whose winter status is given as rare, casual, or accidental (or showing no winter status at all) is subject to question if it is reported on the Christmas count unless the report is verified by details.

It is important that each participant (not just the compiler) be aware of this requirement.

A few minutes spent ahead of time by each of us underlining the rare, casual and accidental winter birds on the Missouri checklist will remind us, when we see one of them on Count Day, that we must make an especially careful observation. Our compiler would no doubt consider it a great help if we'd have notes for each of our rare sightings written out to hand to him at compilation time.

This requirement may seem unnecessarily stringent unless we realize that the CBC lists as published in American Birds are becoming ever more widely used in scientific studies. We want to do our part to make them accurate. Moreover, having a bird which we know we saw and identified deleted from the report because of the lack of verification is embarrassing and frustrating.

We know the rules; let's play by them. (R.M.)

ON MISSOURI WILDERNESS

Recently your editor had an opportunity to see and hear a slide presentation on "Missouri Wilderness." The beautiful photographs were accompanied by a well written and well narrated script presenting the case for the preservation of wilderness areas in Missouri. This program of about 25 minutes length is available for meetings of interested groups. For information contact the Ozark Chapter of the Sierra Club, Box 12424, Olivette, Missouri 63132.

We strongly suspect that some of the hikers pictured were members of our state Audubon Society.

CONGRATULATIONS!

We are delighted with the honor given to artist David Plank in the choice of his collection of bird portraits for a special tour of the state (see page 7). David is an active member of our state Society, and his drawings appear regularly in The Bluebird. You will want to make a special effort to see this show when it reaches your area.

COPY IS DUE FEBRUARY 1 FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE BLUEBIRD.

NOTES AND FEATHERS
(continued)

PROGRESS ON SWAINSON'S WARBLER HABITAT

Letters to the proper authorities concerning conservation issues do make a difference. Some of our members wrote about the destruction of Swainson's warbler habitat at Big Oak Tree State Park. This response was received from William K. Wight, director, Missouri Department of Natural Resources. It was dated November 5, 1975.

"I am pleased to inform you that action has been taken by the Division of Parks and Recreation to protect the habitat of the Swainson's warbler at Big Oak Tree State Park.

"To encourage the propagation of the species we are pursuing a management program which will allow for the rejuvenation of the cane patches in the park, and will at the same time allow the forest to proceed with a natural succession that will insure future generations of a healthy forest.

"In order to allow for the rejuvenation of the cane all mowing has ceased except in the service area, residence area, picnic area, around shelters, along roadsides, the lake levee and trails.

"There is no guarantee that the cane will reestablish itself, but upon a recent visit to the park it was noted that the unmowed areas contained numerous new cane sprouts."

We are happy to receive this report and will be watching with interest the implementation of the program and its effect upon the rare warblers.

DID YOU SEE THAT ONE?

A note from Harry Gregory tells about birding at the fall meeting:

"While everyone marveled at the fantastic weather at this year's fall meeting, the birding left a lot to be desired. A total of 65 species was seen during the two days in and around Camp Rising Sun.

"Perhaps the most exciting sight, seen only by a handful of people, was a Cooper's hawk and a sharp-shinned hawk soaring in a thermal directly overhead. They remained in sight for several minutes, giving ample time to study the field marks. Besides the obvious difference in size, the squared tail of the "sharpie" contrasted sharply with the rounded tail of the Cooper's hawk.

"Other memorable moments included a flock of a dozen or so long-billed marsh wrens in the marsh and a kettle of 60 or more turkey vultures circling about the cliffs lining the Lake of the Ozarks."

ON THE FALL MEETING

Various phases of the fall meeting have been discussed elsewhere in our paper. We would like to comment on the fellowship which is a part of this informal gathering of nature-oriented folks from across the state. Friendships are made and renewed. We missed several faces which we have come to associate with this autumn event, and hope that they will reappear next year. We hope you, too, will begin now to make plans for this pleasant time of work and play.

....♂...♂...♂....

TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP FOR 1976

Why not renew your membership in the Audubon Society of Missouri today? Don't put it off and forget in the holiday rush. This will guarantee your continuing to receive The Bluebird as you help to support the numerous state-wide conservation activities, including those described in this issue. The schedule of membership dues is as follows:

Regular	\$ 4.00	Sustaining	\$10.00
Family	6.00	Organization	12.00
Student	2.00	*Affiliate	2.00

*This membership available to individuals who belong to an affiliate organization if dues are submitted by the organization's treasurer.

Send your check (payable to Audubon Society of Missouri) to Mrs. Katherine Wade, treasurer (address below).

GIFTS AND BIRDING AIDS

- Audubon Society of Missouri Decal - 60¢ each; 2 for \$1.00 postpaid
Display on your car window or at home or office
First time offered by the Society
- Checklist of Missouri Birds - D. A. Easterla, R. A. Anderson
Seasonal status; abundance status; distribution codes
25¢ each; 10 for \$1.00 postpaid.

Above items may be ordered from Mrs. Edna Kriege, 6123 Waterman Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. 63112. Decal order may be included with your membership renewal.

- "Guide to Finding Birds in the St. Louis Area" - R. A. Anderson and P. E. Bauer
Useful for eastern and central Mo. in Mississippi R. flyway
Where to go; what to expect, how to get there
Seven maps of birding areas in eastern Mo. and western Ill.
Suggested trips for each month
Bar charts for detailed seasonal status and abundance
Special notes for unusual species
\$1.50 postpaid; order from Richard Anderson, 1147 Grenshaw, St. Louis, Mo. 63137.

Mrs. Katherine Wade
2202 Missouri Boulevard
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

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