



# **THE BLUEBIRD**

*The voice of ASM since 1934*

**September 2010  
Volume 77, No. 3**



***The Audubon Society of Missouri  
Missouri's Ornithological Society Since 1901***

# THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

## Officers

Jim Zellmer\*+, President (2010)  
2001 NE 4th St., Blue Springs, MO  
64014, (816) 228-3955  
towhee@sbcglobal.net

Bruce Beck\*+, Vice-President (2010)  
230 CR 466; Poplar Bluff, MO 63901  
(573) 785-3871  
beckbugs@semo.net

Pat Lueders\*+, Treasurer (2010)  
1147 Hawken Pl.  
St. Louis, MO 63119; (314) 779-1372  
pllueders479@aol.com

Laura Gilchrist\*+, Secretary (2010)  
7606 NW 73rd Ct  
Kansas City MO 64152-2385  
(816) 746-8973  
lagi.bird@gmail.com

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Bill Clark, Historian  
3906 Grace Ellen Dr.  
Columbia, MO 65202  
(573) 474-4510

June Newman, Membership  
Carrollton, MO 64633  
(660) 542-0873  
june@binmail.net

# THE BLUEBIRD

## *The Bluebird* Editor:

Bill Eddleman\*+, 1831 Ricardo Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701, (573)  
335-1507, eddlemanw@sbcglobal.net

## Christmas Bird Count Compiler:

Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Lane, St. Louis, MO 63132,  
(314) 993-0055, rikorote@artsci.wustl.edu

## Communication Services:

Patrick Harrison Webmaster, <http://mobirds.org>,  
Susan Hazelwood and David Scheu, Co-owners Listserve,  
mobirds-l-request@po.missouri.edu

## Conservation Editor:

Sue Gustafson+, 429 Bellevue Ave., Webster Groves MO 63119  
(314) 968-8128, smgustafson@juno.com

## Migratory Bird Count Compiler

David Rogles, 60 Shadowridge Drive St. Peters, MO 63376  
(636) 936-0660, suneska@excite.com

## MO Bird Records Committee:

Brad Jacobs+—Chair, 11300 Vemers Ford Road, Columbia, MO 65201,  
(573) 874-3904, brad.jacobs@mdc.mo.gov  
Bill Rowe—Secretary, 9033 Big Bend Road, St. Louis, MO 63119,  
(314) 962-0544, rowe@tjs.org

## Seasonal Survey Editors:

Spring: Kristi Mayo, 1807 Clear Creek Dr., Kearney, MO 64060  
(816) 289-7828, writebirds@yahoo.com

Summer: Josh Uffman, 707 Ashton Way Circle, Eureka, MO 63025  
(636) 587-6016; birdsandbugs@sbcglobal.net

Fall: Walter Wehtje, 3252 South Old Ridge Road, Columbia, MO 65203  
(573) 447-0039; wwhehtje@centurytel.net

Winter: Joe Eades, 517 Willow Lane, Kirkwood, MO, 63122, (314) 835-  
0353, joseph.w.eades@monsanto.com

\* Executive Committee Member

Deadlines for submission of material for publication in *The Bluebird*

Manuscripts for *The Bluebird*—to the editor by:

Feb. 1 for March issue; May 1 for June issue;

Jul. 15 for Sept. issue; *Nov. 1 for Dec. issue*

Deadlines for submissions to the Seasonal Survey Compilers

Winter (Dec. 1-Feb. 28)—to Joe Eades by Mar. 10

Spring (Mar. 1-May 31)—to Kristi Mayo by June 10

Summer (June 1-July. 31)—to Josh Uffman by Aug 10

Fall (Aug. 1-Nov. 30)—to Bill Eddleman by Dec. 10

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*Insert: Fall Meeting information and form*

Front Cover— One of three Lazuli Buntings to appear in Missouri this spring, this one in St. Joseph, Buchanan Co., on 13-17 May. Photo by Jack Hilsabeck.



**Wilson's Snipe, Bob Brown Conservation Area, Holt Co., April 2008. Photo by Peter Kondrashov.**

THE BLUEBIRD is published quarterly by The Audubon Society of Missouri. The submission of articles, photographs, and artwork is welcomed and encouraged. The views and opinions expressed in this journal are those of each contributing writer and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of The Audubon Society of Missouri or its officers, Board of Directors, or editors. Send address corrections to ASM, 2101 W. Broadway, PMB 122, Columbia, MO 65203-1261.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER—JIM ZELLMER



For the past few days, I have been thinking about how I was going to go about **writing the President's Corner** for *The Bluebird* as this will be my last article as your President. And as I thought about the last three years and some of the things that have been accomplished, I also thought about the experience of being your President and how I have served you. So, I came to the conclusion that maybe a little background and history would be in order without getting too detailed or too mushy.

The whole experience for me has been one of tremendous growth, both as an individual and in dealing with people and organizations. **For a lot of us, we really don't like to get too political, but politics is a very real part of life.** And so the journey began three years ago in September of 2007. Here is where I came to the Audubon Society of **Missouri's (ASM) annual fall meeting as both vice-president and president** of our organization. I had a tremendous amount of support and the fall meeting went off without a hitch. All of the planned events – fieldtrips, programs, and meetings – went just like clock work. ASM has, at its core, some of the finest people that I have known in my life. I have said on several occasions that coming to the fall meeting in the Ozarks, is like going to a family reunion or coming home after being gone for a while.

In the course of the past three years your Board of Directors/ Executive Committee, has worked diligently on issues that have kept ASM not only together, but have also worked to move us forward in our service to the birding community. As most all of you know, ASM has for the last several years been involved in what has **commonly been referred to as "partner-shipment"**. **For ASM we have had partnerships with both The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).** With the MDC the partnership has been through the Conservation Area Checklist (CACHE) and for the MDNR it has been

through the State Parks (SPARKS). We are working with these agencies to develop bird checklists, give accurate descriptions of the properties, and provide data on bird species tailored to those who want more than a list. This year, ASM will be entering phase VI for the CACHE project and phase III with the SPARKS project. This is a testimony of the credibility of ASM and our relationship with the state agencies.

The Board members have agreed that it is time for ASM to look closer at some of the membership issues. As I am writing this article, the planning and research for setting up on-line membership is being developed. This will allow both current members and potential new members to use their computers to either renew their membership or to join our organization. As these develop into reality, we will be looking at other services that will allow one to choose to use their computer if so desired or to do it the way it has been done in the past.

I personally feel that ASM is in very good hands with the Board members it has and with Bruce Beck coming on board as the new President. He will bring with him new ideas and a fresh way to view our organization and the direction for the future. I feel very fortunate that I have had the honor and privilege of serving you, the members, and ASM as a premier birding organization. I want to thank all the Board members for the support that they have given **me. No, we didn't always agree on the issues being dealt with, but that makes for a healthy organization.**

In closing, ASM is the kind of organization that brings people closer together for those who take an active role to participate in its being. For them the rewards are priceless. The strength of ASM is in the **bonds of its members and I'm proud to say that I'm a part of those bonds. And I'm proud that I was able to serve you as your President.**

Jim Zellmer  
President,  
The Audubon Society of Missouri

# Grassland Bird Coordinator Report: Conservation of the Greater Prairie Chicken

Mike Doyen - ASM Grassland Bird Coordinator

As I talk to you in person and read your emails, I know how concerned you are that we might lose the Greater Prairie Chicken here in Missouri. NO one wants to admit that this bird may go extinct in our state—no one. However, the reality is that all of us, be it the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), the Grassland Coalition, The Prairie Foundation, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), ASM, or the farmer down the road, know that the Greater Prairie Chicken is barely holding on.

Here are some things I do know based on my observations and information learned over the past years as a member and more currently as the ASM representative to the Grassland Coalition. Across the state we are down to between 100 and 300 birds, maybe less. Habitat destruction has only worsened over the past fifty or more years. The Greater Prairie Chicken population is being cornered into an ever smaller number of locations across the state. Predators have increased dramatically over the past years with the dramatic fluctuation and drop in the price for skins. We have more coyotes, skunks, raccoons, bobcats and feral cats than ever before roaming the prairies in search of food. A number of consecutive years of wet and cold springs have had a negative impact of all ground nesting birds in Missouri, including quail, turkey and of course the Greater Prairie Chicken. Fences, roads, trees, power lines, fescue planting and cutting, row crops, farm houses and farm animals are all competing for the habitat that used to be exclusive to the Greater Prairie Chicken.

It goes without saying that when you combine all these factors plus a few others not mentioned, it would seem that the battle is all but lost and the Greater Prairie Chicken is headed toward extinction. Don't give up just yet—there are rays of sunshine in this otherwise bleak story of survival.

Telemetry is showing us that trans-located birds are surviving and successfully breeding in a number of areas across the state. This data and these numbers are very significant. More and more private landowners across the state are getting involved and are doing what they can to bring back Greater Prairie Chicken habitat. There are some real success stories here and they are things invisible to us the casual observer. For example, Cathy Cooper with MDC has been

casual observers. For example, Cathy Cooper with MDC has been working with private landowners in Pettis County and has opened up over four miles of a site where not one tree or bush can be seen. John Murphy with MDC over the past five years has opened up hundreds if not thousands of acres of private lands with fence clearing, tree removal and prescribed burns. These kinds of stories by MDC personnel are everywhere across northwestern and western Missouri.

In addition, MDC went into Mora CA about five years ago and cut down every tree and woody plant. Prescribed burns and seeding are now bringing back a healthy prairie environment. This approach is being taken in a number of conservation areas and some private lands in the Greater Prairie Chicken emphasis areas. Plant community counts across the whole area are showing an increase in forbs and other viable food sources for Greater Prairie Chicken.

Tall fescue continues to be the grass of choice by cattlemen, yet many ranchers are looking at alternatives and planting them—including smooth brome grass and alfalfa, which are much more quail and Greater Prairie Chicken friendly grasses. Many conservation areas have removed all fence lines and have installed plastic or metal markers on existing fence, as have private landowners, in order to limit fatalities due to wire collisions. More and more private landowners are now burning as part of their grassland management. This is opening up large expanses of grasslands for a short but important time period.

TNC has purchased and rehabbed a large prairie area connected with Pawnee Prairie CA; this large expanse is within viewing distance of Dunn Ranch and part of the Grand River Grassland. MDC and TNC are now working with private landowners to cut as many trees as possible so there will be clear line of sight between the two areas. The Missouri Lek Census had two big success stories in 2010—Taberville Prairie and El Dorado Prairie, where the number of birds on the lek either held or increased over the past years. Other areas continued to show a decline.

Remember, it took us over 100 years to destroy most of the Greater Prairie Chicken habitat in Missouri and for the first time the Grassland Coalition under the able stewardship of Max Alleger is doing something about it. It does none of us any good to dwell on what we could have done or should have done in years past, what is impor-

important is what the Grassland Coalition is doing today and will continue to do tomorrow.

As the Grassland Coordinator for ASM I for one know that the Grassland Coalition is heading in the right direction. It has solid thoughtful leadership, good science, excellent tools in its management chest, and a work force dedicated to keeping the Greater Prairie Chicken a viable grassland bird in Missouri. The most important thing we can do as members of ASM is to make every effort not to visit or walk across Greater Prairie Chicken emphasis areas. Dunn Ranch has closed its observation post for at least two years to avoid disturbing the birds and we must make every effort to do the same.

In closing, all of us know that we will never bring the Greater Prairie Chicken back to the numbers we had years ago, but we might just save enough habitat that the bird can successfully breed and increase its numbers across the Greater Prairie Chicken emphasis areas. If so, birders can enjoy this iconic bird of the grasslands for generations to come.

## Some Notes on the Spring Meeting

Bill Eddleman

Around 80 enthusiastic ASM members assembled in Cape Girardeau April 30-May 2 for the spring meeting. The meeting was co-hosted by me and the Swamp Candle Birders group in Cape Girardeau. Highlights included talks on the past and future of the birdlife of Southeast Missouri (by yours truly), banding demo at the Conservation Campus Nature Center; field trips to numerous locations in the area (Sand Prairie CA and Otter Slough CA in Missouri, and Horseshoe Lake CA and LaRue-Pine Hills Ecological Area in nearby southern Illinois were particularly good); a super-good banquet catered by the Aartful Rose Banquet Facility; and a great talk on rail biology and management by Dr. David Kremetz of the Arkansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. My last tally of the number of species observed that weekend was 155 (a few lists never got to me). I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who helped, especially field trip leaders, Pat Lueders (who graciously collected registrations to help out), those who staffed the welcome table, and the Conservation Campus Nature Center for serving as an assembly point and providing the auditorium on Friday night. A good time was had by all!

# My Birding Birthday—63 Years!

Paul Bauer

On April 12, 1947, I met a group of other teenagers at the Kingshighway Avenue entrance of Tower Grove Park to take part in my FIRST bird walk as a member of the Southwest High School Bird Club ! Did your high school have a Bird Club?

We moved slowly through the northwest corner of the park that is still a prime birding area today. Our leader was Norman R. D. Jones, a biology teacher, and considered the "Father" of the Science Fair movement in St. Louis. I was armed with a pair of 3x "opera glasses" and a new pocket copy of Chester A. Reed's paintings of (passerine) *Birds of Eastern North America* ! As I recall, in that one hour before school, we discovered 18 species of birds; all new to me. I learned that the larger of the two small woodpeckers was called a Hairy; and my memory aid for that fact was that the tallest guy in our group was named Harry!

My interest in "bird watching" started because I needed the Bird Study Merit Badge to move on my drive to be an Eagle Scout. Very quickly I realized that BIRDING neatly combined ALL of my interests in nature and in the outdoor adventures that made Scouting so exciting to me. As they say the rest is history! Who could have guessed the magnitude of trips, special adventures and unique experiences that were ahead in the coming years.

What a true joy these adventures have provided to me for this entire span of over 60 years. So many memories and so many thanks to everyone involved. Now with two new hips I hope to resume my birding adventures for as long as possible. Others have said that: Birding is a Sport for All Seasons, and There are No Limits.

Who could have guessed the magnitude of trips, unique special adventures, and stunning experiences that were ahead for me in the coming years. With this in mind, the next time you plan on going birding consider asking a young person to join you or your group. That invitation may shape an entire lifetime.

What a true joy these adventures have provided to me for this entire span .....

My Wish to each of you: ALWAYS HAVE FUN; GO BIRDING !

## SPRING 2010 SEASONAL REPORT

### KRISTI MAYO

March came on the heels of a tough winter characterized by extended periods of snow cover and sub-freezing temperatures. These conditions carried over into the first part of spring. Large reservoirs such as Smithville Lake still had substantial amounts of ice through the first half of March, and Kansas City saw an 8-inch snow event 20 March. This extension of winter weather made for good gulling at Smithville Lake into the second week of March, with record-late dates for Iceland Gull and **Thayer's Gull**. The long winter also drove Carolina Wrens from the northwest, with several observers noting their absence in rural areas from Kansas City northward.

The first half of April was relatively mild statewide, with few cold fronts or weather systems between the state and the Gulf of Mexico. The second half of April was cooler, with long stretches of rain and clouds, particularly in western and central Missouri. The highlight for the month was a Burrowing Owl photographed at Prairie State Park; this was the 16th state record and only the second spring sighting since 1982.

Early May brought continued cool conditions, especially on the west side of the state—with many days seeing high temperatures between 50 and 60° F—and abundant rain. Conditions were more moderate in the east. The cool, wet pattern finally broke during the final third of the month, with warmth and humidity settling in statewide. A cold front that pushed through the Kansas City area May 6-7 brought good variety and numbers of warblers for the week-end of May 7-9. Several observers noted the warbler migration was difficult to follow, with many silent birds. Josh Uffman wrote of warbler migration from the east side of the state: “Overall, I would describe the migration as sub-par—but, that is from a birder’s eyes. Possibly the birds were just able to keep moving because of so many clear and calm nights (which we had many). Possibly this migration was better for the birds than the birder?” Highlights from May included a number of Black-headed Grosbeaks and Lazuli Buntings at feeders in the west. A Purple Gallinule was photographed in late May at Mingo NWR, and a Western Tanager was reported in Joplin.

High water and flooding throughout the season made shorebirding difficult statewide, as well. Steve Kinder from the Chillicothe area noted, “Cool, wet conditions with snow and then rain caused re-

peated flooding in this area with major impact on wetland vegetation for the third consecutive spring. This left very little good marsh or shorebird habitat in the area.”

## WATERFOWL

Mid- to late-May is a good time to look for Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks statewide, and this year was no exception, with 6 sighted on 23 May at **MNWR's Monopoly Marsh** *Wayne* (CBa) (acc.). The Snow Goose high count for the season was 100,000 on 8 Mar at SLNWR (SK, LL). A nice migratory movement was detected 7 Mar at CBCA with about 3,000 observed in four hours (WR). The occasional straggling or crippled Snow Goose can be expected through late spring—such as 2 at OSCA on 18 May (CBa) and 50+ at SCNWR on 14 May (MR). One ad and 2 imm Trumpeter Swans were at OSCA along with 3 Tundra Swans on 13 Mar (CBa). Two dawdling Gadwalls were at OSCA on 24 May (CBa). A high count of 450+ American Wigeon was at OSCA 11 Mar, and one late individual was still present on 12 May (CBa). Always a good find, two American Black Ducks were reported 6 Mar at SLNWR (TMc, m.ob., *fide* SK), and 1 at CBCA on 12 Mar was the first known sighting of this species at this location (JU). Blue-winged Teal are a rare summer resident, so reports of 1 on 30 May at OSCA (CBa) and 1 m on 31 May CBCA (MT) may indicate nesting. The only report of a Cinnamon Teal this spring came from SCNWR on 3 Apr (DW). The latest Northern Pintail sighting in the south involved 2 birds on 3 May at OSCA (CBa); in the north, 1 m was at SCNWR on 14 May (MR, MA). A single drake Green-winged Teal on 15 May at Confluence Point SP *St Charles* was late (JU, JM, JE). The highest count of Canvasback in the west was 34 on 17 Mar at Mozingo Lake *Nodaway* (DE), and one lingered at RMBS until 30 May (WR). A high count of 78 Redhead came from CBCA



Two of six Black-bellied Whistling Ducks found at Monopoly Lake on Mingo NWR, Stoddard, on 23 May by Chris Barrigar, who also photographed them.

on 7 Mar (JU). The biggest count for Ring-necked Duck was 500 on 12 Mar at TRW, and the latest date included 4 on 8 May in the same location (SK). A nice-sized raft of more than 1,500 Lesser Scaup was at RMBS on 20 Mar (WR). More than 400 Bufflehead were at the Maryville Sewage Lagoons *Nodaway* on 31 Mar (DE). Common Goldeneye can be found into May some years, but the latest spring date in 2010 was of 1 m on 17 Apr at LC (LL). One m and 4 fem Red-breasted Merganser were reported 24 Apr at Lake Wappapello Visitor Center *Wayne* (CBa). The biggest flock of Ruddy Ducks was 312 on 18 Mar at OSCA's Cypress Lake (CBa).

## PRAIRIE-CHICKEN THROUGH RAPTORS

Greater Prairie-Chickens are still hanging on in the TPCA area in painfully small numbers. On 13 Mar, 12 were observed loafing in a privately owned wheat field east of the CA. On 14 Mar, at least 7 m were displaying in this location. Also on 14 Mar, 4 m were displaying on a ridge on the northwestern part of the conservation area. Nearby, an additional 6 were **observed on 15 Mar at a reintroduction site at Wah' Kon-Tah Prairie Cedar**. These birds were not displaying; no lekking behavior was detected **anywhere on the area on this visit by this observer (PW)**. At the state's other chicken stronghold in the northwest, Dunn Ranch *Harrison*, 7 were seen on 23 Mar and 5 were tallied on 17 Apr (SK, TMc). A surprise Pacific Loon in full alternate plumage was found 3 May at SL (DW, KM\*\*) along with 5 Common Loons counted later in the day (Linda Williams). Other Common Loon sightings included: (1) 2 Apr OSCA's Cypress Lake *Stoddard* (CBa); (1) in basic plumage 15 May RMBS (JU, JM, JE); and the latest observed on 30 May OSCA's Cypress Lake (CBa). An unusual spring Red-necked Grebe was observed 8 May at OSCA (SD, BRe). There were four reports of American Bitterns, all single birds: 9 Apr OSCA (CBa); 16 Apr BBCA (KM); 20 Apr TRW (SK); and 11 May Grand Pass CA *Saline* (SK). Only a single report of a Least Bittern was shared: 1 on 20 Apr at OSCA (CBa). No significantly high counts of herons were reported this spring. The highest counts for Little Blue Heron came from CBCA 36 on 24 May (JU); and 32 on 22 May (MT). One Tricolored Heron was at MNWR on 8 May (SD, BRe). The first Cattle Egret report of the season was of 11 on 10 Apr north of Rogersville *Webster* (AK). High counts included: 21 on 24 May at CBCA (JU); and 20 on 24 Apr in *Livingston* (SK). Three late-May Cattle Egret reports may indicate nesting: 10 pm 22 May in Clinton *Henry* (AK); 8 on 22 May at CBCA (MT); and 7 on 26 May in *Livingston* (SK, LL). The first Green Heron of the season in the south was reported on 19 Apr at Crowley Ridge CA *Stoddard* (CBa), and the first in the north was seen on 1 May (slightly earlier than normal) at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM). The first Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported on 12 Apr at OSCA (CBa), and the high count was of 22 on 8 May at Horseshoe L. *Buchanan* (LL). Four northerly Yellow-crowned Night-Herons on 12 Apr at SLNWR were fairly early (SK). A carefully photographed Glossy Ibis posed on 5 May at CBCA (PW, Al Smith). White-faced Ibis numbers seemed a bit lower than recent years. The earliest report was of 12 on 16 Apr at BBCA (KM) and the

high count was only 28 on 2 May at SCNWR (SD). There were two records away from the northwest: 1 on 26 Apr at EBCA (RD); and 20 on 6 May at Four Rivers CA *Vernon* (BF). A Black Vulture observed feeding on a carcass 0.5 mile west of Schell City *Vernon* on 27 Mar (BF) represents the continued northward range expansion of this species. A single Turkey Vulture made a slightly early arrival in the north on 1 Mar at PSP (SK, LL). Two Ospreys on 28 Mar at Mincy CA *Taney* (CBa) were a bit early. Mississippi Kites were missed by observers in the southwest this spring. Lawrence Herbert noted their absence in the Joplin area *Jasper/Newton* and added: "We generally have a few, and find them nesting, too." All reports this spring were from the Miss. R. area: 1 on 2 May at BCA (WR); 7+ on 8 May at MNWR (SD, BRe); 1 on 22 May at Buder Park *St Louis* (MT); 1 on 29 May at WSCA (MT); and a high count of 11 on 31 May at Seven Island CA *Mississippi* (CBa). Also conspicuous in their absence in the north were Northern Harriers. Steve Kinder observed none the last half of the period in north-central MO. He wrote, "Very unusual not to see any. Usually a few around all summer, with some likely nesting." The Red-shouldered Hawk population seems to be growing in the *Clay/Clinton* area: 2 were near a past nesting site on 7 May at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM); and 2 were heard in one stop on 29 May on the Frazier BBS Route *Clinton* (KM). The Swainson's Hawk migration is supposed to peak in mid to late April (R&E), but only one report this spring came in Apr: 1 on 16 Apr along Hwy 169 north of Gower *Buchanan* (KM). The number of reports in early to mid-May suggest a late peak: 1 on 3 May at EBCA (RD); 1 on 5 May at TRW (SK); 2 on 8 May on a NAMC *Holt* (DE, JL, KG); 1 on 15 May at Hwy VV & Hwy 169 *Buchanan* (SD); and 1 on 16 May at EBCA (RD, PW). The sole report from the east, where it is considerably more difficult to find, was an imm. on 24 Apr at CBCA (WR). Three "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawks were at Poosey CA *Livingston* on 12 Mar, and were notable because "very few were seen before this date." (SK) A single winter-resident "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk lingered until late Apr at a location north of Rogersville *Webster* (AK). A Ferruginous Hawk on 27 Mar at HLPCA was an excellent find (SK\*). Wintering Rough-legged Hawks continued into early March in good numbers in NW *Livingston*, with 10 on 8 Mar at Poosey CA *Livingston*; a few lingered there into first week of April (SK, LL, Larry Olpin). At another location on private ranchlands in *Sullivan*, 1 light morph and 1 dark morph were observed 3 Apr (PW). There were only three Merlin reports, all of single birds: 13 Mar CBCA (JU, Hannah Uffman); 14 Mar OSCA (CBa); and 8 May NAMC *Greene* (DB, BB, *fide* DRi). Peregrine Falcons were reported as singles and in pairs at the typical shorebird haunts. Nine reports begin with 2 on 8 Mar at FGCA (SK, June Newman) and culminate with three sightings on May 8 in *Stoddard*, *Holt*, and *Clay* (SD, DE, LG).

## RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Three Virginia Rails were recorded 11 May at Grand Pass CA *Saline* (SK). A high count of 27 Sora was tallied 18 Apr at OSCA (CBa). A much sought-after bird in the Bootheel region, a Purple Gallinule was photographed on 23 May at Mingo NWR's Monopoly Marsh *Wayne* (CBa). Common Moor-



Adult Purple Gallinule found and photographed by Chris Barrigar on Monopoly Lake, Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Stoddard Co., on 23 May.

hens were found at EBCA this spring, with 3 on 26 Apr and 1 on 3 May (RD). **A high count of 6 moorhens on 26 & 29 May at Mingo NWR's Monopoly Marsh** *Wayne* included a nest found by Trenton Uffman that contained one egg (CBa, JU, JE, Neal Young). The highest reported number of American Coots was a rather low tally of 300 on 10 Apr at BKL (MT). An impressive count of 39 Sandhill Cranes, seen migrating overhead with a flock of Snow Geese 5 Mar at OSCA, was a record high count in the east (CBa; acc). Other crane sightings included: 2 in mid-Feb to early Apr at a pond east of Lebanon *Laclede* (Lester Pannell, Rod & Becky Reid); 4-12 during the first week of March near SLNWR, reported by local landowners (*vide* SK); 1 heard 16 Apr at SCNWR (KM); 2 on 7 May at EBCA (RD); and 3 soaring overhead on 14 May at Poosey CA *Livingston* (SK). American Golden-Plovers were first detected on 14 Mar with 12 at OSCA (CBa), and by the peak of their migration in early April high counts included 130 on 3 Apr at BBCA (DW) in the west and 100 on 10 Apr at BKL (MT) in the east. A single Snowy Plover was reported at SCNWR on 2 May (DW). The first wave of Semipalmated Plovers in the south brought 8 on 17 Apr to OSCA (CBa), and by 2 May there were 250+ at SCNWR (DW). Piping Plovers were found in two locations the second weekend of May: 2 on 7 May at EBCA (RD) and 1 on 8 May at SL (Keith Brink). A Black-necked Stilt on 23 Mar at OSCA broke the early-date record by two days (CBa\*\*). Their numbers in the Bootheel topped out at 148 on 30 Apr in a flooded field adjacent to Warbler Woods CA *Dunklin* (CBa). **Other sightings away the stilts'** stronghold in the Southeast included: 1 on 6 Apr at SLNWR (SK); 3 on 1 May at TSCA (PW); 3 on 16 May at EBCA (RD, PW); and 2 possible nesters at CBCA through 31 May (JU, MT). There were only three reports of American Avocets: 25 on 2 May at SCNWR (DW); 1 on 7 May at RMBS (JU); and 2 on 16 May at EBCA (RD, PW). The highest tally of Spotted

Sandpipers was 25 on 3 May at SLNWR (SK, LL). The first Greater Yellowlegs sighting in the south was of 5 on 7 Mar at OSCA (CBa). Willets were detected at four locations in the east, where they are listed as rare: 5 on 24 Apr at Crowley Ridge CA *Stoddard* (CBa); 1 on 1 May at TSCA (PW); 2 on 2 May at RMBS (JU); and 2 on 3-7 May at EBCA (RD). High counts were both from the northwest on 7 May: 14 at Horseshoe Lake *Buchanan* (LL) and 19 at SCNWR, BBCA, Bigelow Marsh *Nodaway* (DE, JL). Lesser Yellowlegs spanned the season with 3 arriving at OSCA on 7 Mar (CBa) and 3 calling in flight on 31 May at the Swift Ditch Access *New Madrid* (CBa). A group of 10-12 Upland Sandpipers were at DR on 17 Apr (SK, TMc) and 5 were heard singing 29 May on 2 stops of the Frazier BBS route in *Clinton* (KM). The sole Whimbrel sighting was of 2 in flight 16 May at Confluence Point SP *St Charles* (JM, CM, Dave Rogles, Tom Bormann). Hudsonian Godwits had arrived in the northwest on 16 Apr with 2 in the distribution channels at BBCA and 16 flying along Hwy 169 north of Gower *Buchanan* (KM). The highest count was 37 on 11 May *Saline* (SK). Records from the east, where rare, include 3 on 11 May at CBCA (PW); 6 on 13 May at OSCA (CBa); and 1 on 15 May at Firma & Dalbow Rd *St Charles* (JU, JM, JE). Marbled Godwits were only reported in one location: 2 on 7 May at RMBS (JU). Two Pectoral Sandpipers were among the first shorebird arrivals in the state on 7 Mar at OSCA (CBa). Decidedly more difficult to find in the spring, only one Buff-breasted Sandpiper sighting was reported: 1 on 7 May at EBCA (RD). Long-billed Dowitchers were also with the first wave of shorebird migrants with a group of 4 on 7 Mar at OSCA (CBa). Their numbers topped out at 1,600 on 10 Apr at OSCA (CBa). Two Wilson's Snipe were also at OSCA on 3 Mar (CBa). Wilson's Phalaropes arrived in the south on 24 Apr with 2 at Duck Creek CA *Bollinger* and 2 at OSCA (CBa), and their numbers peaked the first few days of May with 227+ on 3 May at EBCA (RD) and 150 on 2 May at SCNWR (DW). One Red-necked Phalarope was found among the more common phalaropes on 2 May at SCNWR (DW), and 1 m was at Confluence Point SP *St Charles* on 15 May (JM, JU, JE). There were two reports of Laughing Gulls, both on the Miss. R. at RMBS: 1 ad on 7 & 15 May (JU, WR) and 2 on 8 May (John Solodar). Franklin's Gull numbers peaked in the northwest the first week of May, with 200 on 2 May at SCNWR (DW) and 250 on 7 May at LC (LL). There was just one report from the east, where this species is decidedly less common: 2 on 1 May at RMBS (MT). A single Herring Gull lingered until 1 May at RMBS (MT). The late breakup of ice at SL led to several record late-dates for winter gulls: a single adult Thayer's Gull was observed 7 & 14 Mar SL (BF; acc.), and a first-cycle Iceland Gull was at SL until 14 Mar (found by DW; KM, BF; acc.). One adult Lesser Black-backed Gull on the Miss. R. also broke a late-date record: 2 May at RMBS (JU\*). Least Terns returned to utilize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers nesting barges at RMBS. The first bird of the season was observed on 11 May (Vincent Giammaria). The high count for the period at this location was 23 on 30 May (JU). Few large flocks of Black Terns were reported. One on 10 May at the Carl Junction Water Treatment Facility *Jasper* was notable in its solitude (LH, Dave Henness), and the largest group in the west was 180+ at SCNWR (MR, MA). The largest group in the east numbered 50 on 22 May at RMBS

(MT, PL, m.ob). A good-sized flock of approximately 30 Common Terns was found at RMBS on 15 May (WR).

## DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

While Eurasian Collared-Doves have become expected statewide, a single Ringed Turtle-Dove identified on 17 Mar at Mazingo L. *Nodaway* served as a reminder that other non-established, exotic dove species need to be considered when making an identification (DE & class). There were two reports of White-winged Doves: 1 on 19 Apr at Tarkio *Atchison* (Ryan Evans, *fide* JH) and 1 on 14 May at a Neosho residence *Newton*, the second record for the Joplin area (photographed by Rod Sallee, *fide* LH). “Where are the Yellow-billed Cuckoos?” asked Mark Robbins. “Yes, they arrived late, but as I write, I have been shocked at how few that I’ve heard to date.” The first report in the south was of a single bird at Sand Prairie CA *Scott* on 1 May (CBa, ASM field trip) and, in the north, 4 were detected in the northeastern corner of Clay on the 8 May NAMC (KM). There was only one report of Black-billed Cuckoo, a rather difficult-to-find species, a single on 22 May at CBCA (JU, PL, JM, SLAS fieldtrip). Lawrence Herbert checked up on a Greater Roadrunner that had first been seen the previous year at the Vines and Violets Nursery southwest of Joplin *Newton* and was told by the owner that it was “found injured and died in April.” One Barn Owl was found at the Carl Junction Water Treatment Facility *Jasper* on 8 May. While they have been reliable in this location, there are reportedly no good places to nest (LH). One of the best sightings of the season, a Burrowing Owl was photographed on 9 Apr at Prairie SP *Barton* (Dana Hoisington, Rick Edwards, Brian Miller; acc.). High counts for Long-eared Owl included 8 on 8 Mar at a pine grove in *Livingston* and 7 on 10 Mar in a riparian thicket in *Linn* (SK). Once again, nesting activity was detected in *Livingston*: 1 nest was found in a *Livingston* pine grove on 1 Apr, but it later was found to be predated and the eggs destroyed. Another nest in the pine grove in *Livingston* produced 3 fledglings, observed on 27 May (SK). A large wintering population of Short-eared Owls spilled over into the spring to produce a high count of 30 on 8 Mar at a farm northeast of Carthage *Jasper* (Robert Heth, *fide* LH). The latest sightings included 1 on 23 Mar north of Carl Junction *Jasper* (LH) and 15 on 27 Mar at Mora Prairie *Benton* (SK). The first Common Nighthawks seemed to arrive in a statewide wave around the first of May, which was somewhat early in the north: 1 on 30 Apr on the Miss. R. from the S.P. Reynolds Access *Pemiscot* (CBa); 1 on 1 May at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM); and 1 on 2 May in Chillicothe *Livingston* (SK). Three Chuck-will’s-widow were counted on the 8 May NAMC in *Holt* (DE, JL, KG). The first Whip-poor-will report of the season was of 2 on 31 Mar near Indian Creek *Washington* (SD). A single bird on the 8 May NAMC in *Holt* was considered an unusually low count (DE, JL, KG). Chimney Swifts made a somewhat early arrival statewide. Examples include: 2 on 1 Apr at Dexter City L. *Stoddard* (CBa) and 1 on 6 Apr at Eureka *St Louis* (JU). Seven reports from the Kansas City, Springfield, and St Louis areas of single Olive-sided Flycatchers spanned a period from 8 May to 22 May (DRi, MT, MR, WR). A single Eastern Wood-Pewee heard

singing on 1 May at CBCA was a little early (MT). All reports of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers came from the east, where it is much more common: 1 on 11 May at a SE Columbia residence *Boone* (RD); 1 on 15 May at TGP (MT); and 1 on 22 May at CBCA (MT). The first Acadian Flycatcher was reported 1 May at Cape Girardeau CNC *Cape Girardeau* (CBa). The first Alder Flycatcher, one of our latest migrants, was not detected until 19 May in *Christian* (Greg Swick, *fide* DRI), followed by 2 singing at CBCA on 15 May (WR), 1 singing on 22 May in Buder Park *St Louis* (MT), and 2 singing on 27 May at SL (KM). The first Willow Flycatcher had arrived by 8 May NAMC *Greene* (DB, BB, *fide* DRI), and it was speculated that one heard singing on 22 May at RMBS may indicate nesting at that location (MT). Least Flycatchers were in northeastern *Clay* in large numbers during the 8 May NAMC: 36 (an average of 3.2 birds/hr) were recorded in and around Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM). Western Kingbirds continue to draw attention from observers in the southwest and east, where they are still listed as rare. In the southwest, 2 were noted on 7 May in *Greene* (DB, BB, *fide* DRI). In the east, sightings included 1, a first in this location, on 9 May at OSCA (CBa); 2, possibly a returning nesting pair, on 11 May at Lambert St. Louis Airport *St Louis* (MT); 1 m and 1 fem on 11 May south of Creve Coeur Lake *St Louis* (PL); 1 just outside Confluence SP *St Charles* on 15 May (WR); and 1 on 18 May near Lambert St. Louis Airport *St Louis* (MT). Eastern Kingbird migration peaked with a tally of 49 on 11 May at OSCA (CBa). The first Scissor-tailed Flycatcher report was of a group of 4 on 7 Apr at the Missouri Southern State University campus in Joplin *Jasper* (LH), and 1 was in *Livingston* by 29 Apr (SK). There were at least seven reports away from the Southwest, 4 of which included mated pairs: 8 May near SL (LG); 26-31 May Hwy N & US 40/61 *St Charles* (JM, CM; first observed by Richard Coles); 29 May Dardenne Prairie *St Charles* (MT); and 12 Apr-end of period, St Joseph *Buchanan* (Brent Galliard, Frances Cramer). Nesting Loggerhead Shrikes are always worth mentioning: 2 were behaving like a mated pair on 14 Mar at TPCA (PW), and nesting activity was detected on 14 May near Bigelow Marsh *Holt* (MR, MA, Luis Sanchez-Gonzalez). At what has been a fairly reliable spot for Northern Shrikes in winter near Skidmore *Nodaway*, 2 lingered until 3 Mar and 1 very late bird was observed 23 Mar (KG, *fide* JH). A single White-eyed Vireo was a fairly early arrival on 3 Apr at General Watkins CA *Scott* (CBa). Bell's Vireos were reported in two locations away from the north and west: 1 on 26 Apr at OSCA (CBa) and a very impressive tally of 16 on 31 May along 0.5 mile of the Blue Grosbeak Trail at Weldon Spring CA, *St Charles* (PL, Sue Gustafson). Two Yellow-throated Vireos on 10 Apr at MNWR were among the first of their kind to be seen in the state this spring (CBa). Three or 4 Philadelphia Vireos foraging in the top of a single tree at CBCA seemed unusual (WR). One Fish Crow was found on 3 May at SLNWR, possibly the first observation for that immediate area (SK, LL). The first of the Purple Martins arrived in the southeast on 14 Mar at OSCA (CBa). Decent-sized flocks of Tree Swallows were reported well north into the state in early Mar: 14 on 6 Mar at SLNWR (SK, m.ob.); 28 on 7 Mar at Duck Creek CA, Greenbrier Unit *Bollinger* (CBa). The first Northern Rough-winged Swallows were represented by 3 birds observed on 18 Mar at Dex-

ter City Lake *Stoddard* (CBa). Winter 2009-10 and the subsequent spring 2010 saw low numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches, though up slightly from spring 2009. A total of five records: 1 on 2 Mar at *Greene* (Connie Tyn-dall, *fide* DRI); 1 on 2-3 Mar at St Joseph residential feeders *Buchanan* (JH); 2 on 2 Apr at Rockwoods Reservation CA *St Louis* (JU); 1 fem on 7 Apr at Walter Woods CA *Newton* (LH); and 1 on 23 Apr at Neosho *Newton* (Ronda Sherrill, *fide* LH). Prolonged sub-freezing temperatures and heavy snow cover in the Northwest in early Jan took its toll on Carolina Wrens. It appears this species held on at sheltered backyard bird feeders, but is conspicuous in its absence in its normal rural haunts. "I did not have a single Carolina Wren from Kansas City north to Squaw Creek," wrote Mark Robbins. "It is quite clear that many other species were impacted, but none as obvious as the wrens." And Tom Nagle reports from St. Joseph *Buchanan*: "I have only heard this species in two locations in the St. Joseph area this spring." Some comparisons of 9 May 2009 and 8 May 2010 NAMC in several northerly counties: *Buchanan* 23 in 2009, 3 in 2010; *Clay* 47 in 2009, 4 in 2010; *Livingston* 18 in 2009, 7 in 2010. Three single Bewick's Wrens were reported: 14 Apr *Christian* (DB, *fide* DRI); 1 on 23 Apr and 22 May, southwest of Joplin *Newton* (LH, Jeff Nichols); and 1 on 8 May in *Washington* (JU). There were only two Sedge Wren notations in the seasonal reports submitted: 2 on 1 May at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM) and 2 on 15 May at MNWR (CBa). The first Marsh Wren was detected on 7 Mar at OSCA (CBa), and a high count of 12 came from MNWR on 8 May (SD, BRe). A count of 7 Ruby-crowned Kinglets in the northeastern corner of *Clay* on 8 May seemed like a good count for that date (KM). Just one Veery made it into the report, seen on 15 May at BCA (JU, JM, JE). Swainson's Thrush was represented in good numbers the first week of May with 100+ on 7 May at SCNWR, BBKA, and Bigelow Marsh *Nodaway* (DE, JL); and 40+ on 8 May in *Washington* (JU). The first Wood Thrush of the season slipped into the state on 19 Apr in *Washington* (JU), and the earliest Gray Catbird was seen on 13 Apr at Crowley Ridge CA *Stoddard* (CBa). American Pipit migration peaked in the east during the second week of March with high counts of 161 on 7 Mar at OSCA (CBa) and 24 on 13 Mar at CBCA (JU).

## WARBLERS

There were three records of Blue-winged Warblers north of the Missouri R., where rare: 1 on 7 May near maturing sycamores at the north end of Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM); 1 on 15 May at a cemetery *Livingston* (SK); and 1 on 25 May-end of period at Poosey CA *Livingston* (SK, LL, m.ob.). Golden-winged Warblers were worthy of note the first weekend in May in the northwest, with 1 on 7 May at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM); 2 on 8 May at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM); and 3 on 8 May at WBSP (MR). A record-early Tennessee Warbler was documented on 6 Apr north of Rogersville *Webster* (AK; acc.). Since this species is usually present in large numbers during peak warbler migration, Josh Uffman was surprised to note that 12 on 8 May in *Washington* was his highest single-day count in 2010. "This was the only count of Tennessee Warblers for the entire spring that I had a count in

the double digits,” he wrote. Two observers in the northwest noted impressive numbers of Nashville Warblers on 8 May: 48 (an average of 4.3 birds/hr) were recorded at and around Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM); and 65+, a personal high count for one day in Missouri, was recorded at WBSP (MR). A solid high count of 12 Northern Parulas on 17 & 24 Apr came from a location north of Rogersville *Webster* (AK). Yellow Warblers were ubiquitous on 8 May in northeastern *Clay*, with a high count of 25 (KM). A high count of 8 Cape May Warblers came from TGP *St Louis* on 8 May (PL, m.ob.). This species also had a good showing in the west this year, where it is listed as rare: 1 on 8 May at Busiek WA *Christian* (Charley Burwick, GOAS field trip, *fide* DRi); 1 on 8 May at SL (LG); 1 on 11 May at a St Joseph residence *Buchanan* (LL); and 1 m on 17 May on the University of Missouri campus *Boone* (RD). Joshua Uffman writes of Yellow-rumped Warblers: “They never seemed to peak in *St Louis*.” His meager high count was 30 on 19 Apr in *Washington* (JU). Yellow-throated Warbler is rare in the north, but has been found for a number of years in riparian habitat near St Joseph *Buchanan*, where 1 occurred 8 May in bottomland forest along the 3rd Fork of Platte R. *Buchanan* (Tom Nagel, Bryan Evans); and 2 were seen throughout the period at two different locations on NW Parkway Trail in St. Joseph *Buchanan* (Tom Nagel). Bay-breasted Warbler is another species normally difficult to find in the west. Nonetheless, there were three separate sightings from the northwest the second week of May: 1 on 8 May at St Joseph *Buchanan* (JH); 1 on 8 May at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (KM); and 1 on 12 May at Busiek WA *Christian* (Stephen Scroggs, Zelda Ellison). A single, singing Blackpoll Warbler on 1 May at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* was a little bit ahead of schedule (KM). There was only one report of a Cerulean Warbler from the southwest, where it is rare: 1 on 8 May at Roaring River SP *Barry* (AK, JCa). The high count was of 8 on 25 May at WSCA (PL, Linda Bobo). A Black-and-white Warbler on 28 Mar at Patrick Bridge CA *Ozark* was a little earlier than average (CBa). There were two Worm-eating Warbler records from the north, both in *Livingston*: 1 on 8 May in SW *Livingston* (Ted Rights, *fide* SK); and 1 on 27-28 May at Poosey CA *Livingston* (TMC, SK; found by Myrna Carlton). A Louisiana Waterthrush on 24 Mar north of Rogersville *Webster* was the first of its kind reported this season (AK). A single-day high count of 10 Kentucky Warblers came from northeastern *Clay* on 8 May (KM). There were four reports of Connecticut Warblers, all single birds: 1 fem, netted & banded on 7 May at the World Bird Sanctuary/Chubb Trail *St Louis* (PL, m.ob.); 15 May north of Rogersville *Webster* (AK); a m on 16 May at Grindstone Natural Area *Boone* (RD, PW); and 17 May Creve Coeur *St Louis* (JU, CBr). Mourning Warbler was well represented with at least eight reports spanning from 5 May to 27 May in locations across the state. The earliest date was of 2 m banded on 5 May at the World Bird Sanctuary/Chubb Trail *St Louis* (PL, m.ob.). High counts included 5 on 14 May at WBSP (MR, MA) and 3 on 15 May at BCA (JU, JE, JM). The Canada Warbler high count was 4 on 5 May in Creve Coeur *St Louis* (JU, DB, CBr).

## TOWHEES THROUGH SISKINS

*Spizella* sparrows were clearly on the move in the northwest 7-8 May. A high count of 188 Chipping Sparrows (an average of 2.98 birds/party hr) was tallied on the 8 May NAMC in *Clay* (fide JAE). Clay-colored Sparrow reports from this time window included 11 on 7 May at SCNWR, BBCA, Bigelow Marsh *Nodaway* (DE, JL); 20 on 8 May in the NE corner of *Clay* (KM); and 11 on 8 May NAMC *Livingston* (fide SK). A high count of 22 Field Sparrows (an average of 2 birds/hr) came from the NE corner of *Clay* 8 May (KM). A single Savannah Sparrow had returned to the north part of the state on 16 Mar at a location south of St Joseph *Buchanan* (SK, LL). High counts included 20+ at CBCA and 25+ at RMBS 17 Apr (JU). The latest bird was recorded on 23 May at CBCA (WR). The first Grasshopper Sparrow of the season was found on 17 Apr at CBCA (JU). There were three records of Le Conte's Sparrow that involved multiple birds: 2 on 7 Mar at Prairie SP *Barton* (Cyndi Cogbill, Dana Hoisington, fide LH); 3 on 22 Mar at FGCA (SK); and 2 on 2 May at Sand Prairie CA *Scott* (CBA, ASM field trip). Participants in *Holt's* 8 May NAMC had a good count of 20 Lincoln's Sparrows (DE, JL, KG), and a single bird lingered until 18 May at Young CA *St Louis* (JU). Peak numbers of White-crowned Sparrows were tallied during the 8 May NAMC in the north: 259 in *Livingston* (fide SK); and 68 in *Clay* (fide JAE). Interestingly, two subspecies were observed in the northwest on 14 May: 2 *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii* at SCNWR & Bigelow Marsh *Holt* and 2 of the "eastern" subspecies, *Z. l. leucophrys* at WBSP & SCNWR (MR, MA, Luis Sanchez-Gonzalez). A high count of 1,000 Lapland Longspurs came on 6 Mar at SLNWR (Grand River Audubon trip, fide SK). By 3 May, 20 were still near LC, and on 8 May, 8 were still at that location (LL). Smith's Longspur numbers peaked at 100 on 17 Apr at DR (SK, TMc). Other records included: 2 on 14 Mar on a hilltop in short grass, TPCA (PW); and 12 on 15 Mar at SLNWR (SK). A m Scarlet Tanager on 19 Apr in *Washington* was a bit early (JU). A m Western Tanager was documented on 7 May on the Frisco/Greenway Trail in Joplin *Jasper* (LH\*\*). If accepted, this would be the seventh spring record of this species. This spring saw an impressive invasion of Black-headed Grosbeaks at feeders in the northwest. An imm m first appeared 27 Dec 2009 and continued through 2 May at Kansas City residence feeders in *Platte* (Lisa Owens; acc.). An ad m was at the feeding station at Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary *Clay* on 9 May (DW). One m was photographed 12-13 May at St Joseph residence feeders *Buchanan* (Dave & Jan McClurg, JH\*\*, DE, LL, m.ob.). Finally, a 2<sup>nd</sup>-yr m was at a **Skidmore residence's feeders** *Nodaway* 20 May-11 Jun (KG). Lazuli Buntings also made a good showing across the west with at least three records, all of single adult males: 11 May at a residence near Freeman *Cass* (Ginny Culver; ph.; acc.); 10-17 May at a residence near Bennett Springs SP *Laclede* (Archie & Dorothy Murdock, fide Lester Pannell\*); 13-17 May in St Joseph at residential feeders in *Buchanan* (Vetra & JH). The earliest Indigo Bunting noted was a m on 19 Apr in *Washington* (JU). The high count was of 27 on 8 May in northeastern *Clay* (KM). Two Painted Buntings were found away from their usual haunts in the southwest: 1 with a m Indigo Bunting on 10 May south of St

Joseph *Buchanan* (SK\*, LL) and 1 on 19 May-end of period at a feeder at a Boonville residence *Cooper* (Susan Meadows\*\*, Mary Barile). Other records included: 2 on 8 May at Roaring River SP *Barry* (AK, JCa); and 1 on 2 May-end of period at a Forsyth feeder *Taney* (Louis Harris, *fide* JH). The first Bobolinks in the south were a group of 27 at Warbler Woods CA *Dunklin* on 30 Apr (CBa); in the north, 6 were near the *Linn/Chariton* line on 4 May (SK, LL). High counts were counted during the 8 May NAMC: 315 in *Clay* (*fide* JAE); 280 in *Livingston* (*fide* SK); and 120 in *Holt* (DE, JL, KG). The 5 birds on 3 stops on the Frazier BBS Route *Clinton* 29 May could be breeders



This was a banner year for Black-headed Grosbeaks, with 4 appearing at different sites this spring. Top: Male from St. Joseph, Buchanan Co., 12-13 May, photographed by Jack Hilsabeck. Bottom: Male from a Kansas City, Platte Co., feeder; first appeared 27 Dec 2009 and present until 2 May 2010; photographed by Lisa Owens.

(KM). Notably, no large groups of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were observed at SCNWR, possibly because of a lack of appropriate habitat there this spring (DE). Records from the east, where rare, included 7 fem on 2 May at Dalbow Rd *St Charles* (CM; Dave Rogles & Tom Bormann original obs.); and 1 fem on 2 May near RMBS (JU). Rusty Blackbird observations consisted of 6 at CBCA on 7 Mar; 60 in *St Louis* on 22 Mar; and 40 near the same *St Louis* location on 29 Mar (WR). A high count of 2,500 Great-tailed Grackles was tallied 13 May in the LC area *Buchanan* (LL). The latest Purple Finch this spring, a fem, was observed 19 Apr in *Washington* (JU).

## Observers

Mike Andersen (MA), Barb Blevins (BB), David Blevins (DB), Chris Barrigar (CBa), Chris Brown (CBr), Jeff Cantrell (JCa), Ryan Douglas (RD), Stephen Dilks (SD), Joe Eades (JE), David Easterla (DE), Jo Ann Eldridge (JAE), Bob Fisher (BF), Laura Gilchrist (LG), Kirby Goslee (KG), Lawrence Herbert (LH), Jack Hilsabeck (JH), Andrew Kinslow (AK), Larry Lade (LL), Joseph Landewee (JL), Steve Kinder (SK), Pat Lueders (PL), Charlene Malone (CM), Jim Malone (JM), Kristi Mayo (KM), Terry McNeely (TMc), Bill Reeves (BRe), Dean Rising (DRi), Mark Robbins (MR), William Rowe (WR), Mike Thelen (MT), Joshua Uffman (JU), Doug Willis (DW), Phil Wire (PW).

## Key

- \* Documentation needed for MBRC review
- \*\* Documentation received by MBRC for review
- acc. Accepted by MBRC

## Abbreviations

ad-adult, adults

CA-Conservation Area

fem-female

imm.-immature

juv-juvenile

L.-lake

m-male

MO-Missouri

m.ob.-multiple observers

MBRC-Missouri Bird Records Committee

NAMC-North American Migration Count

R&E-Robbins & Easterla, *Birds of Missouri: Their Distribution and Abundance* (1992)

Location abbreviations (counties are in italics)

BKL-B. K. Leach Conservation Area, *Lincoln*

BBCA-Bob Brown Conservation Area, *Holt*

BCA-August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area, *St Charles*

CBCA-Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, *St Louis*

DR-Dunn Ranch, *Harrison*

EBCA-Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, *Boone*  
FGCA-Fountain Grove Conservation Area, *Linn & Livingston*  
HLPCA-Hi Lonesome Prairie Conservation Area, *Benton*  
LC-Lake Contrary, *Buchanan*  
MNWR-Mingo NWR, *Stoddard & Wayne*  
OSCA-Otter Slough Conservation Area, *Stoddard*  
PSP-Pershing State Park, *Linn*  
RMBS-Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, *St Charles*  
SL-Smithville Lake, *Clay & Clinton*  
SLNWR-Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge, *Chariton*  
SCNWR-Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, *Holt*  
TPCA-Taberville Prairie Conservation Area, *St Clair*  
TRW-Thompson River Wetlands, *Livingston*  
TSCA-Ted Shanks Conservation Area, *Pike*  
TGP-Tower Grove Park, *St Louis City*  
WSCA-Weldon Spring Conservation Area, *St Charles*  
WBSP-Weston Bend State Park, *Platte*

## A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

Edge Wade

### OSAGE-TAVERN ACCESS

27 acres Miller Co. DeLorme 45, A/B-10; MDC owned; for information call 573-346-2210

Directions: From St. Elizabeth, go north on Rt. E to its end and continue north on Hoecker Rd. about 1 mile.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: The open campground area is a productive place for spring migration viewing and for seeking summer nesters. The riparian habitat may hold water-loving nesting warblers. Grassland species may be seen on the perimeter, and waterfowl may be seen in the fall and winter.

Features of interest to birders: Figure-eight road through a savanna-like campground gives good viewing opportunities for the center area and the wilder grassy and wooded perimeter.

Toilets: 1 privy

Camping: 17 campsites

Hazards/Limitations: The access is at the confluence of Tavern Creek and the Osage River, so is subject to flooding. It is a popular place on summer weekends; bird it on weekdays.

Nearby Birding Sites: Painted Rock CA, Saline Valley CA, Wilson Camp Access

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## BOHIGIAN (GEORGE) CONSERVATION AREA

437 acres Phelps Co. DeLorme 46, H-3; MDC owned; for additional information call 417-256-7161

Directions: From I-44 Exit 179 at Doolittle, take Rt. T south to and through Newburg. Cross the Frisco tracks and turn right onto Rt. P, go 5 miles, then turn left onto Rt. AA. You may turn left off Rt. AA at Mill Creek Rd. (CR 7550) and follow it past MDC and private land to a parking area on the right; or you may continue on Rt. AA to a parking lot on the left.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: This area offers good birding anytime. Waterfowl, waders and rails may be found in season. There are 28 species of warblers and **Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrush** on the checklist, suggesting that a visit here in spring migration may be particularly rewarding. The area has a good selection of **sparrows (including Henslow's)**, representing summer and winter residents, and six species of wren have been reported.

Features of interest to birders: 2 parking areas (one on CR 7550 and one on Rt. AA). There are 100 acres of old fields, 327 acres of forest and woodland that include bottomland forest along the 1.2 mile stretch of Mill Creek, limestone bluff woods, and a 100-acre fen.

There are no designated trails, but paths leading from parking areas and along the creek provide access to good riparian and wetland habitat.

Toilets: None

Camping: None

Hazards/Limitations: None noted other than the necessity to wade Mill Creek (may be calf deep or more) to reach the very rugged eastern half of the area.

Nearby Birding Sites: Jerome Access, Beaver Creek Conservation Area, Schuman Park Lake (Rolla), Gasconade Hills Conservation Area.

## SAINT STANISLAUS CONSERVATION AREA

812 acres St. Louis Co. DeLorme 41, D-6; Leased from the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation; for information call 314-877-6014.

Directions: From 370: Exit 9, Earth City Expressway. South is the expressway; go north on Missouri Bottom Road. At an intersection at 1.3 miles from the exit, Missouri Bottom Rd. goes sharply right. Stay straight to continue on Aubuchon Rd. At 3.5 miles from Exit 9, just beyond a high, bright yellow water level gauge, a parking area for Saint Stanislaus CA is on the left. This is at the point where Aubuchon Rd. becomes Charbonier Rd. To reach a second parking lot, continue .2 miles on Charbonier Rd. to the lot on the right.

Alternate route: From the intersection of Hwy. 67 (Lindbergh) and Charbonier Rd. in Florissant, go 3.6 miles to the first parking lot (on the left) and an additional .2 miles to the lot on the right where Charbonier Rd. becomes Aubuchon Rd.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: This area has shown great results for winter birding as a site for the Christmas Bird Count. It is overlooked the rest of the year. Spring flooding may reduce access to the low areas. The upland portion off Charbonier Rd. should be very productive in migration. This is an underbirded area. Spring, summer and autumn trips are likely to be very rewarding.

Features of interest to birders: Habitat variety includes 530 acres of forest and woodland, 25 acres of wetlands, 30 acres of old fields, and 44 acres of non-prairie grassland, and 180 of cropland. Two paved parking lots are along the 3.5 mile hiking trail. Internal loops may be followed to shorten total distance to explore bottomland and upland habitat on Charbonier Bluff. The nearly one-half mile handicap accessible trail is reached from the lot on Aubuchon Rd. Paths along Bryan Island Chute and Cowmire Creek provide good riparian corridor birding.

Toilets: 1 privy at the Aubuchon Rd. parking lot.

Camping: None. One picnic pavilion with 4 tables is at the Aubuchon Rd. lot.

Hazards/Limitations: Low lying portions of th area are subject to flooding, especially in the spring. Charbonier Rd. bisects the area and crosses the hiking trail. Missouri River frontage is accessible

only from Bryan Island . Bryan Island, in the western portion of the area, is about 30% of the total area and can only be reached by boat across Bryan Island Chute.

Nearby Birding Sites: Riverwoods CA, Hickory Woods CA; Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary is 15.1 miles away.

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DUCK CREEK CONSERVATION AREA (MAIN UNIT)  
Steve Dilks, Chris Barrigar, Edge Wade

6,234 acres Stoddard, Bollinger, Wayne Cos. DeLorme 67, A-9 ;  
MDC owned, some leased; for information call: 573-290-5730

Directions: The main entrance is nine miles north of Puxico on Hwy 51. From the west, take US 60 east of Poplar Bluff to Hwy 51. From I-55, there are several “scenic route” options.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Anytime is a good time to visit.

**Duck Creek is one of Missouri’s premier sites to see great numbers** of waterfowl and shorebirds, but waterfowl hunting season severely limits accessibility for those without a hunting license. Rarities that have been or very well could be seen here include Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Mottled Duck, Purple Gallinule, Neotropic Cormorant, White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Tricolored Heron, Wood Stork, and Anhinga.

Features of interest to birders: There are 2,400 wetland acres, a 1,800-acre pool, 1,500 acres of bottomland hardwoods, and about 800 acres of cropland.

This suggested approach to birding Duck Creek is by Steve Dilks, **written for The Audubon Society of Missouri’s, *A Guide to Birding in Missouri***, 2001, compiled and edited by Kay and Bill Palmer: Starting from the headquarters parking lot check for nesting Chipping Sparrow, then proceed to Pool 1. In spring trees anywhere may yield warblers. The shallow pool on the left along the way may have puddle ducks. Wood Duck may be seen along the wood/water edge just **before reaching the “Big Pool” [Pool 1]**.

Examine Pool 1 closely. From late winter to early spring expect thousands of Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, and numerous puddle ducks. Searching might produce a few Redheads, a Western Grebe, or a scoter. This is a great place to see Bald Eagles. A pair of

eagles has nested in the cypress trees. A sign on the road will help you locate the nest. In spring the cypress trees in the north part of the pool are usually covered with Double-crested Cormorants and Tree Swallows. On occasion Willet have been seen sitting on stumps. Sometimes the 7.5 mile road around Pool 1 is open. While driving watch for goslings in spring and the many fishermen on weekends. Listen for Fish Crow and keep watching the skies for Black Vulture [ & Mississippi Kites that nest in nearby Mingo NWR].

**The entrance to the “A” Area, 3.9 miles from the entrance to Pool 1,** is on the left. When open, touring this 4.5 mile loop drive is a must. When there is shallow water it is excellent. If the gate is closed you may enter on foot, but you will have to walk at least a mile to reach a wetland area. In early March there can be thousands of **Snow Geese with Ross’s Geese, puddle ducks, rails, Marsh Wrens, and American Bitterns** hiding in the vegetation. One April day, 20 Marbled Godwits were observed descending out of the sky to join Black-necked Stilt, White-faced Ibis, and hundreds of shorebirds. **Two miles into “A” Area, there will be a road on the right that leads to an abandoned farm.** Walk it into the surrounding fields. The field on the right with multiflora rose has many sparrows. Listen for quail. One winter a pheasant was seen. The farm field on the left has yielded Savannah Sparrow. To the northwest of this field is a large stand of mature white pine. It can either be walked to from here or visited by esay access from Rt. P. While driving or walking in the **“A” Area watch for a Peregrine Falcon diving at shorebirds or ducks.** Black-crowned Night-Herons perch in the willows early in the morning. Return to Pool One. When the gates are open, two other driving loops are available--Pool 2 and Pool 3. These areas are flooded woodland and may provide species not otherwise evident.

Toilets: 11 privies are on the perimeter of Pool 1; 1 privy is at the headquarters.

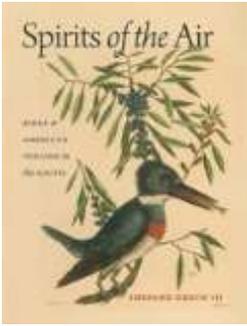
Camping: There are 2 designated camping areas with fire pads, picnic tables, and privies. Primitive camping is allowed at 4 spots along the Pool 1 gravel roads.

Hazards/Limitations: Waterfowl hunting season brings closure to most of the area to all but hunters. Varying water levels determine what species may be present.

**Nearby Birding Sites: Mingo NWR (adjacent), Crowley’s Ridge CA, Otter Slough CA, Lake Wappapello SP, Coldwater CA, Duck Creek (Dark Cypress Unit), Castor River CA.**

## BOOK REVIEW

Bill Eddleman



*Spirits of the Air: Birds & American Indians in the South* By Shepard Krech III, 2009. University of Georgia Press, Athens. Additional details and ordering information at [www.ugapress.org/](http://www.ugapress.org/)

Anyone who has been around me long enough realizes I have a ton of deep interests in addition to birds. One of these interests, a long-standing one that dates back to my teenage years, is an interest in Native American culture and history. So, when a friend told me about this book, I just had to see it. After all, how many books can one find that combine the interests of birds and anthropology? The author is a noted anthropologist who has devoted much of his career to the study of American Indian cultures and how they interacted with the land. I had previously read his well-known *The Ecological Indian*, which painstakingly documents that Indians also had a profound influence on the land and its life—belying the myth of the First Peoples as staunch defenders of the land in its natural state.

The present book grew out of a symposium on American Indians and birds in the South. The event was so well-received that Dr. Krech was encouraged to turn it into a more thorough study. However, the book is far more than a dry academic work. First of all, it is a stunningly beautiful book, with dozens and dozens of photographs, paintings, and drawings of artifacts and Indians going about their lives. Among the paintings included are those done by Audubon, Alexander Wilson, Mark Catesby, George Catlin, and most interestingly, John White. White was an artist and Governor of the ill-fated Roanoke Colony in Virginia. His paintings survive because he went back to England to seek more supplies before the colony disappeared. While his documentation of pre-contact Indian life is priceless, his bird illustrations are often difficult to identify!

**The book's chapters include, first of all, a summary of the birds we know were important to Indians and their abundance at the time of European discovery; and then those on how Indians used birds (with emphasis on Southeastern tribes), including food, clothing, artwork, symbols, in war and peace, and religion; how Native populations**

affected bird populations; and how Indians viewed different species of birds. Because of varied amounts of information available, and the early dying out of some groups, tribes that survived to the present day are emphasized (e.g., Cherokee, Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muskogee or Creek).

My deepest impression after having read the book is how profoundly the extinct (or near-extinct) Ivory-billed Woodpecker figured in Southeastern Indian cultures—it appears through much of the book as a symbol and totem. Others that figure prominently are those one might expect—raptors, especially eagles, swans, herons and egrets for the beauty of their plumage, the Whooping Crane, and most universally (and possibly surprisingly to some), the Wild Turkey. Turkeys were food, as one might expect, but also were used in clothing and in adornment. Leaders of many Southeast tribes, for example, wore capes made of turkey tail feathers as a badge of honor. It is easy to see why Benjamin Franklin favored Wild Turkey as our national bird, in view of how valued it was to native peoples. Other birds were nearly ignored by Indians—many sparrows, for example, were largely considered not worthy of mention, and may not even have been regarded as separate species by some tribes. It is also interesting that Indians traded for foreign feathers very early in the historic period. Thus, one might have found a 16th-Century Indian leader appearing in artwork wearing ostrich or peacock feathers in addition to the native plumes.

If there is a problem with this book, it is the frustration one feels about how much knowledge was lost before it could be recorded. For example, many modern scholars think that native populations may have been reduced by as much as 90% or more by European diseases after first contact. Would that de Soto and the other explorers have been more interested in recording the life ways of the native peoples, and not in gold! Oftentimes, recording of the cultures of the tribes in this area was not undertaken until 300 years after first contact. As a result, in many cases Dr. Krech can only discuss use of birds by certain groups or for certain uses in very broad terms. I also found a few of the illustrations that, in my opinion, showed birds that were **not correctly identified.** (For example, the “Sandhill Crane” in the photo at the top of page 59 looks like a Great Blue Heron to me.)

Nonetheless, if you want a gorgeous book on how some groups of Indians used birds, I can highly recommend this book. The illustrations alone are worth the price, and the information included was often gleaned from sources that are otherwise obscure to most of us.

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