



THE BLUEBIRD

The voice of ASM since 1934

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

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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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Front Cover— This gorgeous male Eurasian Wigeon at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Holt County provided a bonus to those who attended the Spring ASM Meeting on April 30. It is the latest spring record and potential eighth state record if accepted by the Missouri Bird Records Committee. Documented and photographed by Al Smith.



Pectoral Sandpiper, Ellis Bay, Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, St. Charles County, March 28, 2011. Photo by Al Smith

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER—BRUCE BECK



Dear Fellow Birders,

Is it possible not to have birds in the yard?

I confess, I'm a plant man first of all. I retired from University Extension as an agronomist, having worked over thirty years advising crop farmers, cattlemen, and gardeners. Now I am a gardener. I spend some time every day in the yard and garden.

Sharon and I grow vegetables, annual and perennial flowers, berries, grapes and pears, lots of trees and shrubs, a small patch of prairie, a meadow and a bog garden. The gardens keep us busy. They keep us well fed and give us the exercise we need.

Our yard and gardens are also filled with bugs, birds and other critters. **Doesn't every yard have hundreds/thousands of other living creatures?**

The song of a pewee in the treetops early in the morning sets a calming tone for the day. The persistent song of the Indigo Bunting later **in the day reminds me that "my" garden is a shared space.** The call and flight of a Mississippi Kite overhead always make me stop, look up and marvel in their flight. The surprise visit of a Red-headed Woodpecker to the blackberries is a special event. The familiar calls of the chickadees, cardinals, Carolina Wrens, nuthatches and goldfinches **include me in the inclusive family of God's creatures.**

I look forward to my birding trips to the "wild" places to see other species. But from the birds in my yard I see and learn things I don't get to see in my less frequent trips to the wild places. In the yard I see the birds daily and come to know them as individuals and as family groups. I see what they eat, where they nest, what they feed their young, how they interact with each other and with other species, how they molt, how they learn their songs, that some individuals are more adventurous and others more timid. Seeing new behavior every day is as rewarding as adding new species to my life list

every day is as rewarding as adding new species to my life list and yard list.

As a Master Gardener, I have the opportunity to share my appreciation of birds through gardening and by teaching bird-friendly garden design and care. Homeowners frequently ask us to identify a bird or how to attract bluebirds and hummingbirds. We give presentations on gardening for birds and butterflies. All visitors to our gardens see bird-friendly practices such as a wide variety of plant species, including native plants, a diversity of plant types and areas, including tall and shorter trees, lots of shrubs, grouped plantings, water, and even brush piles and weedy plants in inconspicuous areas.

The Audubon Society of Missouri is dedicated to the preservation and protection of birds and other wildlife; to education and appreciation of the natural world; and to effective wildlife and habitat conservation practices. As birders and members of ASM, make it your mission to share that appreciation and knowledge with your family, neighbors and friends.

Gardens and their birds nourish us in body and spirit. Aren't we all blessed?

Bruce E. Beck

President, Audubon Society of Missouri

Spring Meeting Followup Elizabeth Stoakes

The members of Burroughs Audubon Society in Kansas City would like to thank everyone who came to visit us this spring. We enjoyed hosting you and hope you had nothing but great birding and great fellowship!

Each person who registered for the Spring meeting was entitled to receive a souvenir pin. These were distributed at the reception Friday night. If for some reason, you did not receive your pin, please contact Elizabeth Stoakes at 816-554-1956 or lizkvet@yahoo.com. Thank you!

ASM Website Undergoes Growth

Patrick Harrison, Webmaster: mobirds.org

To be launched in mid-August 2011, The Audubon Society of Missouri website (mobirds.org) will have a complete new look and new functionality! The ASM Board voted in September of 2010 to hire Ann Johnson, webmaster of iowabirds.org and Iowa's records committee secretary, to convert the website to a dotNET website. This change will allow for future growth and expansion without having to rely on outdated and arcane programming.

One of the first changes return visitors will notice is that they need to create a new account to login to the secured sections of the site. This login process will link them up to their old account and allow them to see the information **they've submitted to the site and continue to add data to the new site.** The new security does not allow the use of an e-mail address for a user name so that family members who share one will still be able to have their own accounts. An added security measure is the encrypting of passwords so they cannot be stolen by hackers.

A major change in how ASM conducts its financial business is in store. Members and the general public will now have the opportunity to do their business on-line while choosing to make payments by check or with a credit **card through ASM's PayPal account.** Meeting registration, membership dues, and a tax-deductible donation are all available. We hope the use of this technology will encourage more people to join ASM!

While the webmaster, Patrick Harrison, will continue to be able to manage all portions of the site, some sections of the site can also be managed by other individuals. The membership section will be managed by our Membership Chair, Jerry Wade. He will generate mailing labels directly from the website through pages that are available only to him in his role as membership chair. This means it becomes even more important that the members of ASM keep their mailing address information up-to-date. This can be done by themselves online or by sending their information in an email to Jerry Wade who will then update the mailing information.

The Meeting Registration pages will be managed by the ASM Vice President, June Newman. She will create the pages that market the upcoming ASM meetings and will set up the cost structure and online payment links using built-in mechanisms available only to her in her role as Vice President. This will make it possible for users to register for the Fall and Spring Meetings online and to sign up for field trips.

ASM is using PayPal for online transactions, but a user does not need a PayPal account to do this. He or she can simply use their credit card in Pay-

Pal account to do this. He or she can simply use their credit card in PayPal's secure environment. As always, it will continue to be possible to pay by check if that is the option of choice.

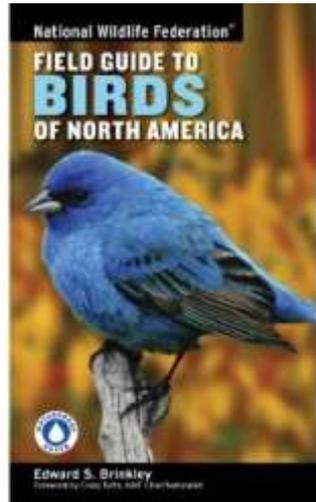
The site will go live mid-August. However, some aspects of the site will still be under-development and will not be available immediately. Some CACHE / SPARKS reports are likely to become available after the site is launched.

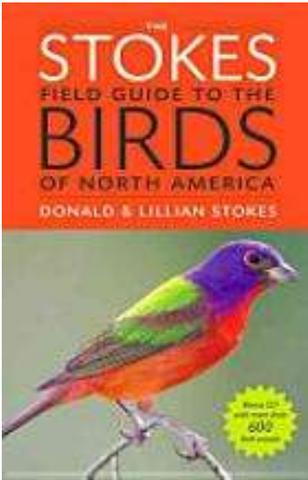
As all the changes that will take place in the site are too numerous to mention here, you are encouraged to watch the ASM Listserve (mobirds-l) and the site itself for more information pertaining to the changes. <http://mobirds.org>.

Review of Two Recently Published Guides: Stokes & National Wildlife Federation Photographic Field Guides

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In recent years there has been a proliferation of field guides that cover just about every nature topic you can imagine—including birds, trees, wildflowers, amphibians, reptiles, dragonflies, damselflies, caterpillars, etc. I think most ornithologists and birders are of the opinion that you can never have too many field guides. For birds, there are three basic types: 1) illustrated **field guides** [see **Kristi Mayo's** excellent review of the new *Crossley ID Guide* in the June 2011 issue of the *Bluebird* (pp. 62-64)], 2) photographic field guides, and 3) specialized guides that cover various groups (e.g. gulls, raptors, wood warblers, hummingbirds, etc.) or advanced tips on identification. There are so many guides available now that it is hard to keep up. Nonetheless, I think the overall goal of authors of bird identification field guides is to improve the identification skills of observers. To that end I think they have been remarkably successful. Additionally, I think various authors attempt to address sugges-





tions by ornithologists and birders on what can be done to improve existing guides. In comparing illustrated field guides to photographic field guides there are obviously pluses and minuses for both. In the past, I think many ornithologists and birders were critical of some of the older photographic guides due to such obvious flaws as incorrect or insufficient lighting, poor angles that prevented important field marks from being highlighted, or that the photographs were too narrow in scope and did not cover the wide range of variation in plumages in immature vs. adult, male vs. female, or alternate

(breeding) vs. basic (winter or non-breeding). On the plus side, however, photographs often depict birds as you see them in the field; birds are often not in the perfect looking plumage that you see in illustrated guides because you will see them in transitional plumages or various stages of molt, or exhibit heavily worn feathers prior to the next molt.

For those of us who have a multitude of the different types of guides outlined above, we may not get overly excited about another photographic field guide. However, some of them are so well done (e.g. Sheri Williamson's 2001 field guide: *Hummingbirds of North America*) that we should take a closer look when new guides become available. Additionally, advancements in camera technology have enabled an increase in the photography of different plumages and rarities. Recently, I came across two photographic guides that I so impressed me that I bought them both: the *National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Birds of North America* by Edward S. Brinkley (2007, 528 pp.), and the *Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America* by Donald and Lillian Stokes (2010, 792pp.). First, many of the photographs in the National Wildlife Federation guide (hereafter NWF guide) show important field marks for alternate and basic plumages and for \$19.95, you can hardly argue the price. This guide provides an excellent introduction. Any field guide where the author emphasizes the importance of taking good field notes along with photographs gets my support. The NWF guide includes a range map that is fairly accurate, photographs of many vagrants and a satisfactory description of the species' song and calls.

The downside to this guide is that (as is often the case for many photographic guides) important field marks are often not visible in the photographs and there is insufficient discussion of important field marks in the text. Another downside is that many of the accidental species that have been recorded in North America only a few times are not included. But given the price and the information in this guide, this book will be a useful addition to your reference collection.

I have saved the best for last. I think most naturalists today are familiar with the Stokes field guide series. I have both the photographic guide to birds in both the eastern and western regions along with their field guide to songs. I also have a copy of their *Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies* and have literally worn it out. Because I had some issues with their first photographic guides to birds, I was not sure what I would find with this updated version that includes all of the North American species in a single volume. I was pleasantly shocked with what I saw! This is surely one of the most incredible compilations of North American birds ever included in one guide! Anyone who Googles this book on the internet will find nothing but **raving reviews of this guide; I cannot disagree with other reviewers' assessments.**

The *Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America* book covers no less than an astounding 854 species of birds in the ABA checklist area and includes photographs of just about every North American vagrant (how about 6 photos each of Red-necked and Little Stints!) recorded through 2010. That alone is worth having the **book on every birder's book shelf. If that was not enough this guide** includes no less than 3,400 photographs which cover alternate, basic, and where appropriate, juveniles plumages; information on variation in plumages of subspecies (e.g., 6 photos of different plumages of Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers); an excellent photo key to the parts of birds in the introduction, depiction of some often difficult to see field marks (e.g., difference in underside view of webbing on tail feathers in Ash-throated vs. Brown-crested Flycatchers); updated taxonomy (e.g. recent split of Pacific Wren from Winter Wren; Juniper and Oak titmice); excellent flight shots of difficult plumages of gulls, terns, raptors and shorebirds); small range maps, and information on songs and calls. There are even 23 photographs showing plumage variation in Red-tailed Hawks. If this all was not enough, the book even comes with a CD that covers 600 bird songs of 150 species- WOW! Although the book retails for the amazing low price of \$24.99, you can currently buy the book at the unheard price of \$15.05 from Amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Stokes-Field-Guide-America-Guides/dp/0316010502/ref=pd_sim_b_3 !!

Surely there must be something wrong with this guide you ask? Well, if I must, I guess the book can be criticized for its weight. **At about 3 pounds, this is not a hip pocket field guide but I don't** think it was ever intended to be. It would have been good to provide wing length of raptors in flight, highlight differences in sizes of male vs. female accipiters, and as with all photographic field guides, not all critical field marks are visible for some species. One issue I do **have is their use of a “quantitative description” where they provide** comparative measurements of various bird parts and attempt to use a more precise language to describe shape. Thus, terms such as “deep-bellied,” “broad-necked,” “blunt-tipped bill,” “defined head,” etc., are used rather than such qualitative terms as “stocky,” “slim,” “heavy billed,” or “plump.”

Additionally, the authors use a lot of adverbs such as “relatively,” “proportionately,” “noticeably,” “fairly,” etc. **While I understand** their intent, I think the authors fell short of their goal because I personally do not believe that some of the descriptions are any more helpful in distinguishing some species from others in the **same group or family. As an example, the phrase “deep-chested, short-tailed” is used for all species of *Catharus*** (e.g., Hermit, Swainson's, etc), *Turdus* (e.g., American Robin, Clay-colored Thrush, etc), *Ixoreus* (Varied Thrush), and *Ridgwayia* (Aztec Thrush) thrushes as well as Northern Wheatear. I would not anticipate that birders would confuse Northern Wheatear with larger thrushes- they are more petite and slimmer with a slimmer bill and shorter tail and their perky, bobbing behavior and striking black and white tail pattern sets them apart from larger thrushes. The authors use the term “broad-necked” **for Wrentit and for Eastern, Western, and Mountain Bluebirds.** While I agree that Wrentits have broad necks, I would not use the same term to describe the necks of North American species of bluebirds.

But these comments should be viewed as nit picking and based on personal preference; they should certainly be viewed as minor complaints compared to the overall excellence of this book. I will conclude by saying emphatically that this field guide should be on the book shelf of every serious ornithologist and birder in North America.

Dreams of a Midcontinent's Sea

Phil Wire

Preface: This was originally written in March of 2008, when I was a senior in college at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. It describes events of the preceding spring in 2007 in Adair and Sullivan counties in north-central Missouri.

I remember the only time I truly felt in their element, an early April morning last year in 2007. I had been watching the number of prairie chickens dwindle slowly during my weekly visits at a lek (a communal display ground where males compete for females), when the time of year was such that just the opposite should have been happening. That particular morning, there was only one bird displaying **on a ridge of corn stubble where previously I'd seen as many as five.** I tried to reason out which would be more heartwrenching: to see one lone chicken, or none at all.

After some time spent observing and photographing the lone chicken from the roadside, a man drove by and stopped on the shoulder of the gravel road and asked if I was looking for chickens. He was a **landowner, he explained, and he'd had prairie chickens displaying** in his pasture. My eyes lit up, but my heart had tempered expectations. One learns early on that reported birds are often mistakes: works of optimism or ignorance, but rarely malice. I myself have been guilty many times. I asked when he saw the birds, expecting **an answer dated by months or years. He answered "Yesterday. I think there were seven."**

He offered to let me walk back into his pasture and take a look. He pointed out the ridge where they were displaying and everything. I thanked him, started the car, and drove over to the gate and parked to begin walking back to the area he described. My expectations, despite my intention to hold them in check, were rising quickly.

The grasslands of this area of north-central Missouri are now hilly pastures, closely grazed by cattle and planted in introduced species of grass. The texture, both to the foot and to the eye, closely resem-

bles that of thousands of acres of closely-cropped lawns. Formerly, grasses would have extended as high as the tip of your nose in places, with other recently burned or recently grazed portions of the prairie no higher than your ankles. Of course, the grazers then were capable of outrunning horses and traveled in herds of innumerable individuals. American bison. Their docile ruminant cousins now occupy the land, but only on our schedule, grazing in the pastures we so choose, and usually choose poorly. The free-running bison and elk herds that shaped the dynamics of grass and grass-dependent species had no such restriction. Thus, they were free to let the range recover, and virtually always did so.

The ground under my feet feels and looks scarred, as years of over-grazing has let rain carve out channels of varying size into the highly erodable soil. Without the long prairie grasses, the soil has lost its shield from the elements. The roots cling to the soil, but cannot hold it all in place. Yet my heart still sees the landscape with different eyes—the openness, the vastness, held in check only by the occasional trees along the fencelines and the barbed-wire fences that partition the former prairie into neat little parcels. It is toward one of those fences that I now walk in a southwesterly direction, looking, listening, and contemplating. Sparrows kick up from the grasses as I walk, and my eyes constantly wander looking for hints of the birds I really came to see. As I approach the fence, two things strike me. At my feet are several feathers. Only a few inches long, they bear the telltale brown and cream-colored barring of a prairie chicken. They are positioned such that my brain is at an impasse. Near enough to the fence to suggest that yet another prairie chicken had succumbed to a fence collision, these feathers nonetheless gave me an unwavering sense of hope. They were scattered as if the wind had blown them away from elsewhere, and one of the telltale signs of lekking grounds are the scattered feathers that males lose in their disputes over choice pieces of territory. And the second piece of sensory evidence that confronted me at that moment? The low, haunting sounds coming from just over the next ridge were gradually **sounding less like the wind and more like the telltale “booming” of the male prairie chicken.**

People refer to prairie chicken displaying as “booming,” which I have never understood. The sound couldn’t be farther from booming. The sound they make is a low “oo-looo-hooo” that sounds as if it emanates from blowing across the top of a glass bottle. It blends in so well with the prairie soundscape that I often don’t notice as it fades into the auditory backdrop of the grassland morning. Occasional cackles and caws accompany the moaning sounds, and to me, these

sounds do more to anthropomorphize the chickens into creatures I understand and feel connected to than anything else. Perhaps it is because it so closely resembles the laughter of a few people I have known, at least in the way I hear it.

As I slowly walked up the backside of the ridge that April morning, I felt more relief than joy. The chickens had earned a temporary reprieve from their sentence. I hopped a fence and peered over the top of the ridge, which was now visible. Confronting me at a comfortable distance were several male prairie chickens. They turned to face me, and then quickly continued turning, foot-stomping, booming, and otherwise defending their own special piece of the hilltop, though I got the sense they kept one eye on me. These birds seemed to anchor the panorama directly onto the hilltop, as if every bit of energy in the landscape was focused through this avian lens. The desire to stand there for hours was nearly unshakable. The gentle slope of the **ridge ensured I had a view from far enough away that I wouldn't** flush the male chickens. Still, I knew better. I was too close. Males will obstinately hold steady as observers close in on a lek, while the females they dance for will avoid any sort of danger near the lek at all costs, including forgoing mating and ultimately nesting. An intruder standing there, even at a distance as I was, would prevent hens from coming to do what was necessary to make sure this dance would continue next spring.

To this day I have no sense of how long I stood there, though it **couldn't have been more than a minute or two. Every time I think** about it I wish I had stood and watched longer, yet I fully understand, perhaps now more than ever, that I needed to leave. The whole episode melts together in my brain to sufficiently muddy the crystal-clear waters of actuality and replace them with memories of longing and hope. Was I as near the birds as I remember, or have I placed myself there in some symbolic gesture? Were the chickens still actively displaying in my presence, or were they simply holding fast and watching? My physical memory only has bits and pieces, but I have never been too concerned with that. The memory of what I felt in my heart sits over and above anything else about the **experience. I wasn't hiding in a blind or viewing with a spotting scope from** a roadside pulloff. I was among them—naked and exposed—with some of the most pure creatures on the planet. Every scar on the landscape, and the corresponding scars in my consciousness, seemed to heal as I stood upon that ground. Logic and other forms of rational thought dictate that a few simple birds cannot transform a land-

scape into something infinitely more complete than it is without **them present. That myth, among other reasons, is why I've always felt that romanticism is nearer the conservationist's heart than any** other intellectual framework that can be placed upon a landscape. Being from a suburban area, I grew up with no knowledge of the power of a landscape and its creatures upon a psyche. Going to a college with mostly suburban and urban students, I hear many disparaging comments about how northeast Missouri is a wasteland. **To listen to them, it's a veritable arctic nightmare in the winter with** no redeeming cultural qualities at any time of year. With time I grow progressively more frustrated with these comments. To paraphrase what someone more famous and intelligent than myself said, in the end, we only protect what we understand. To see an entire generation of my peers who, for the most part, remain blissfully ignorant about the natural world and its plight, tears at my heart on a daily basis. As with many places in Missouri, there are a few places here with truly landscape-scale habitat, degraded as it may be—but the closest most of my peers get to it is a man-made beach at a man-made reservoir. If we believe any place around here to be a wasteland, it is because we have made it so—both within our minds, and because of our collective action.

I used to wonder how I came to be so enamored with prairie chickens. But upon research, reflection, and experience, I realized that I was framing the question improperly. How can one not be enamored by prairie chickens? Or Cerulean Warblers for that matter? Or hellbenders and the near-immaculate Ozark streams they inhabit? No video game, no party, no social organization, and so on and so forth, **can ever give back to a person's consciousness what a deep connection** to a landscape does. I see that April morning not as a specific time, but as a place within myself—a place I know very may well only exist within myself as the prairie chicken continues its decline and probable extirpation from the area. I cannot claim that I have a lifelong connection to this landscape. All I can say is that I have seen what it may be, and I long desperately for it. And as the most precious part of that landscape slips away like sand through my fingers, I struggle to cope.

It is only in this frame of reference that people can understand why the loss of a creature like the prairie chicken could weigh so heavily on someone. But often, I feel resentment at having to attempt to set such a framework in the first place. Does a prairie chicken not have an inherent right to exist? Because of their fondness for a habitat we have no use for, are we free to kick them to the trashcan of natural history? Will my grandchildren ever hear the mislabeled sound of

“booming,” or will they instead be perfectly content to entertain themselves with some currently unimaginable level of realism in a video game? I think I know the answer, but it’s too painful to concede it.

That morning after leaving the lek, I began walking back to my car with spirits decidedly on the upswing. I eventually found a spot along the road where I could see the lek through my spotting scope from a distance that was clearly far enough away not to upset the chickens. As it stands now, despite some pretty intensive searching this year, I cannot find one chicken. Interestingly enough, coinciding with their disappearance, I have stopped dreaming about them as well. They used to show up in my dreams periodically. In one particularly haunting one last year, I watched as they morphed into people, and then looked at me wistfully, as if to ask for help. I’d love to see them again and tell them help is coming, but I’m not that naïve anymore. Any help that arrives will be too little, and far too late.

The world will not mourn for local populations of prairie chickens, nor the other untold numbers of creatures who have met and are yet to meet their demise at our hands. But someone probably should.

Epilogue: A few weeks after this was written, I found two booming male chickens in the area. They flew together from hilltop to hilltop, displaying for a while and then moving on. To my knowledge, prairie chickens have not been seen in the area since.



Robert G. Fisher, A Man of Many Hats

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Many people who knew Bob had actually never met him. Instead, they knew him through the Missouri LISTSERV (www.mobirds.org) as an avid birder who had a great willingness to teach, share, and express his love of birding with those who were less knowledgeable. Often, those who read his postings immediately became students at the first word written. His poems he shared filled in the cracks when birding was slow and flooded us with an elevated sense of discovery when birding was good.

Bob was born in New York City and spent his youth on Long Island, NY. He received his law degree from Columbia University and he served everyone from corporate law at a high-powered New York **City law firm to the nation's poor in court. He appeared before the US Supreme Court and taught at two law schools.** On May 13, 2011 he passed away at the age of 76.

To hold all the hats that Bob wore would require several large trunks. In researching and interviewing, I learned that a life of many hats is a life fulfilled. Bob was an avid birder. He was possibly **the last person to have reliably heard the Bachman's Warbler in 1962 while he was vacationing in South Carolina. The Bachman's Warbler used to nest in the canebrakes of south Missouri. This habitat was largely lost because farmers cut the cane to use as winter livestock forage. As a child, Bob identified an American Golden Plover during a field trip at Plum Island, Massachusetts. This bird would be identified later, in the same spot, by Ludlow Griscom – the man who practically "invented" bird watching and was a mentor to Roger Tory Peterson. Bob's identification of the plover, the bird that**

was challenged by everyone in the group, was confirmed later that day when the two groups met. Bob considered this one of his greatest triumphs as a child and as a birder.

Bob was a writer. He wrote essays, a book, and poetry. The Independence Examiner interviewed Bob a few years ago. The heading of the article read *Former Attorney is a Published Poet. "Independence resident Bob Fisher has had poetry published under the pen name Robert G. Fisher in Present Magazine, The Lyric Poetry Magazine, The Mid America Poetry Review and Poetry Miscellany...Fisher has avidly read and written poetry for about 10 years."* When asked where he gathered his inspiration, it was no surprise that one of his answers was "nature."

Bob volunteered as an ambulance attendant, play room supervisor **in a hospital's pediatric unit, and a hospital chaplain. He served on** the boards of numerous civic and community service organizations. He presided over The Burroughs Audubon Society, the greater Kansas City chapter of the National Audubon Society (www.burroughs.org); a drug rehabilitation agency; a Christian counseling center; a Kiwanis Club; a political club; the Advisory Board of a Salvation Army Corps. He spent a lot of time in a maximum security prison as the organizer of a convict self-help rehabilitation project, and in a mental hospital as a social work student. He was founder of two political organizations and an elected Democratic County Committeeman. He led campaigns to acquire a wildlife sanctuary, to build a City Hall, to prevent a city from losing 38% of its territory, and to erect a homeless shelter. Someone once delegated him the task of providing the music for a church congregation. **When he couldn't get any volunteers, he sang a solo. After that, volunteers were abundant!**

Perhaps what we know Bob best for though, was his birding. He birded in 49 states and 8 Canadian provinces. Bob was closely involved in the lives of his two daughters and spent quality time with them, especially when it came to vacationing which often coincided with birding. Whatever the destination, there would be camping and things to do, but mostly because somebody had spotted some rare bird in the area. Gary Johnson, a close friend who birded with Bob **said that when they birded, Gary was Bob's ears and Bob was Gary's eyes.** Because Bob was deaf in one ear, he used to bribe his daughter **with Hershey bars because he couldn't hear the direction the birds were coming from. He'd recognize the calls but needed someone to point to the source so he could see the bird.** He always had patience with those who were less knowledgeable. In the early 1970s, Bob

birded regularly with Mick McHugh, Chris Hobbs, and Mel Cooksey within a 100-mile radius of Kansas City. Often birded were Marais Des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge, the Kansas Corps of Engineers Lakes, Taberville Prairie, Shell Osage Wildlife Management Area, Montrose Conservation Area, and Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge. They also frequented Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in central Kansas. Bob was a member of the Missouri Bird Records Committee and was quite an environmentalist. **Mel Cooksey said, “He was a brilliant individual. He was ‘old school’ when it came to birding and often broke away from college to chase rarities. He was a very good birder. He was a shorebird expert who knew molt sequences and vocalizations and was a great pelagic birder. He was a very distinguished, wise old barrister.”**

Mel remembers, “When birding with Bob out on the open road, he was one of a kind. He described himself as having an abrasive personality to those who didn’t know him. He even had a scowl, but he had a zany slap-stick style of humor. He had personal witticisms and because of this, he was great on birding trips because he never wore out.” Laughing, Mel said, “Everyone expected Bob to die a fiery death while driving out on the open interstate. So I was very pleased to hear he went peacefully.” I didn’t know Bob. I never birded with him. But even I, Christine Kline, beginner birder and relatively new member of Audubon had heard of Bob Fisher’s driving. He was a terrible driver! Once, he backed his vehicle into a lake and had to be towed out using cables because he was submerged. He totaled a car trying to ford a deep stream. He backed up once to turn around and hit the same pole at least ten times as he drove forward, drove back, drove forward, drove back...finally he said “What is that?!” Bob even overturned in a ditch with Paul Lehman, top birder and field guide author aboard. I suppose it’s not surprising that when he ventured out with a group to go birding and offered to drive, there were several resounding “NO’s” from the group each expressing how much they would “love to drive!”

Once when Bob and Mel were out birding, some crazy local drove out and around Bob’s vehicle, driving over the speed limit, and drove right into the water ahead of them. The two laughed. Later, in the same spot, another local drove up behind them. Mel asked Bob, “Do you suppose we could guide them into the water too? Would that be illegal?” Bob responded, “Stupidity is not illegal. Therefore, becoming an accessory to stupidity is also not illegal.”

The other humorous sides of Bob Fisher were when he played bridge and poker until dawn, ending the poker game ten cents ahead. He

once beat a former United States Table Tennis Champion ten games in a row (with a 15 point spot), winning 1,024 sodas from him. He made a lot of winning tennis shots but also hit the ball into the net more times than he could count. He capsized a sailboat and pitched a tent atop a colony of fire ants. However, he had so much more to trump these humorous instances – he had watched autopsies, held the hands of dying patients, preached sermons, published articles, wrote poetry and a memoir, exhibited sculpture, photographed birds, studied yoga, built a bookcase, shingled a roof, gardened, raised tropical fish and snorkeled in the Caribbean, was one of the first people to own SCUBA equipment, saw the aurora borealis, a polar bear on the arctic pack ice, a total eclipse of the sun, a US city under **martial law, his daughters' first breaths, and the cathedral at Chartres.** Bob did all those activities despite having polio as a child.

In Bob's own words, "I have too many friends to mention by name. I am not afraid to die. I have had a great life and have been privileged to share it with all of you. Now, it's time to find out what comes next. I might have made a bigger splash, but my life could not have been much more interesting." (Bob wrote his own eulogy and planned his funeral.)

Burroughs Audubon, the Greater Kansas City Chapter of the National Audubon Society has established The Robert G. Fisher Youth **Education Fund.** While we won't be teaching our youth Bob's driving habits, we will be opening up the world of birding to young people, inspiring a new generation of potential birders, who will join us to **chase the rarities and identify birds by sound and sight.** We'll encourage them to travel to 49 states and 8 Canadian provinces to build a life list, just as Bob did. Maybe some of these youth will order their hamburgers in memory of Bob on their birding trips – a plain burger on a bun with nothing on it. Evidently, it was quite difficult to get a plain hamburger and this would infuriate him. Bob would say, "How hard can it be? Did I ask for mustard? Did I ask for ketchup?!" Mel Cooksey said, "It was amazing how quick we could go from peaceful to totally infuriated in a matter of seconds."

Bob's last posting to the Missouri LISTSERV was posted on April 2, 2011. It read, "*Gary Johnson and I birded Squaw Creek, then Bob Brown today. The managers of Squaw Creek have done controlled burns of grass and cattail stalks, and the water is way down. Therefore, there is good shore bird habitat all over the place and good visibility -- for the time being at least. There are Coots everywhere and lots of waterfowl. Waterfowl included groups of Snow Geese walking on the dikes, most of which were very tame and included Ross' Geese,*

which could be viewed at close range. Also a couple of Trumpeter Swans and a larger group of swans that took off before we could look for Tundras among them. In general, the ducks are thinning out, except for lots of Blue-winged Teal and Shovelers coming through, but there are still thousands present. We met Doug Willis on the dike. He had arrived at earliest light and found a shorebird bonanza in Pintail Pool, including the following: Killdeer, Am. Golden Plover, G. Yellowlegs, L. Yellowlegs, DUNLIN, Pectoral S., Baird's S., Least S., L-B Dowitcher, W. Snipe. We eventually found all of the shorebirds Doug reported, except for the Dunlin. Doug also reported seeing two Sandhill Cranes early in the morning and 2 NEOTROPIC CORMORANTS at Bob Brown. He showed us good photos of the NE-COs. We went on the Bob Brown. We found 8-9 D-C Cormorants where Doug had seen 25. They took off, and one seemed smaller than the others in flight. However, we could not be sure. All in all, a lovely day. Spring is happening. Bob Fisher – *Independence, Missouri.*”

To donate to the Robert G. Fisher Youth Education Fund, send your tax deductible donations to Burroughs Audubon Society, C/O Marilyn Koshland, 24406 Timberlake Trail, Greenwood, Missouri 64034. Please memo: Robert G. Fisher.

Excerpt from Bob Fisher's "The Ornithological Year: September"

September should be one of our most active birding months. The fall warbler, vireo and flycatcher migrations hit their peaks in September. The shorebird migration, which has been underway since early July, tapers off rapidly during this month.... Most of the Broad-winged Hawk migration occurs in later in the month.... Several factors make September a different birding experience from its spring counterpart, May. Passerine (song bird) migrants are not singing. The trees are fully leafed out, and the birds are difficult to see. Many come south in drab fall plumage, which makes them more difficult to identify. If May is an introductory course in how to bird, September is at a more advanced level. But there are compensations. Several times as many individuals of a species come south as went north. Not only do most of the adults return. Their offspring follow....” The transition from summer to fall occurs in September, and it is often quite noticeable in the bird species one sees at the beginning and at the end of the month. Early September is often hot. It is an excellent time to see *Empidonax* flycatchers. By late September.... sparrows, thrushes and tanagers begin to show up in numbers. Weather makes a big difference in September. Cold fronts from the northwest bring waves of new migrants. The whole process seems to slow down when periods of hot, still weather occur. Altogether, September is one of our most interesting birding months. Enjoy!

SPRING 2011 SEASONAL REPORT

JOSHUA UFFMAN

The second consecutive harsh winter appeared to be wrapping up as we entered March. Temperatures began to warm and the weather was rather pleasant. However, by March 13-14 winter returned as 3-6 inches of snow fell across most of central Missouri, with the heaviest amounts, 9-10 inches, in Callaway County. This was quickly followed by a warm front that brought temperatures into the upper **70's for most of the state in the third week. It was also during this period that the Golden-Crowned Sparrow in Osage** was last seen. However, winter again returned on March 26 when 2-5 inches fell across the central and east-central parts, with some areas receiving 6-7 inches. By the end of March precipitation totals were below normal in the north and west-central parts and above normal for the rest of the state.

April began with record low temperatures. But again, the see-saw weather pattern brought warmer air. The temperatures were 5-7 degrees above the norm April 3-10 **and even reached the low 90's** in some locales. The second half of the month was much cooler with less than average precipitation totals reported in the north. However, it was quite the opposite in the south where a week of heavy rainfall starting on April 21 affected numerous areas, primarily south and east of the I-44 corridor. Poplar Bluff alone received 18.1 inches during this period, while most other areas received 10 to 15 inches. The torrential rainfall resulted in widespread flash flooding and the closure of approximately 400 state roads. It was also during this period, April 22, that an EF4 tornado cut a 22-mile path across north St. Louis County, including Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. Remarkably, there were no fatalities.

Like April, May began with temperatures being unseasonably cool, averaging nearly 10 degrees below normal, and then soared to record highs on May 9 -11. Cold fronts and warm fronts continued to battle through the end of the month. As a result, May 2011 will most likely be remembered for the severe weather that occurred across much of the southern half of the state. The most notable storm on May 22, when an EF-5 tornado devastated the Joplin area and resulted in over 150 fatalities and at least 1000 injured. Toward the end of the month a surge of food became available for many of the nesting species, when the emergence of 13-year cicadas (Brood 19) began.

So, what about the birds this season? A Eurasian Wigeon at Squaw Creek NWR in Holt County made those in attendance at the ASM spring meeting very happy. A breeding-plumaged Roseate Spoonbill at Duck Creek Conservation Area was a first in modern times for the spring season. Anhingas had a very strong showing in southeast Missouri, while ibis and godwits were found at numerous locations statewide. Single Burrowing Owls visited the Southwest and the Southeast. Very low numbers of thrushes and warblers were reported in the St. Louis area this spring. Comments received for this report indicate that other areas had similar experiences. In **regards to Boone County, Paul McKenzie explains, “Overall, one of the worst migration seasons I can ever remember in Missouri—some birds were early, some species I completely missed; others were only observed in noticeably low numbers.” Tim James in the Southeast says, “There seemed to be a very low number of all warblers for the area. I was able to locate most of the usual species, but I had to really search.”**

WATERFOWL THROUGH GREBES

In 2010, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck became Missouri’s newest nesting species. This spring singles arrived near Mosby *Clay* 23–29 Apr (KM, DWi-ph., m. ob.) and another on 9 May in *Greene* (GS, CBu, GSa). The season high count of 4 was in *Dunklin* on 26 May (TJ-ph.) where the only 4 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were also at on 30 Apr (TJ-ph.). The high count for Greater White-fronted Geese was 200+ on 7 Mar in *Nodaway* (DE, m. ob.). Late individuals included a flyover at OSCA on 19 May (CBa) and 1 at MNWR on 27 May (SD). The only high Snow Goose count was an estimated 10,000 near Kirksville *Adair* on 2 Mar (PL, m. ob.). It is not unusual for Snow Geese to linger in the Northwest, often because they are sick or wounded from the spring hunting season, and this May was no different: 25 at SCNWR 3 May (KM) with a few remaining there through at least 21 May (DWi); and 25 recorded during the *Holt* NAMC on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). However, the latest were 2 in the Southeast at OSCA on 27 May (CBa). This is also where the last 7 **Ross’s Geese** in the east were on 7 Apr (CBa). However, in the opposite corner of the state they remained into May: 2 at SCNWR 30 Apr–3 May (MT, KM) with 1 remaining until through 14 May (JU, DW); and 1 at NVCA 5 May (MR, JK). Departure dates for Cackling Goose are still being defined in Missouri. There were 8 in *Nodaway* on 7 Mar (DE, m. ob.) while 8 at DCL on 14 Apr seemed exceptionally late (CBa*). Trumpeter Swan reports included a single at Cooley Lake CA *Clay* on 11 Mar (KM); the season high count (13) at the MODOT mitigation site *Livingston* 12 Mar (SK); and the season’s last (2) were at SCNWR on 7 Apr (KM). A high count of 92 Wood Duck was made during the *Holt* NAMC 14 May (DE, m. ob.). Gadwall numbers typically peak in late March – so counts of 40 at SCNWR on 3 May (KM) and 125 in *Holt* on 14 May indicate flocks might have headed north a bit late this year (DE, m. ob.). Also found

during the *Holt* NAMC were 2 apparent Mallard × Gadwall hybrids (DE, m. ob.). Attendees of the ASM's spring meeting were rewarded with a drake Eurasian Wigeon, the latest spring and potential 8th state record, at SCNWR 30 Apr - 2 May (AI Smith-ph**, MT**, EW**, m. ob.). Twelve American Wigeon were still at SCNWR on 3 May (KM), 6 total across multiple locations in Holt 14 May (DE, m. ob.), and less expected were 2 at OSCA 14 May (CBa-ph.). In *Holt*, a count of 410 Blue-winged Teal was made on 14 May (DE, m. ob.) and 3 were late at Weldon Spring CA St. Charles on 28 May (MT). Single drake Cinnamon Teal visited eastern Missouri, where quite rare: 2 Apr at CBCA (JU-ph.) and 24-25 Apr at Voelkerding Slough Wetland Preserve Warren (Jim Jackson, Don Hays). At SCNWR 1-2 males were observed 7-23 Apr (DWi, KM, m. ob.), with one continuing through at least 21 May (DWi-ph.). High counts of Northern Shovelers included 200+ on 6 Apr (DE, m. ob) and 400 on 5 May (MR, MA), both *Nodaway*; and 108 in *Holt* 14 May (DE, m. ob.). Five Northern Pintail and 23 Green-winged Teal were in *Holt* on 14 May (DE, m. ob.) and a single m Northern Pintail was still at OSCA on the final day of the season (CBa-ph.). Peak counts of Canvasback included 250 on 1 Mar at FGCA (SK) and 200+ in *Nodaway* on 5 Mar (DE, m. ob.). A male remained at OSCA through 14 May (CBa-ph.). Two to 3 Redheads were still at SCNWR 3-5 May (KM, MR, MA). The season high count of 5000 Ring-necked Duck occurred at FGCA on 1 Mar (SK, m. ob.), while 1900+ were in *Nodaway* on 5 Mar (DE, m. ob.). The last to pass through included 10 at SCNWR 3 May (KM), 1 south of Palmetto Greene 4 May (GSw, AK, GSa), and a f at LC 21 May (LL). A single Greater Scaup at EBCA 14 May was three days later than listed in R&E (RD, PMC**). A female Surf Scoter was in *Nodaway* 30 Mar–6 Apr (DE, m. ob.), an adult m White-winged Scoter continuing from the winter season at RMBS was last seen 5 Mar (PL, m. ob.), and 5 White-winged were at FL on 1 Apr (CBu). A late sub-adult male Long-tailed Duck was a nice find at EBCA on 11 May (Kathleen Anderson-ph., EW). The only high count for Bufflehead was 250+ in *Nodaway* on 30 Mar (DE, m. ob.). Single females at FGCA on 14 May (SK, June Newman) and at LC on 21 May (LL) were not in a hurry. May Hooded Merganser sightings included 12 on 3 May (KM) and 2 on 13 May (MR, JK, JB), both sightings at SCNWR; and 2 at BM 13 May (MR, JK, JB); and 13 at FRCA Bates 27 May. A pair of Common Mergansers was late at FGCA on 14 May (SK, June Newman) and another apparent pair was at HSL through at least 26 May (LL). Forty Red-breasted Mergansers at RMBS on 12 Mar was the only high count (MT). The last were 3 females at RMBS on 1 May (JU) and 2 others in *Holt* 14 May (DE, m. ob.). High counts of Ruddy Ducks in *Nodaway* included 310 on 30 Mar and 453 on 6 Apr (DE, m. ob.). The last Ruddy Ducks included a single on 26 May at OSCA (CBa) and 2 males at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* the

following day (KM). The only Greater Prairie-Chicken report came from DR where at least 5 continued as of 9 Apr (SK, MM, TM). Twelve Common Loons at Bull Shoals Lake *Taney* on 23 Mar was the only high count (Clark Creighton). There were four May sightings, when they are rare but regularly occur: 1 at OSCA 6 May (CBa); 2 in flight at Finger Lakes SP *Boone* 14 May (EW, Chris Corben); 2 at FL 16 May (CBu); and another, possibly 2, at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* 27 May (KM). A meager 6 Horned Grebes at Creve Coeur Lake *St. Louis* on 13 Mar was the eastern high count (PL, Bryan Prather). In the west no high counts were received, but 2 at SL on 29 Apr at SL were the last seen (KM). In *Nodaway*, **DE's students were able to take note** of the differences between a single Horned Grebe and the first Eared Grebe of the season on 30 Mar. In the Southwest 3 Eared Grebes were at FL 31 Mar–1 Apr (GSa, CBu). Other reports included a single at SL on 29 **Apr and this spring's last individual at SCNWR on 3 May (KM).**

CORMORANTS THROUGH IBIS

Those who were patient enough to pick through cormorants this spring located at least five more potential Neotropical Cormorant records. In the east, where they are accidental transients; 3 were mixed with 70+ Double-crested Cormorants at Robert G. Delaney Lake CA *Mississippi* on 22 Apr (CBa-ph.***) and another was with 4 Double-crested at OSCA on 14 May (CBa). In *Holt*: 2 were record early on 2 Apr at BBCA (DWi-ph.); 1 at SCNWR 4-5 May (KM, WW**); and another, possibly a different bird, in *Holt* on 14 May (DWi-ph., DE). 500+ Double-crested Cormorants was the only large count received (DE, m. ob.). Anhinga observations have increased across the Mississippi Lowlands the last few springs. This spring was no different with five separate sightings: 1 in flight at MNWR-Flat



This female Anhinga was one of 13 observed in flight over Otter Slough Conservation Area, Stoddard County, on 21-22 May by Josh and Hannah Uffman, Joe Eades, and Chris Barrigar. Photo by Josh Uffman.

Banks on 9 Apr (RD, Kyle McCommis); a f at Big Oak Tree SP *Mississippi* 22 Apr (CBa); 10 along St. Francis Levee Road *Dunklin* on 18 May (TJ-ph.); and 13 (the 2nd highest count in modern times) at OSCA 21 May (JU-ph., Hannah Uffman), with a f there the following day (CBa, Joe Eades). 400+ American White Pelicans were at EBCA Mar through Apr (EW) and 205 made the *Holt* NAMC on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). 160 Great Egret at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* on 27 May was the highest count received (KM). In the Northwest, 8 Snowy Egrets were at SCNWR on 3 May (KM) and 2 were at HL on 26 May (JH). In the Southwest only a single Snowy was observed 4-5 May near Palmetto *Greene* (GSw, AK, GSa). The first and only count of multiple Little Blue Herons (8) was at OSCA on 8 Apr (CBa). All other reports were of singles: near Palmetto *Greene* 4 May (GSw, AK, GSa); SCNWR 14 May (JU, DWi); 27 May at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* (KM); and separate sightings on 28 May in *Callaway* (RD) and *St. Charles* (MT). The first Cattle Egret was in *Vernon* on 10 Apr (GSa) and in the North on 12 Apr at SCNWR (LL, SK). The only high count received (15) was in *Greene* on 5 May (GSw) and the last sighting was a single in *Vernon* on 27 May (KM). Single Green Heron in *Ste. Genevieve* on 9 Apr (MT) and in *Bollinger* on 12 Apr (MH) were the first two to arrive. A Black-crowned Night-Heron hunting RMBS at sunrise on 2 Apr was the first to be spotted this season, but a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Fasnicht Park *Greene* on 18 Mar was nine days ahead of the early date listed in R&E (Dorothy Thurman*). Other Yellow-crowned Night-Heron sightings included 2 sitting on a nest at BSF on 7 May (GSw, m. ob.) and 1 at FP on 14 May (MT). Ibis were well represented across the state this spring. One of the more notable occurrences this spring, possibly a result of the severe flooding of the Mississippi River at points south of St. Louis, was the stunning photograph taken by Tim James of an unprecedented 226+ White Ibis in flight along St. Francis Levee Road *Dunklin* on 26 May (TJ-ph.). This same day a group estimated at no fewer



The air in far southeastern Missouri and adjacent Arkansas was full of White Ibis in late May. This flock was part of the 226+ observed by Tim James in *Dunklin* County along the St. Francis Levee Road on May 26. A total of 6000 was observed the same day in White County, Arkansas.

Photo by Tim James.

than 6000 individuals was observed in *White* Arkansas (Kenny Nichols). Joe Eades observed an adult and an imm. at OSCA on 22 May. A Glossy Ibis with at least 30 White-faced Ibis were the first of each to arrive 11-12 Apr at SCNWR (DWi-ph., LL). Twenty to 30 White-faced remained at SCNWR through 3 May (MT, KM) and 8 were still there 14 May (JU, DWi). Other Glossy Ibis found away from the Mississippi River included: 1 with 7 White-faced at ML on 18 Apr (SK, LL, MC); 2 at FGCA on 23 Apr with 14 White-faced (SK, m. ob.); and a sub-adult with 26 White-faced in *Holt* 14 May (DE, m. ob.). In the Southeast, where Glossy were once the more expected dark ibis, 2-3 were with 10 White-faced on 14-15 May (CBa-ph., TJ), with at least 1 Glossy remaining through 17 May (CBa). Additional White-faced Ibis reports are as follows: 9 at EBCA 21 Apr (EW, PK); 1 in Palmetto *Greene* 28 Apr (GSa, Bob Brown); 2 at DCCA *Bollinger* on 8 May (CBa-ph.); 1 at LS 14 May (Dean Rising); 8 at SLNWR 9 May (SK); and 1 in *Dunklin* along CR 723 on 21 May (TJ). Never an easy identification, the last *Plegadis* sp. (dark ibis) of the season (8) went unidentified at FRCA – Unit 2 *Bates* 27 May (KM). Wrapping up the waders is a first for modern times in the spring: An adult breeding-plumaged Roseate Spoonbill (acc.), the 11th state record, at DCCA– Unit A on 10 Apr (RD-ph.***, CBa-ph., EW).



An adult Roseate Spoonbill in breeding plumage provided a modern first for spring in Missouri and eleventh state record overall. The bird was found by Ryan Douglas at Duck Creek Conservation Area, Bollinger County, on April 10. Photo by Ryan Douglas.

VULTURES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Black Vultures (3) were noted in northern *Greene* on 17 Mar (CBu) and 1 at the Camden Service Center *Camden* on 24 May (EW) – both are locations where this species is not typically observed. High counts included 12 at Lake Taneycomo *Taney* on 20 Mar (JU) and 30 at the Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery *Taney* on 21 Mar (JU). In the East, 4 were recorded at mile marker 150 along I-55 on 18 Mar (PL, Jean Leonatti) and 7 were tallied across *Ste. Genevieve* and *Perry* on 22 May (JU, Hannah Uffman). Turkey Vultures returned the first week of March as usual in north-central Missouri, with a kettle of approximately 50 soaring over the hills of the Thompson River *Livingston* on 17 Mar (SK). However, KM had a different vantage point in *Clay* where they seemed late with the first one noted 17 Mar. The first three Ospreys of the season included 1 flying over Lake Taneycomo *Taney* on 22 Mar (JU), 1 in *Christian* 27 Mar (Marilyn Owens), and 1 in central Missouri *Camden* 4 Apr (MH). The only other Osprey mentioned was a single at SNR on 4 & 7 May (Don Hays, MT). Mississippi Kites, all singles, were found in four southwest locations: *Christian* 30 Apr (DB), *Newton* 4 & 25 May (LH, JC), 8 May *Jasper* (LH), and at LS 10 May (GSw, CBu). Slightly further north where they breed, 2 were at FRCA-Unit 2 *Bates* on 27 May (KM). In *St. Louis*, the seasonal high count (8) was recorded in Webster Groves on 22 May (PL) and 2 were likely nesters in University City on 29 May (MT). A peak count of 25 Bald Eagles was tallied at **FGCA on 1 Mar (SK). A nest containing 2 young at the Blaine's residence** *Greene* was observed on 4 Apr (Jan Carter) and 9 were found on 27 May across four different locations at FRCA-Unit 2 *Bates* (KM). Northern Harriers seemed scarce to KM, with an observation of only 1 the entire season, 7 Apr at BBKA. May sightings included a female at SCNWR 13 May (MR), one at OSCA 22 May (CBa), and a female at PSP 25 May (SK). A nesting pair of **Cooper's Hawks** was at Mack Porter Park *Clay* on 11 May (KM). In the north, 8 Red-shouldered Hawks were at PSP on 2 Mar (SK) and at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* **another was heard, but the previous year's nest was** found vacant on 29 Apr (KM). The first Broad-winged Hawk was seen at HRCA on 5 Apr (CBa) and 6 were seen at BSF on 7 Apr (GSa, CBu, Ruth Grant). Further north, solo birds were at HSP and Emmenger Park *St. Louis* on 9 Apr (MT). Just six days after the first Broad-winged was found another was seen sitting on a nest in *Greene* on 13 Apr (CBu). A single Swainson's Hawk had returned a little early to its nesting grounds on 22 Mar at the Springfield Industrial Park *Greene* (CBu) and by 18 Apr three nests were already occupied in *Greene* (CBu). Peak movement occurred around 11 Apr when 6, including a dark-morph, were in *Holt* (DWi). Other western Missouri reports included: 1 at Taberville Prairie CA *St. Clair* 8 Apr (SD); 1 perched on ant mounds in the prescribed burned areas at DR on 14 & 18

Apr (TN); 3 during the *Holt* NAMC (DE, m. ob.) and 1 in *Platte* (JU), both 14 May. At the eastern edge of their migratory path, 1 was spotted at EBCA on 5 May (RD). Single Rough-legged Hawks were observed at LC 3 Mar (LL), at the *Clay* Regional Airport on 26 Mar (KM), and a very late observation for this arctic breeder at FGCA 23 Apr (SK, TM**, m. ob.). Merlin were only reported in the west, all singles: at Browning Lake *Buchanan* 12 Mar (JH); one at ML that was seen often in the early part of the season through 2 Apr (SK, LL); BBCA 7 Apr (KM); and a flyover at WGCC on 29 Apr (JC, Cyndi Cogbill). Peregrine Falcons were first noted on 11 Mar with 1 at RMBS (PL, m. ob.), 1-2 at SCNWR 8 Apr – 14 May (LL, KM, m. ob.), a resident pair in Clayton *St. Louis* 10 Apr (MT), and 2 at SLNWR 23 May (SK). Single Prairie Falcons were at SLNWR on 5 Mar (SK, m. ob.) and another very late bird was south of Lockwood *Dade* on 26 Mar (GSa). Single Virginia Rails were at OSCA on 7 Apr (CBa) and at SLNWR 26 Apr (SK). This season's high counts of 38 Soras and 423 American Coots were made during the *Holt* NAMC on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). Common Moorhen sightings included 1 at EBCA on 5 May (RD), 3 at OSCA on 20 May (JU, Hannah Uffman), and 1 at LC on 26 May. A pair of Sandhill Cranes at EBCA was discovered to have 2 colts on 1 May (Bonnie Heidi, Eric Wood). Many observers enjoyed seeing this family through at least 26 May (PMC**, m. ob.). This record represents the first documented successful survival of young beyond a few weeks in Missouri in modern times. Additional Sandhill sightings included 1-2 at SCNWR 10 Apr – 13 May (Keith Brink, m. ob), with 5 there 14 May (DWi, JU), and the only eastern observation was a single photographed outside the entrance to DCCA on 21 May (Frank & Margaret Farese). Fifty-nine Black-bellied Plover were in the northwest corner on 5 May (MR, MA) and 25 were at SLNWR on 9 May (SK). The only others (4) were at OSCA on 12 May (CBa). Thirteen American Golden-Plover were at OSCA on 6 Mar where they increased to 366 by 19 Mar (CBa). Numbers peaked in early Apr when 4500 were estimated at the junction of Hwy 164 and NN *Pemiscot* on 2 Apr (TJ). However, Tim James explains there were plovers everywhere that day, and the total was likely in the range of 7000-10,000 birds for the area. A total of 1000 in *Dade* on 3 Apr was the highest western count (CBu). Many on the MoBirds Listserve took interest when Shirley Stephens was still reporting a flock of 900+ (most all in alternate plumage) at her *Stoddard* farm on the late date of 17 May. In addition, 250 more were at OSCA that same day (CBa). However, and although this is not a regular occurrence for May, R&E does note that flocks numbering in the hundreds may be seen from late Mar to mid-May and by 21 May the high numbers had diminished to 2 at OSCA (CBa). A Snowy Plover at SCNWR on 4 Apr was quite early (DWi) while another on 23 May at SLNWR was slightly outside of its anticipated northwestern Missouri range (SK*). On 18 Apr the first Semipalmated Plovers (16) were in *Buchanan* (SK, LL, MC).

Numbers peaked on 5 May when 318 were counted across SCNWR, BM, and NVCA (MR, MA). The last 13 of the season were late at OSCA 27 May (CBa). **This spring's only** Piping Plovers were in *Holt*: 1 photographed at SCNWR 24 Apr (DWi); possibly the same individual, an unbanded bird, was at SCNWR 1 May (MR); and another one unbanded bird at BM on 5 May (MR, MA). A Killdeer nest containing 3 eggs was in Wyatt *Mississippi* on 12 Mar (Wayne Corse, MH), and by 16 Apr an adult with 4 young was in Gordonville *Cape Girardeau* (MH, Mark Goodwin). For the 2nd year in a row Black-necked Stilts arrived record early at OSCA. This year 3 arrived on **19 Mar, 4 days ahead of last year's pace** (CBa-ph.). Numbers peaked to a record high count of 523 in the *Dunklin* rice fields on 23 Apr (TJ). Away from the Mississippi River, 4-5 were in the oxbow lake area in *Buchanan* 19-25 Apr (LL, JH); another at FGCA 19 Apr (SK); a male in *Holt* 14 May (DE, m. ob.); and 2 at EBCA 25 May (PMc). In *St. Louis*, 4 arrived on 20 Apr at CBCA (David & Mary Anne Marjamaa) and 2 possible nesting birds were still there on 30 May (PL). American Avocets were reported from three locations this spring: 4-10 at EBCA 17-25 Apr (RD, PK, EW); 11 at SCNWR arrived on 24 Apr (WW) and peaked at 57 on 1 May (MR, JK), with at least 7 there 14 May (JU, DWi). In the east, 26 were a first for CBCA on 1 May (BR). The first Spotted Sandpiper was a little late to arrive on 9 Apr at DCL (CBa), 37 in the northwest corner on 13 May were the seasonal high count (MR, JK, JB), and a likely breeding pair was at RMBS on 29 May (MT). A Solitary Sandpiper at MNWR on 2 Apr (CBa) was the first to return and another* on 30 May was quite late at Hornersville Swamp CA *Dunklin* on 30 (CBa-ph.). A Greater Yellowlegs at OSCA on 24 May was also late (CBa). The only Willets (24) were in *Greene* on 10 May (GS, CBu, MD). Just outside of SLNWR on 26 Apr, 300 Lesser Yellowlegs had returned (SK) and by 5 May numbers peaked to an impressive 9100 with 5500+ at BM, 2500 at SCNWR, and 1100 at NVCA (MR, MA). A single Lesser was still at Hornersville Swamp CA *Dunklin* on 30 May (CBa-ph.). One Upland Sandpiper in *Dade* on 24 Mar was the first to return (CBu, Ruth Grant). Several were at DR on 9 Apr (SK, TM, MM) while 9 were counted there on 24 May (TN). Additional Upland sightings include 2 at BBCA 3 May (KM); 1 in Palmetto *Greene* 10 May (GSw, CBu, MD); and 2 at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* 27 May (KM). Whimbrel made appearances on both sides of the state following heavy thunderstorms; 2 in *Dunklin* 20-21 May (TJ) and 7 found resting in a disked field with no standing water at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* on 27 May (KM). Like Ibis, Godwits too had a significant showing across the state this spring. Both species were found on 11 Apr when 6 Hudsonian Godwits and a single Marbled Godwit were at Thompson River Wetlands, *Livingston* (SK). A few days prior, 7 Apr, the first Marbled (3) arrived record early at SCNWR (SD) while 2 were still there 16 Apr (LL, Brenda Lade). Twenty Marbled at SLNWR on 16 May was a record high

count (SK**). In the east, 26 Hudsonians in *Dunklin* 12 Apr was an impressive eastern count (TJ) while 2 at OSCA on 19 Apr was the only other eastern report (CBa). Other godwit sightings include 35+ on 29 Apr at SCNWR (LL, SK), with numbers peaking at 50 on 16 May (SK); a godwit sp. at EBCA 17 Apr (RD); 6 Hudsonians near SLNWR 26 Apr (SK); the high count for Hudsonian (89) in *Holt* 14 May (DE, m. ob.); 3 at SLNWR 24 May; and 2 at EBCA 25 May (PMc, RD). Ruddy Turnstones were also well reported: 1 at HSL on 5 May (LL); (3) at both OSCA (CBa) and SCNWR on 14 May (JU, DWi); 1 at SLNWR on 16 & 23 May (SK); a single at RMBS 22 May (Dave Rogles, MT); and the last 4 of the season at EBCA 25 May (RD). A single Sanderling was at SCNWR on 14 May (DWi, JU), their numbers peaked to 15 on 16 May at SLNWR (SK), and the last was a single at RMBS on 22 May (MT). SCNWR was one of the few areas not affected by the heavy rainfall through most of April into May. As a result many peak counts of shorebirds were still able to be recorded during the *Holt* NAMC on 14 May: 472 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 349 Least Sandpipers, 590 White-rumped Sandpipers, 129 **Wilson's Phalaropes** (DE, m. ob.). Additionally, the break in rainfall after mid-May allowed Paul McKenzie to count 800+ Semipalmated Sandpipers and 300+ White-rumped Sandpipers at EBCA on 25 May. Four **Baird's Sandpiper** at RMBS on 2 Apr (JU) and 3 in *Lawrence* on 3 Apr (CBu) were the first arrivals. 295 Pectoral Sandpipers made it to Schell-Osage CA *St. Clair* as of 10 Apr (Bob Ball). Numbers peaked at a total of 3450 at BM, SCNWR, and NVCA on 5 May (MR, MA). By meticulously picking through the 435 White-rumped Sandpipers at SCNWR on 21 May, Doug Willis was able to find and photograph an apparent Dunlin × White-rumped Sandpiper hybrid, potentially one of very few records of this type documented in North America. The only Dunlin high count was a mere 60 at SLNWR on 16 May (SK), while 7 at OSCA were the last seen on 25 May (CBa). A rather early Stilt Sandpiper was at OSCA on 13 Apr (CBa), while the only count of multiple birds was 34 in *Holt* on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). Much easier to cross paths with as a fall migrant, a Buff-breasted Sandpiper was a good spring find at SCNWR on 1 May (DWi-ph.), while a female Ruff* (Reeve) found and photographed there on 27 Apr is the potential 17th state record (DWi). Long-billed Dowitchers numbers peaked in *Dunklin* rice fields on 10 Apr at 4200 (TJ), while in the Northwest a mass movement occurred on 5 May with 3000 at BM, 2500 at SCNWR, 300 at NVCA, 90 in flight at WBSP (MR, MA), and 700 at HL (LL). American Woodcock made an impressive showing at BCA on 12 Mar with 10+ tallied during the St. Louis Audubon Society woodcock walk (PL, MT, m. ob.). **Wilson's Snipe** at OSCA peaked at 275 on 5 Mar (CBa) and 704 across *Dunklin* rice fields on 19 Mar (TJ). A late individual remained at Little River CA *Dunklin* on 30 May (CBa-ph.). Eight **Wilson's Phalaropes** on 3 Apr in *Dade* is a high count considering the early date (CBu). Numbers began to climb at SCNWR on 30 Apr with 200 present (MT, m. ob.) and peaked on 5 May when 530 were in *Holt* (MR, MA). The last seen was a single at OSCA 21 May (CBa). Red-necked Phalarope sightings included 2 in *Dunklin* 17 May (TJ), 2 males and 1 female at EBCA on 25 May (PMc, RD) and a single male at RMBS on 26 May (JU).

GULLS THROUGH CUCKOOS

An imm. Black-legged Kittiwake*, possibly the same bird observed during the winter season, was at SL 15 & 26 Apr, 11 days past the previous late departure record (DWi-ph.). Peak **Bonaparte's Gull** counts included 50 at Table Rock Lake *Stone* on 22 Mar (JU) and at least 100 at Bull Shoals Lake *Taney* the following day (Clark Creighton). The last was quite late at SLNWR on 21 May (RD). More than 300 **Franklin's Gulls** were in the northwest corner on 5 May (MR) and the latest individual was in basic plumage at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* on 27 May (KM). In the East, 1 was at RMBS on 16 Apr (JU) and another there 22 May (MT). Five Laughing Gulls feeding together over Ellis Bay at RMBS was an unexpected high count for this coastal species on 28 May (JU, Dave Becher). With the high water along the Mississippi River, very few gulls were reported at RMBS this spring, but 2 Ring-billed Gulls and 3 Herring Gulls were there on 29 May (MT). Away from the Mississippi, 22 Ring-billed and 5 Herring were in *Holt* on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). Rare gulls included a record late apparent adult California Gull* at SL on 22 May (DWi). A **Thayer's Gull** and a first-cycle Glaucous Gull were still lingering at RMBS from the winter season on 11 Mar (PL, m. ob.). A Lesser Black-backed Gull (acc.) at Long Branch SP *Macon* on 2 Apr (PK-ph.***) and an imm* at SL on 4 & 26 Apr (DWi-ph.) were both quite late to be lingering in Missouri. For the third consecutive year the Army Corps of Engineers has placed a barge in Ellis Bay at RMBS to attract nesting Least Terns, and up to 9 were observed 22 May through the end of the period (MT, PL). The highest number of Least Terns recorded was 28 on 30 May near Warbler Woods CA *Dunklin* (CBa). Only one lone individual was recorded away from the Mississippi River at FRCA-Unit 3 *Vernon* on 27 May (KM). **The rest of the "white terns" went mostly unnoticed this spring, as only the following reports were received:** 3 Caspian Terns at FL on 11 May (DB); 7 Common Terns at Little Dixie Lake CA *Boone* 24 May (RD); and 5 **Forster's Tern** at SCNWR 30 Apr (MT), with 40 there 5 May (MR). Black Tern counts were a little better: 18 at FL 11 May (DB); a high count of 101 in *Holt* on 14 May (DE, m. ob.); 60+ at SLNWR on 23 May (SK); and the last 10 at OSCA on 30 May (CBa). White-winged Doves were found in two western locations; 1 at a *Greene* feeder 23-25 May (Jill Hayes, DB) and another near Avenue City *Andrew* on 10 May (Ryan Evans *vide* JH). Two Eurasian Collared-Doves were a first for the *Holt* NAMC on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). A window killed Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Shirley Stephens *Stoddard* home on 1 May was the first for the season (*vide* CBa), while 8 at WBSP was the high count on 13 May (MR, JK, JB). The only Black-billed Cuckoo was at Cooley Lake CA *Clay* on 17 May (DWi). In the Southwest Greater Roadrunner sightings included 1 in *Greene* on 5 Apr (Mort Shurtz); 1 seen by many in Neosho *Newton* during the third week of Apr that was even seen snagging a Tufted Titmouse (JC); and 1 along the Glade Top Trail *Taney* on 29 May (CBu).

OWLS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Barn Owl reports consisted of two fledglings in *Cape Girardeau* on 21 May (JU), a ♀ sitting on the side of the road at Capps Creek CA *Newton* on 7 May

(JC), and 1 at FRCA *Vernon* on 27 May (KM). Two Burrowing Owls made appearances this spring: 1 in Willard *Greene* 3-7 Mar (CBu, Lisa Berger-ph.** , PMC** , m. ob.) (acc.) and another along CR 622 *Dunklin* on 20 Apr, which was the 2nd eastern Missouri record (TJ-ph.**). Steve Kinder reported the only Long-eared Owls: 2 in a *Linn* riparian thicket 4 Mar; 4-5 in a spruce grove at the edge of Chillicothe *Livingston* 6 Mar; and 3 in a riparian thicket near the Thompson River *Livingston* on 7 Mar. At DR there were 8 Short-eared Owls on 2 Apr (Randy Arndt *fide* Tom Nagel) and 2 were still there on 9 Apr (SK, TM, MM). The last Short-eared of the season was in a *Dunklin* rice field on 16 Apr (TJ). Common Nighthawks arrived 30 Apr with 3 flying over DCL (CBa) and 4 in front of a storm front in Eureka *St. Louis* (JU). A Chuck-**will's**-widow at Fantastic Caverns *Greene* on 19 Apr was the first of spring (CBu). Further north, where they become much harder to find, 4 were at Little Dixie Lake CA *Callaway* on 8 May, with 1 heard there in late May (RD), and 6 were tallied for the NAMC in *Livingston* on 14 May (SK). Three Eastern Whip-poor-wills arrived in *Webster* on 6 Apr (AK) and the only 1 recorded during the *Holt* NAMC 14 May was considered a low count (DE, m. ob.). The first Chimney Swifts (15) were viewed in Webster Groves *St. Louis* 8 Apr (PL) and a high count of 100 was in St. Louis City on 14 May (MT). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird* on 21 Mar was two weeks earlier than listed in R & E at a feeder along Bull Shoals Lake east, the first Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was at DCL on 10 May (CBa),



This Burrowing Owl found in Dunklin County provided the first record for Southeast Missouri in over 50 years. Found on 20 April, it raises the question of whether the sand country of the Bootheel hosts the species in small numbers. Found and photographed by Tim James.

another at TGP on 22 May (BR), and in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* 25 May (JU). Paul McKenzie found them to be in good numbers across *Boone*: 3 at EBCA 26 May, 2 at Rockbridge SP 28 May, and the last 3 of the season at Grindstone Park 28 May (PMc). In the west, where they are much harder to find, 1 was along the Kearney Bike Path *Clay* on 20 May (KM). An Alder Flycatcher on 3 May outside of Paul McKenzie's *Boone* office beat the previous arrival record by 4 days. Alders made an excellent showing in the East this spring where they can be tougher to locate: 1 singing in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* 13 May (JU); 1 in *Mississippi* 20 May (JU); 1-3 at Weldon Spring CA *St. Charles* 21 May, including 1 calling in the same willows as a singing Willow Flycatcher (BR), and a high count of 5 Alders located there on 28 May (MT); and the last 1-2 were at CBCA 22 & 28 May (MT, JU). Further west, peak counts included 15 in *Livingston* 23-24 May (SK) and a 12 on 27 May at FRCA-Unit 1 *Vernon* (KM). Other than the Willow Flycatcher mentioned above, one was at RMBS on 22 May (MT). The first Least Flycatcher made its' appearance at DCL on 25 Apr (CBa). Strangely, there were no reports received of multiple individuals this spring; instead, only a meager 1-2 were in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* 3-18 May (JU, CBr) and a single at TGP on 9 & 14 May (MT). Eastern Phoebe (3) arrived at Tywappity Community Lake *Scott* on 6 Mar (MH). Great-crested Flycatchers arriving on 5 Apr (2) at HRCA (CBa) were 2 days earlier than the previous arrival record and in the North 3 were also early at Wallace SP *Clinton* 9 Apr (KM). In western Missouri: the first Western Kingbird was logged in *Jasper* on 21 Apr (LH); by 29 Apr they were en mass across *Clay* (KM); and 9 were tightly packed along the road to LC on 31 May (LL). In the East, 2 returned to the Switzer Power Station *Boone* for at least the 2nd consecutive year (EW); 4 were at a different *Boone* location on 9 May, 2 of which remained through the end of the month (RD); and a single returned just north of Lambert Airport *St. Louis* 16 May (MT). On 9 Apr the first Eastern Kingbird of the season was in *Jefferson* (MT). The first of three *Greene* Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, all singles, arrived 6 Apr (AK). Reports away from the Southwest continue as this species expands its range: a single m west of Chillicothe *Livingston* 16 Apr (TM, SK); 1 in southern *Boone* was present for the 2nd consecutive year on 6 May (EW); 1 the latter half of May at EBCA (RD, EW); noted to be present again in *Callaway* (EW); and 2 at OSCA on 27 May were the farthest eastern report (SD). The only Loggerhead Shrike reports were a single 10 miles east of St. Joseph *Buchanan* 5 Apr (JH); 2 at DR on 5 May (TN); and 1 just outside of OSCA on 20 May (JU). On 8 Apr at OSCA, the first White-eyed Vireo was sighted (CBa) and on 28 Apr the first nest was confirmed at BICA (JC). In the West, high counts of **Bell's Vireos** included 14 at Bois D'arc CA *Greene* on 10 May (DB) and 7 at FRCA-Unit 1 on 27 May. Nesting was confirmed in *Newton* (2 pairs), a pair in *Barton* 28 May (JC), and a possible nesting pair at BCA on

22 May (MT). In St. Louis, 4-5 at CBCA was an increase in the typical number recorded there, possibly a result of the secondary growth taking over previous grassy areas, and 5 were also at Weldon Spring CA *St. Charles*, both observations 21 May (BR). Fifteen Yellow-throated Vireos was the seasonal high in *Christian* on 17 Apr (DB). Blue-headed Vireos (acc.) arrived record early by ten days at two separate locations on 9 Apr with 1 at HSP (MT**, Mike Grant-Ph.) and 2 at OSCA (RD**). The highest count recorded was 5 on 13 May at LS (CBu). Two Philadelphia Vireos arrived in *Greene* on 30 Apr (Myra Scroggs, m. ob.). The only other observations were 3 chasing each other high in a single tree in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* on 13 May (JU, CBr) and 2 at TGP on 14 May (MT). A high count of 44 Red-eyed Vireo was made in *Christian* on 17 Apr (DB). In the southern half of the state, many noted that Fish Crow (groups of 7-15) began returning on 2 Mar, at single sites in *Barry*, *Cape Girardeau*, *Newton*, *Taney*, *St. Charles*, and *St. Louis*. In central Missouri, Fish Crows are also now regular at EBCA (EW), but were a first for SLNWR this spring on 24 May (SK). Chris Barrigar found the first Purple Martin at OSCA on 5 Mar, while the Tree Swallows he previously reported at the end of the winter season now totaled 70. Additionally, Chris noted a significant influx of martins (68) appearing at this same location on 21 May. Peak Tree Swallow counts included 600+ at Duck Creek CA on 25 Mar and 2000 at HL on 18 Apr (SK, LL, MC). On 17 Mar, 2 Northern Rough-winged Swallows were at DCL (CBa) and the following day a single was in Eureka *St. Louis* (JU), both rather early observations. 300 Bank Swallows at LS on 14 May was the only report received (GSw) and a single Cliff Swallow at EBCA on 8 Apr was the first reported (PK). Considering Barn Swallows typically do not arrive until the final week of March, the following reports are quite early: 1 in Eureka *St. Louis* on 18 Mar (JU); 1 at the Carl Junction Lagoons *Jasper* on 18 Mar (LH); and 1 in Jackson *Cape Girardeau* 21 Mar (MH). Five of the six Red-breasted Nuthatch reports came from eastern Missouri: 3 at BCA 12 Mar (JU); 1 at HSP 9 Apr (PL); 1 at CBCA 1 May (BR); 1 at SNR 7 May (MT, JU); and 1 at TGP 9 May (MT). However, the latest individual was in *Greene* 14 Mar – 14 May (CBu, Lisa Berger). Observers in the northwestern and north-central locations continue to note a decline in Carolina Wren numbers after the **second consecutive harsh winter**. Jack Hilsabeck writes, “**Very scarce in town (St. Joseph) where they had access to winter feeders**”. Kristi Mayo only observed 1 this spring, which was along the Kearney Bike Path *Clay* on 8 Apr. Only 5 were recorded in *Livingston* during the NAMC on 14 May (SK, m. ob.). An unexpected **Bewick’s Wren**, north of its expected range, was singing along the Smoke and Davy Trails *Clay* on 9 May (KM). The **Southwest was represented by the following four Bewick’s reports: 1 in *Greene* on 2 Apr (Jackie West); 2 at the Valley Water Mill 21 May (AK, CBu, GSa); 2 nesting pairs observed most of the spring at WGCC (JC, Becky**

Wylie-ph.); and another at Minnie Kelly's farm north of Seneca *Newton* last seen 12 May (JC). At the edge of their range; 1 was at Nifong Park *Boone* on 28 Mar (EW) and another in *Washington* 18 & 23 Apr (JU). Winter Wrens (2) were last reported in BSF on 23 Apr (DB) and the latest individual was in Larry Lade's backyard *Buchanan* on 26 Apr. An overwintering Marsh Wren was at OSCA through 2 Mar (CBa). Two others were observed on 30 Apr—1 at SCNWR (MT) and 1 in *Greene* (Myra Scroggs, m. ob.). At Big Oak Tree SP *Mississippi* the first 5 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers of the season arrived on 28 Mar (MH). Peak counts included an impressive 44 at DCCA on 10 Apr (CBa) and 19 at Big Sugar Creek SP *McDonald* on 29 Apr (JC, Kevin Badgley). The last Ruby-crowned Kinglet was seen at TGP on 14 May (MT). The *Catharus* thrush migration was rather lackluster overall, with very low counts reported this spring. Veery sightings in eastern Missouri included 1 in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* on 2 May and 2 there on 18 May (JU, CB); 2 at the Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center 7 May (CBa); and one each at TGP and FP on 14 May (MT). On the opposite side of the state, where this shy thrush is tougher to find, 1 was at BSF on 13 May (GSw) and another at SCNWR on 14 May (JU-ph.). Outside of the WBS sighting listed above, Gray-cheeked Thrushes appear to have slipped by most observers, with only two sightings in the St. Louis area: 1 in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* 3-4 May (JU) and 1 at TGP 9 & 14 May (MT). High counts of **Swainson's Thrush** were 29 in *Christian* on 30 Apr (DB) and 30+ at WBSP (MR, JK, JB). In *Greene*, 7 Hermit Thrush represented the high count on 15 Apr (CBu) and 1 at TGP on 12 May tied the latest spring departure (Dave Becher, m. ob.). A single Wood Thrush was at Oak Ridge *Cape Girardeau* on 13 Apr (MH) and another was at the WBS on 14 Apr (PL, m. ob.). The only count of multiple birds was in *Christian* 10 May (4) (GS, CBu, Marvin Dejong). The last 2 Wood Thrushes, both likely migrants, were at TGP and FP on 14 May (MT). Ryan Douglas reported the first Gray Catbird, possibly an overwintering individual, along Grindstone Creek *Boone* on 30 Mar. Two Brown Thrashers had returned to Joplin *Jasper* on 24 Mar (LH). American Pipit numbers reached 100 near ML on 24 Mar (LL) and 109 in *Dade* on 3 Apr (CBu, m. ob.). The latest were at SCNWR (2) 30 Apr (MT), 30 in the prescribed burn area at DR 2 May (TN), and 3 still in the far south on 8 May at DCCA *Bollinger* (CBa). Cedar Waxwings were scarcely reported this spring, but Mike Thelen recorded 20 on 7 May at SNR and 55 at TGP on 9 May. At least 18 **Smith's Longspurs** were at Bradford Farm *Boone* on 12 Mar (Joe Lafleur, RD) and an alternate-plumaged m there on 27 Mar (RD). At SLNWR, 3 were present 19 Mar and 2 at Pawnee Prairie CA *Harrison* on 20 Mar (SK).

WARBLERS THROUGH OLD WORLD SPARROWS

Golden-winged Warblers were scarcely reported, with only 1-2 in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* 28 Apr–17 May (JU, CBr), 1 in *Barry* 30 Apr (J&MW), and 1 at SNR 7 May (MT, m. ob.). At the WBS, 48 Tennessee Warblers were banded 4-9 May (PL). A single Orange-crowned Warbler at OSCA on 2 Mar was likely a holdover from the winter season (CBa), while 2 on 23 Apr at BICA were the first to arrive in the west (JC). A Nashville Warbler on 8

Apr at OSCA tied the earliest spring record (CBa) and 49 were banded 1-9 May at WBS (PL). The first Northern Parulas were discovered 25 Mar, with 1 at Sank CA *Bollinger* (CBa) and 2 at MNWR (JU). High counts of this species included 18 at OSCA on 10 Apr (CBa) and 38 in *Christian* on 13 Apr (DB). The first Chestnut-sided Warbler was observed at MNWR on 24 Apr (CBa). In St. Louis they were not easily seen this spring, thus the highest tally was quite low with only 4 at SNR on 7 May (MT, m. ob.). A Magnolia Warbler at General Watkins CA *Scott* on 17 Apr (CBa) was quite early. The only high counts came from *Greene*, where 4 were at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center *Greene* on 12 May (JC) and 10 on 17 May at LS (GS, CBu, Kathy Cowens). Four Cape May Warblers were at TGP on 11 May (PL, m. ob) and at least 1 m Black-throated Blue Warbler was there on 8 May (m. ob). Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers peaked in mid-Apr with 93 in *Christian* on 17 Apr (DB) and 24 at BICA on 23 Apr (JC). Black-throated Green Warblers arrived early with 1 at HRCA on 5 Apr (CBa) and another in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* on 7 Apr (Bill Duncan). The only multiple birds reported were from the Southwest with 3 at BICA on 28 Apr and 6 along Red Bridge Road *Christian* on 30 Apr (DB). A Yellow-throated Warbler on 20 Mar at Lake Taneycomo *Taney* was a day earlier than the previous R&E early arrival date (JU) and numbers peaked at 17 in *Christian* on 13 Apr (DB). Jeff Cantrell had 11 singing Pine Warblers on 24 Mar at Huckleberry CA *McDonald* and 7 there on 28 Apr. Casual in northern Missouri, a singing m Prairie Warbler* was in north-west *Livingston* on 27 May (SK, MC). The only Palm Warblers reported (4) were likely lingering from the winter season at OSCA 19 Mar (CBa). In western Missouri, Bay-breasted Warblers can be tough to locate, therefore a male at PSP on 7 May (SK) and another at Big Lake SP *Holt* on 13 May were good finds (MR, JK, JB). In the East, 3 at TGP on 9 May was the high count (PL, Cathy Spann). Blackpoll Warblers were scarcely reported, except on the 13 May when 16 were found; 11 at WBSP and 5 at Big Lake SP *Holt* (MR, JK, JB). In the Southwest 8 Cerulean Warblers were counted, both at RRSP on 30 Apr (J&MW) and in *Christian* on 10 May (CBu, MD, GSw). Elsewhere, 3 were at Castlewood SP *St. Louis* 7 May (MT), a singing m was at WBSP 13 May (MR, JK, JB), and 2 were at Weldon Spring CA – Lost Valley Trail *St. Charles* on 28 May (MT, PL). The first Prothonotary Warbler was at HRCA on 6 Apr (CBa). In *Newton*, flooding along Shoal Creek and Elk River resulted in JC losing most of his Prothonotary nest boxes. However, 2 of the boxes did still fledge 4 and 5 young from their first clutch and both were currently occupied for a second clutch. A pair of Worm-eating Warblers with nesting material was at Big Sugar SP *McDonald* on 29 Apr (JC, Kevin Badgley). On 9 Apr Black-and-White Warblers arrived in good numbers, with 42 in *Christian* (DB). On 30 Apr, 24 Ovenbirds were counted RRSP (JW), while 23 were at Red Bridge Road *Christian* (DB). The

first 2 Louisiana Waterthrush arrived at Walter Woods CA *Newton* on 21 Mar (LH). High counts included 10 at BSF on 23 Mar (DB) and 7-8 at HSP on 9 Apr (PL, m. ob.). A Kentucky Warbler nest was located at BICA on 28 Mar (JC) and 24 were banded at WBS 1-9 May (PL). There were three Connecticut Warbler reports: a single at the new LS bubbler 19 May (CBu, GSw); a singing m at Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary *Clay* on 20 May (DWi); and 2 in close proximity along the BCA – Fallen Oak Nature Trail on 21 May (BR, PL, m. ob.). The first Mourning Warbler arrived at WBS on 4 May (PL). Other reports included singles in *Christian* (GSw) and TGP (MT) on 9 May, 4 at WBSP on 13 May (MR, JK, JB), and the last in *Webster* 19 May (AK). A high count of 69 Common Yellowthroats was made at DCCA on 8 May (Cba). A remarkable count of 16 Hooded Warblers made at Red Bridge Road *Christian* on 30 Apr was four more than the high count listed in R&E (DB). At WBS 2 Hooded Warblers, 2 **Wilson's Warblers**, and 3 Canada Warblers were banded in May (PL). The male Spotted Towhee that was a winter resident at Steve Dilks' *Osage* home continued through 14 Apr (SD). Another was present at WGCC 2-26 Mar (JC, Randy Haas). A pair of **Bachman's Sparrow** at the north-western edge of their range was along the Glade Top Trail *Taney* on 18 May (JC). In central Missouri, a single Clay-colored Sparrow was at Prairie Home CA *Cooper* on 23 Apr (EW); another in *Boone* arrived on 26 Apr outside of Paul McKenzie's office, peaking at 5 on 5 May. In eastern Missouri where they are a rare transient, 1 was at DCL on 27 Apr (CBa) and another in Berkeley St. *Louis* on 6 May (MT). The last seen was in *Holt* on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). On 16 Mar, 38 Field Sparrows was the season high count at Crowley Ridge CA *Stoddard* (CBa). Vesper Sparrows (3) arrived in *Greene* on 27 Mar (GSw) and a single Lark Sparrow returned to DCL on 5 Apr (CBa). Two Grasshopper Sparrows arrived at Marble Hill *Ballinger* on 8 Apr (MH). Always a good find in the spring, a **Nelson's Sparrow** was in *Holt* on 14 May (DE, m. ob.). Several **Henslow's Sparrows** were noted at DR on 9 Apr (SK, TMc, MM) while (2-4) were noted in *Franklin*, *St. Charles*, and *Newton* 7-25 May (MT, JC). Single **Lincoln's Sparrows** seemed early at WGCC on 2 Mar (JC) and 12 Apr in Creve Coeur St. *Louis* (JU, CB); while 4 at SNR on 7 May was the only high count (MT). A **Harris's Sparrow** at Scrivner Road CA *Cole* on 23 Mar was an unexpected find (EW). Further west where they are more abundant, 12 were found in a single brushy thicket near LC on 2 Apr (LL, SK). The last Harris's in the south included 2 in Joplin *Jasper* on 2 May (Randy Haas *fide* JC) and an adult male was in the north at SCNWR on 14 May (JU). White-crowned Sparrows (3) were getting late at Maintz CA *Cape Girardeau* on 17 May (MH). The Golden-crowned Sparrow (acc.) that excited many through the winter season at Steve Dilks** residence *Osage* said good-bye on 16 Mar (SD). Late Dark-eyed Juncos included 1 in *Washington* on 24 Apr (JU) and an-

other in Creve Coeur *St. Louis* 28 Apr (JU, CB). A Summer Tanager was quite early on 16 Apr at HRCA (CBa), while a high count of 14 Scarlet Tanagers was at Red Bridge Road *Christian* on 30 Apr (DB). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks arrived in the south on 26 Apr with a single in Neosho *Newton* (LH) and 12+ flycatching at HRCA (CBa). An adult m Black-headed Grosbeak was a treat for Jill Hayes when it showed up at her *Greene* feeder on 1 May. A count of 5 Blue Grosbeaks was made in *Holt*, where this species can be difficult to locate, on 14 May (DE, m. ob) and on 27 May a pair was found, with the f carrying nesting material, in *Stoddard* (CBa). A m Indigo Bunting on the early date of 14 Apr was not expected (JU, CB). High counts included 150+ on 22 Apr in *Mississippi* and 180 on 8 May at DCCA (CBa). A Painted Bunting at RRSP on 30 Apr was the first (J&MW), while 2 singing m were there on 8 May (JC). Another was in *Greene* on 10 May (GSw, CBu) and 2 were in *Barry* on 14 May (JW). A Dickcissel on 1 Apr might have been an overwintering individual at Settles Ford CA *Cass* (EW), while 160 was the high count on 26 May in *Stoddard* (CBa). EW commented that Bobolinks in central Missouri were seen in expected numbers in the appropriate habitat, while many in St. Louis commented the numbers seemed low this year. Bobolink reports included: 6- 40 in *Greene* 26 Apr - 14 May (AK, GSw); up to 12 at CBCA on 27 Apr -22 Apr (JU, BR, MT); 2 at FGCA on 2 May (SK); 5-17 at DR 2 May - 24 May (TN); and 2 males at Weldon Spring CA *St. Charles* on 21 May (BR). A singing Western Meadowlark at the entrance to OSCA was far from its expected range 15-25 May (CBa-ph., JU). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were only reported in western Missouri: 2 at HL 15 Apr (LL); several mixed in with blackbirds in *Buchanan* 18 Apr (SK, LL, MC); 10 at Grand Pass CA *Saline* 27 Apr; 6 in *Greene* 28 Apr (AK, GSa); and a rather low count of 2 during the *Holt* NAMC 14 May (DE, m. ob.). A high count of 525 **Brewer's Blackbirds** was tallied in *Dade* on 28 Mar (CBu, GSw), 2 were found near LC on 2 Apr (LL, SK), and the last individual was very late at DCL on 26 Apr (CBa-ph.). Twelve Great-tailed Grackles at a lagoon east of Joplin *Jasper* on 20 May comprised the only report of multiple birds (LH). Away from western Missouri, a f was at CBCA on 2 Apr (JU) and a single in central Missouri at Bradford Farm *Boone* on 5 Apr (EW). An Orchard Oriole was noted in Jackson *Cape Girardeau* on 11 Apr (MH) while the first Baltimore Oriole (acc.) might have been an overwintering bird in *Webster* on 5 Mar (AK**). Finally for 2011, 2 Pine Siskins at **WBSP on 5 May were MR's first** since November and the last 2 were observed in *Greene* on 14 May (CBu).

Observers

Mike Andersen (MA), Chris Barrigar (CBa), Christopher Brown (CBr), David Blevins (DB), John Bollin (JB), Charley Burwick (CBu), Jeff Cantrell (JC), Myrna Carlton (MC), Marvin DeJong (MD), Steve Dilks (SD), Ryan Douglas (RD), David Easterla (DE), Mark Haas (MH), Larry Herbert (LH), Jack Hilsabeck (JH), Tim James (TJ), Jon King (JK), Andrew Kinslow (AK), Steve Kinder (SK), Larry Lade (LL), Pat Lueders (PL), Kristi Mayo (KM), Paul McKenzie (PMc), Mark McNeely (MM), Terry McNeely (TM), Bill Rowe

(BR), Greg Samuel (GSa), Greg Swick (GSw), Mike Thelen (MT), Joshua Uffman (JU), Edge Wade (EW), Walter Wehtje (WW), Jerry Williams (JW), Jerry & Marge Williams (J&MW), Doug Willis (DWi)

Key

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

Abbreviations

CA - Conservation Area
f - Female
imm. - Immature
m – Male
m. ob. - Multiple observers
NAMC - North American Migration Count
ph. - Photographed
R&E - Robbins & Easterla, *Birds of Missouri, Their Distribution and Abundance*, University of Missouri Press, 1992
SP - State Park

Location Abbreviations (counties are in italics)

BCA - August A. Busch Conservation Area, *St. Charles*
BICA – Bicentennial Conservation Area, *Newton*
BM - Bigelow Marsh, *Holt*
BBCA - Bob Brown Conservation Area, *Holt*
BSF - Busiek State Forest, *Christian*
CBCA - Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, *St. Louis*
DCL - Dexter City Lake, *Stoddard*
DCCA - Duck Creek Conservation Area, *Bollinger and Stoddard*
DR - Dunn Ranch, *Harrison*
EBCA - Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, *Boone*
FGCA - Fountain Grove Conservation Area, *Linn*
FL - Fellows Lake, *Greene*
FRCA - Four Rivers Conservation Area, *Bates and Vernon*
FP - Forest Park, *St. Louis City*
HSP – Hawn State Park, *Ste. Genevieve*
HRCA - Holly Ridge Conservation Area, *Stoddard*
HL - Horseshoe Lake, *Buchanan*
LC - Lake Contrary, *Buchanan*
LS - Lake Springfield, *Greene*
MNWR - Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, *Stoddard*
ML - Muskrat Lake, *Buchanan*
NVCA - Nodaway Valley Conservation Area, *Holt and Andrew*
OSCA - Otter Slough Conservation Area, *Stoddard*

PSP - Pershing State Park, *Linn*
RMBS - Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, *St. Charles*
RRSP - Roaring River State Park, *Barry*
SL - Smithville Lake, *Clay*
SNR - Shaw Nature Reserve, *Franklin*
SCNWR - Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, *Holt*
SLNWR - Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge, *Chariton*
TGP - Tower Grove Park, *St. Louis City*
WBSP - Weston Bend State Park, *Platte*
WBS - World Bird Sanctuary, *St. Louis*
WGCC - Wildcat Glades Audubon and Conservation Center, *Newton*

A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

Edge Wade and Others

The site descriptions in this issue are special. Three birders have taken time from active birding to share with us the “what” and “how to” details of one of their favorite haunts.

Richard Anderson is a member of Missouri Master Naturalist, Loess Hills Chapter, a new chapter based in the northwest. He's hoping the chapter will become active in the CACHE and SPARKS program and concentrate on areas that have few reports and no guides.

Harold John has contributed to the Missouri birding community for many years. He did several raptor surveys for MDC in south central Missouri, and wrote entries for the ASM *A Guide to Birding in Missouri*.

Chris Barrigar is one of the state's most active birders, making the rounds of the great variety of sites in southeast Missouri and reporting his finds on Mobirds and to the CACHE and SPARKS database.

#####

LEWIS and CLARK STATE PARK

by Richard Anderson

189 acres Buchanan Co. DeLorme 26, B-2; DNR owned; for additional information call (816) 579-5564.

Directions: From the south, take MO 45 north of Weston, past Weston Bend State Park and the Iatan Power Plant. Turn left onto Lake Crest Blvd. at the state park sign.

From the north, take US 59 south and continue onto MO 45 when US 59 turns toward the Atchison bridge. Turn right onto Lake Crest Blvd. at the state park sign.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Fall and Spring Migrations: Lewis and Clark Lake attracts large numbers and numerous species of migrating wa-

waterfowl. Snow Geese flocks should be scanned for Ross's Goose. 20 species of ducks have been reported. Trumpeter Swans have been found here on March trips.

Summer: The park has good numbers of summer resident songbirds that are easily observable. Breeding birds include Hooded Warbler, American Redstart and Prothonotary Warbler.

Good, accessible sparrow habitat is available in winter and spring.

Features of interest to birders: There is a good blend of open and wooded terrain, all accessible on foot. The park is a productive area for small songbirds, especially warblers.

Tall Grass Prairie Restoration: Between the campground and the lake there is an area that is in the process of restoration of native tall grass prairie. The area is small and is easily walked. It is also observable from the road.

Lewis and Clark Lake (Sugar Lake): The south shore of the lake is easily accessible from the park with ample parking. The north shore of the lake is accessible along North Shore Drive. A large amount of reed area is observable from a car. After exiting the campground go north and take the first left.

Field area between Lewis and Clark State Park and the Missouri River: Low lying fields in the Missouri flood plains. It has areas of semi-permanent wetlands. It is an excellent area for shorebird observation depending on season and wetness. To access, continue along North Shore Drive and turn right onto 116th street. This returns you to US 59.

Lewis and Clark Interpretive Area: In the State Park and clearly marked by signs, this is a large open area of former farm fields beginning to grow wild. It also contains some field levees that provide access to several marshy areas.

Toilets: Full service bath house in the camping area with showers and laundry facilities. Vault toilets available along the lake front.

Camping: Both basic and electric RV and tent sites are available. Some are first come first served, others are reservable. Camping pressure is generally light.

Hazards/Limitations: None noted.

Nearby Birding Sites: Weston Bend SP, Little Bean Marsh CA, Bluffwoods CA

BUSHWHACKER LAKE CONSERVATION AREA

by Harold F. John and Edge Wade

4,790 acres Vernon and Barton Co. DeLorme 50, B-2; MDC owned; for information call 417-895-6880.

Directions: The Area is in southern Vernon Co., along the Barton Co. line, about 4 miles west of Sheldon and 3.5 miles southeast of Bronaugh. It can be reached from US 71 or MO 43.

From US 71, there are two options: Take the Sheldon exit and go west on Rt. N 3.5 miles, turn left (south) on 1525 Rd. (where Rt. N turns north) for 1.5 miles, then right (west) onto Zodiac/NW100 Rd. for 1.1 miles to a parking lot (see below for birding from this point).

Or, at the Sheldon exit go west on Rt. N for 0.1 mile to the outer access road. Go south one mile to Zodiac/NW100 Rd. Turn right (west) onto Zodiac/NW100 Rd., which usually has good roadside birding. Go 4.1 miles to the same parking lot as above.

From Bronaugh go 2.5 miles south on MO 43; east one mile on Zodiac/NW100 Rd.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: The area hosts about 90 breeding species, including grassland species as Northern Harrier (limited breeding in this relatively southern location; numerous spring and fall), Upland Sandpiper, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell's Vireo, Dickcissel, Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrow. Western species occasionally appear, such as Swainson's Hawk (possible breeder), Spotted Towhee, and Western Meadowlark. Other uncommon breeding species, such as Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Black-billed Cuckoo, can sometimes be found.

From late June through early August the area around the two lakes often serves as a concentration area for migrating swallows. Cliff Swallows are predominant.

Fish Crows and Osprey should be looked for in fall and spring.

Late October through February here can produce some interesting birding. Short-eared Owls may be found in very good numbers; Cackling Geese may be among Canada Goose flocks. Two Trumpeter Swans were present in January, 2010. **Harris's Sparrows are common.**

The last Greater Prairie-Chicken report for the area in the CACHE database was in late March, 2008.

Features of interest to birders: There are 1,500 acres of native prairie, 440 acres of non-prairie grasses, 270 acres of savanna, and about 850 acres in forest and woodland. Two impoundments add to the possibilities: 157-acre Bushwhacker Lake and 28-acre Willow Lake (walk in access only, 1/4 mile from the road). There are 22 parking lots; 3 fishing jetties and a boat ramp.

Hiking is allowed throughout the area. These suggested birding hikes begin with the southeast-most parking lot on Zodiac/NW100 Rd., about 5.1 miles east of MO 43.

East areas. Exploring the mixed, brushy habitat along the trail and the limited riparian habitat between the parking area and the bridge should produce several woodland and edge species.

Trails from the next two lots west (the first reached by road about one-third of a mile north from Zodiac, and the second along Zodiac) go into wooded areas and will produce birds typical of upland oak woods. Birding along Zodiac/NW100 Rd. to the west can be rewarding. The trail going north from the fourth lot (counting the southeast-most as number 1), is perhaps the best trail for birds. Over a distance of a little more than two miles, it leads through grassland and some small wooded areas to the lake edge and onto **Little Dry Wood Creek. Likely birds are Bell's Vireo (usually multiple birds along this trail), Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Summer Tanager.** Watch for Northern Harrier in open areas and Black-billed Cuckoo in brushy thickets.

From the first parking lot west of where NW 80 Lane comes in from the south (.6 miles west of 1185 Rd, or 1.9 miles east of MO 43), hiking directly north to the top of the small hill will give a good view of the best grassland **areas. Henslow's Sparrow have nested in this area, but they move around from year to year to satisfy their specific nesting requirements.** Watch for Upland Sandpiper on the tops of fence posts. Look carefully at soaring **hawks for the occasional Swainson's.**

From the first lot (0.4 mile) north of Zodiac along 1185 Rd., hiking short distances into the grassland may yield species missed elsewhere.

Willow Lake can be reached by walking about a quarter mile from the lot 0.6 miles north of Zodiac (sign indicates lake access route). Look for **Henslow's Sparrow in the area directly north of the dam. This lake is a refuge area** and several waterfowl species may be present, depending on season. There is some excellent marshy habitat around the south end of the lake. Be alert for White-eyed Vireo in the brush near the lake and for Sedge Wren in the drainage runs.

Along Yucca Rd, leading to Bushwhacker Lake, watch the grassland on both sides for Northern Harrier. The shorter grass areas are particularly good for fall sparrows.

The center of the north parking areas generally provides the most extensive view of the lake and and waterfowl, waders, or shorebirds.

Hiking the lakeside trail will usually be productive, unless fishing activity is particularly high. Both orioles can usually be found near the lake, as well as Tree Swallow, White-eyed Vireo and Yellow-breasted Chat.

Hiking northeast from the lake dam to Little Dry Wood Creek can produce many of the same birds found near the first lot on Zodiac/NW100 Rd.

Toilets: 3 privies, all located along the west side of Bushwhacker Lake.

Camping: Primitive camping sites are on the west side of Bushwhacker Lake, accessible from Yucca Rd.

Hazards/Limitations: Hiking is not advised during turkey or deer hunting seasons. An unmanned archery range is near the intersection of Zodiac Rd. and 1185 Rd.

Nearby Birding Sites: Osage Prairie CA, Comstock Prairie CA, Prairie SP, Shawnee Trail CA, Clear Creek CA.

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HOLLY RIDGE CONSERVATION AREA
by Chris Barrigar and Edge Wade

991 acres Stoddard Co. DeLorme 68, D-1; MDC owned; for information call 573-290-5730.

Directions: From US 60 at Dexter, go north on MO 25; take Rt. E east from Bloomfield, then south two miles on CR 517. The south side of the area can be reached via gravel roads going north off US 60 or west from Rt. FF.

When to Visit/Species to Expect: Holly Ridge CA, like General Watkins CA, is perched on the edge of the high, forested land to the west and north of the flat, virtually featureless lowlands planted in rice and cotton. It has all the **characteristics of a “migrant trap” that make a trip during spring or fall an adventure in seeking passerines.**

More finds at Holly Ridge are likely, but the current checklist of 135 species includes a good mix of woodland birds--woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos and warblers. Eastern Screech-Owl and Chuck-**will's**-widow can be found.

Rusty and Brewer's Blackbirds occur in good numbers among the very plentiful Common Grackles, especially in January and February. Wintering sparrows are plentiful. Eastern Towhees are here year-round. Winter Wren can be expected from October into early April.

American Woodcock display here in February and March and are present in fall.

Summer Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Blue Grosbeaks, and both orioles may be found in spring migration and some during the summer.

Features of interest to birders: 770 acres of forest, 60 acres of warm season grasses, and 101 acres in old fields. Two ponds (one of 1.8 acres) are accessible by trail from the horse trailer parking area across from the entrance to the archery range parking. Waterfowl and waders may be found near them.

East of parking lot A in the far northeastern section, there is a small patch of moist wetland area where a Sora was observed in the spring of 2011. It should be checked for migrating rails in wet springs.

Of special interest are the two designated Natural Areas. 84-acre Holly Ridge NA is easily accessed by trail from parking lot F on CR 527 (reachable from the west by taking CR 517 south, then going right (east) on CR 517A, then right (north) on CR 519. It was donated by The Nature Conservancy in 1975, protects 26 rare or endangered plant species, including the namesake American Holly. 35-acre Beech Springs NA, includes a perched, a.k.a **“hanging” bog, a natural pond on an upland site, surrounded by a stand of large red, black and white oaks.** It is reached by trail from parking lot G on CR 533A, going north from CR519 along the railroad.

For birders with appetites for seeking additional fauna and flora, Holly Ridge is a special place for insects and plants, with new discoveries awaiting the lookers. In the spring of 2011, a find of a *Cicindela scutellaris*, probable *lecontei* sub-species (a Tiger Beetle intergrade) is a record early season report for Missouri. And on the botany scene, it is well-known for hosting several hard-to-find species. In 2009, a genus new to Missouri was discovered in the form of a single plant of *Listera australis*, Southern Tway-blade Orchid.

Toilets: 1 privy at the archery range and shelter on the west side, accessed from CR 517 south of Rt. E.

Camping: Primitive camping near the archery range.

Hazards/Limitations: Field archery range.

Nearby Birding Sites: Crowley’s Ridge CA, Dexter City Lake, Aquilla Access.



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