



# **THE BLUEBIRD**

*The voice of ASM since 1934*

**December 2013  
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***The Audubon Society of Missouri  
Missouri's Ornithological Society Since 1901***

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# THE BLUEBIRD

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

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Fall (Aug. 1-Nov. 30)—to Peter Kondrashov by Dec. 10

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Front Cover—**This summer's only Tricolored Heron was seen June 17 and July 11 at Four Rivers Conservation area, Vernon County, where it was photographed by Susan Nixon.**

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

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER—JUNE NEWMAN



Dear Fellow Birders,

The shiny ads name Patagonia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Madagascar, Kilimanjaro, or Borneo, and picture birds we didn't know existed. Some birders have the time and resources to book enticing tours to far away, exotic places. Some birders may take one such trip in a lifetime and many only dream of that kind of travel.

This month I and some other Missouri birders took advantage of a closer, more affordable kind of bird related travel to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Yellow Rails and Rice Festival in Jennings, Louisiana. I was inspired by the energy and creativity exuded by a group of people that includes environmentalists, birders, and rice farmers. Because Yellow Rails are not exactly yard birds for most of us, we were thrilled to ride combines in the rice fields to see rails flush ahead of the big machines. Not only were there Yellow Rails, but Virginia and King Rails and Soras. Hundreds of egrets dodged the cut-off head to feast on katydids disturbed by the harvest.

On Thursday night festival participants gathered for jambalaya and Cajun music. All evening many thousands of White-faced Ibis (or Ibises, if you please) streamed into nearby wetlands for the night in silhouette against the sunset, along with White Ibis and many Greater White-fronted Geese. Early Saturday morning those same wetlands afforded us long looks at a remarkable assortment of shorebirds and waterfowl, including Cinnamon Teal, but the earlier reported Ruff was a no-show.

I went to see birds. So mention in the festival itinerary of a rice mill tour did not excite in me great expectation. It turned out to be one of my favorite parts of the trip. We followed rice from the dump pit where semi-trailers unloaded the rough, or paddy rice, still encased in hulls, through humming, vibrating, flashing, futuristic looking mills to bags headed to Iraq and other ports. Other mills process rice destined for domestic markets.

I came home feeling a connectedness to a community of people working together for the common good, appreciating kinds of agriculture that are compatible with birds, loving that the English language

even when spoken with a very different accent. (Oh, and those oyster po' boys!)

Birds are opportunists; they take advantage of the habitat available if they can. In the southern part of the U.S., that includes rice fields for food and shelter during migration. A field after harvest still serves those purposes. The rice stubble we saw was still live, green, and cut high.

I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by community bird festivals. Find them online with your favorite browser, or in the magazines you read such as the ABA journal *Birding*. Your support matters to communities working hard on creative kinds of economic development. What you will take away matters to you, and in ways much broader than ticks on your life list.

I encourage you to eat US grown rice. And I encourage you go to Jennings for the Yellow Rail and Rice Festival in 2014. Maybe next year I'll see the Ruff!

June Newman,  
President



**Two birders do it “the hard way,” watching for birds flushed by rice-harvest operations at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Yellow Rails and Rice Festival in Jennings, Louisiana. All photos by Paul Baicich.**



The goals of a Yellow Rail and Rice Festival: One mist-netted Yellow Rail, and a great rice harvest!

## *The Bluebird Online!*

Bill Eddleman

Beginning with the March 2014 issue of *The Bluebird*, we will be simultaneously placing the quarterly online for members. This will allow you to view photographs in full color, as well as eventually provide the option of going paperless. I would EMPHASIZE that there are no plans to eliminate paper copies of *The Bluebird* at this time, but you will likely be presented with options in the future.

Stay tuned for further developments!

# Robert Lewis

## October 21, 1928-October 16, 2013

Sue Hagan and Bill Reeves



Bob Lewis, an avid birder and conservationist, climbed his highest peak this past October. A champion of National Audubon, Missouri Audubon and founder of the East Ozarks Audubon Society, Bob had a passion for nature starting in his youth that would remain all his life: he achieved the highest honor for an adult volunteer in scouting, the Silver Beaver, developed skills in hunting, archery, canoeing, hiking, mountain climbing, and camping. But it was his love of birds which

would become his focal point.

Following service in the U. S. Army in 1946-1947 (where he served in the occupation of Japan), he married his high school sweetheart, Joyce. He received a Bachelor of Journalism in 1951, worked briefly as a journalist in Kansas, but moved back to Farmington where he ran an auto store and later worked in banking, from which he retired in 1987. He and Joyce raised three children, leading to three grandchildren and one great-grandson. After his retirement, Bob and Joyce volunteered several summers to serve as camp hosts at Rocky Mountain National Park, and later Bob worked as a naturalist for St. Francois State Park.

**Always a family man, Bob's interest in birds was spurred by his son Greg's ability to identify them by their calls. Bob started writing articles about birds for the local papers in the late 70's, and his budding ornithological interests quickly became a passion. He was aided and abetted by two younger birders, Bill Reeves and Steve Dilks, both of whom would be inspired by their mentor to surpass his counts but could only step aside when Bob's enthusiasm outshone their own.**

But it was as an Audubon organizer and proponent of environmental protection that Bob achieved an ever-expanding circle of influence. In this he always credited two persons, Fielding Chandler and Dr. Richard Crouch; both involved in scouting and the latter also an av-

avid birder. Dr. Crouch was especially influential in encouraging **Bob to join National Audubon, telling him that if he didn't work to** protect the environment there would be no birds left to count. So it was that Bob and his younger birding friends formed East Ozarks Audubon Society in the early 80s. Bob would also serve as president of the Missouri Audubon Society.

Bob encouraged the East Ozarks Audubon Society to take a strong pro-environment stand and to educate the public about birds and conservation. Notable successes in which EOAS played an important role include the establishment of the Irish Wilderness in Shannon County; protection of a bat colony atop Pilot Knob in Iron County; and thwarting mega-ATV trail proposals in the Rock Pile Mountain **Wilderness and at Sutton's Bluff. Under Bob's leadership, the Chapter** took public education as an essential mandate, including sponsoring *Audubon Adventures* for many classrooms and starting a **speaker's bureau to serve numerous schools and civic groups. Not** surprisingly, the most requested speaker was Bob Lewis, who could easily captivate an audience of any age with his stories of birds and birding adventures. For over thirty years, he used his journalism background to edit the Chapter newsletter, *The Bird's Eye View*. He inspired many a fledgling birder and led the way on numerous bird counts, including assisting with the Breeding Bird Atlas, supporting the annual Mingo Christmas Bird Count, and setting an example for **the Chapter's annual Birdathon by regularly spotting well over 100** species, even during this past spring when his health problems were increasingly evident. A little over a year ago, he made his lifetime goal of 600 North American birds.

The 1984 establishment of the Dr. Richard Crouch Nature Sanctuary in Farmington's Engler Park may well become Bob's most enduring and expansive tribute. He and his birding compatriots had **regularly visited the city's sewage lagoon during migration season** and realized the nearby woodland would be a great place for a bird blind. They persuaded both city and state officials to set aside 14 acres for a nature trail and the blind, and this in turn led to an **adjoining city park with ball fields, a children's playground, a lake and** bicycle/walking trails. Grooming the Lewis Trail (as the City chose to name the Sanctuary trail), using prescribed burns on the woods, maintaining the blind, and the year-round filling and maintaining feeders became a project of love involving many Chapter members, with Bob always front and center. Last year when EOAS member Lynn Winston died, her family chose to memorialize her newly found birding hobby by constructing a butterfly garden and chimney **swift tower on the outer edge of the Sanctuary. And Bob's influence**

continues: the city of Farmington has now announced intentions to reconstruct the bird blind, to make it handicapped accessible, and to support construction of a wetland area adjacent to the creek that flows through the Sanctuary.

**Call it coincidence, of course, but at Bob Lewis's funeral a flock of geese were spotted flying high overhead just as the American Legion fired their three-gun salute. We will miss our Chapter Founder but hope to honor his numerous achievements by continuing on the East Ozarks Audubon Society and the Dr. Crouch Nature Sanctuary. The family requests that any cash memorials be given to EOAS.**

## The Story of the Chimney Swift Tower at Cole Camp City Hall

Marge Lumpe

Chimney Swifts had been coming to roost at Cole Camp City Hall (the building which once was the gymnasium for Cole Camp High School) for well over 50 years when the phenomenon was re-discovered in the fall of 2012. As the Hi Lonesome chapter of Missouri Master Naturalists was staged to walk in the Cole Camp Fair Parade on September 6, 2012, we watched in wonder as an estimated 1,200 chimney swifts came to roost.

The following month—October 2012—a rumor was circulated that the City was going to take the chimney down. When I observed that the chimney was still standing, I was relieved that this had just been a rumor and nothing needed to be done. The swifts, however, could be observed downtown flying everywhere looking for a roost. It was then I realized that something had indeed happened to the chimney. It turned out that the chimney had been capped while the birds were still in the area.

I appeared before the November 15 City Council meeting to learn what could be done to restore the roost and what the City had planned for the chimney. The result of that meeting was that the City planned to leave the cap, but they were agreeable to another chimney being built if space could be found. Council requested that plans be brought along with a list of materials, and they would cooperate. The mayor, by the way, said he had never seen the birds.

A report was brought to the Hi Lonesome chapter, and a committee was formed to help resolve the Chimney Swift issue. The committee appeared before City Council on January 17, and proposal was made to erect a new chimney alongside the old chimney, which would save

the need for brick on two sides. Constructing a new tower would require a great deal of labor as well as quite a few bricks.

The Council discussed the proposal and then agreed that making a hole in the cap of the existing chimney and installing an umbrella-type cover to allow swift entry without further degrading the brick in the old chimney would be a much less expensive fix and would be very doable.

In early February Mayor Green notified me that the old chimney was too unstable, and he would not permit his workers to work on making a hole in the cap. One suggestion was made that the old chimney be torn down and another one built back up from the saved bricks. This solution might have worked, but the manpower was no longer available to build the tower. The Swift Committee met with Mayor Green on February 12 to discuss alternatives.

Mayor Green came up with an ingenious idea of creating a tower of wood to be attached to the current chimney on the outside but to extend above the current chimney so that the swifts have no doubt as to where to enter. The committee agreed that this was a great idea, and we reported back to the chapter at the next monthly meeting.

### *Good Politics*

*What a few citizens of Cole Camp, MO did in cooperation with one another, in response to a threat to wild birds in their community, is an example of politics working well. Bird-aware people identified a problem, educated themselves to be well-prepared advocates for their cause, approached elected officials, jointly decided on action, and made it happen. The solution did not cost a lot of money; it did not result in a grand structure with brass plaques; it simply did the job. Kudos to Mayor Green and the city council of Cole Camp, and to the Hi Lonesome chapter of Master Naturalists!*

*Is there a bird habitat need in your community waiting for your assessment, creativity, and educated advocacy? The Audubon Society of Missouri has funds available to partner with your organization on projects that will improve conditions for wild birds. For more information go to [mobirds.org](http://mobirds.org), and find “requesting funds” in the menu under ASM in the blue banner, or go directly to: <http://mobirds.org/ASM/FundsRequest.aspx>. Then make something good happen.*

*The daunting, seemingly insurmountable nature of habitat destruction in our world threatens to paralyze us with apathy and cynicism. That must not be an excuse to abjure the responsibility to do what can be done.*

—June Newman

Meanwhile, Mayor Green obtained estimates for the materials and labor, and he presented his proposal to City Council on March 21. The Master Naturalists chapter agreed it was a brilliant solution, and it could possibly be achieved prior to the swifts return in April. The Council heard the proposal, and there were some very tense moments as members of the council considered the expense of the tower and the fact that there was no money available in the budget to undertake such a project.



The City Council ultimately agreed to the proposal and to advance the money for the project, and the Hi Lonesome Master Naturalists chapter agreed to undertake a fundraising campaign to reimburse the City. The chapter also agreed to provide labor to complete the project if needed.

The tower was completed and installed April 12. The tower was built according to specifications set out in the Chimney Swifts Towers handbook. The Hi Lonesome chapter obtained donations to reimburse the City for the 93% of the expenses which amounted to \$855.

Chimney Swifts returned to the area, but there was no guarantee that they would return to the newly constructed tower. We did not need to be concerned; it was no time before the young man who had built the tower for the City phoned to say he had spotted a bird in the tower. A Chimney Swift was nesting! On June 16, I was showing the tower to June Newman who was birding in the area, and we saw a swift enter the tower.



After a July City Council meeting that was unusually short, some members of Council and the Mayor were outside the building visiting. As they talked they heard the Chimney Swifts coming to roost. They estimated about 200 birds came in that evening. The mayor said, **“Those are the birds Marge has been talking about.”** A very happy result.

Thanks to all ASM members who were supportive and offered information

about the Chimney Swift dilemma in our town!

## A Hidden Gem Uncovered Pat Lueders

The many fall colors of the Indiangrass, little bluestem, sedges, broom and native grasses blended into a breath-taking multicolored wave in the breezes on the new prairie at the Audubon Trails Nature Center in Rolla, Missouri. Sedge Wrens bounced up for a look as we wandered the freshly cut trails through the fragrant grasses. We were visiting this native prairie for the first time with Mike Doyen as our guide. Mike has been the driving force behind the nature center since 2000 when Ozark Rivers Audubon purchased the property located within the Rolla city limits.

It took 10 years of volunteer work to cut down the thousands of cedars and expose this native remnant prairie. The first controlled burn in March, 2013, allowed the prairie to quickly come to life. Six target species of birds have been chosen to forecast how the management plan is working: Field Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, **Dickcissel, Henslow’s Sparrow, and Northern Bobwhite.** The Red-headed Woodpecker is the target species in the savannah, and two immature birds were seen there this fall!

ASM provided a grant of \$3,500.00, using funds achieved through the CACHE program, to assist in these restoration efforts. Future plans include the rehabilitation and restoration of a glade found on the property. Already Justin Thomas, the botanist and consultant on the project, has discovered and identified a short brown capped grass, in the rush family, that was thought extinct in the state for 50 years except on the Golden Prairie!

For more information on the Audubon Trails Nature Center, please go to the website for Ozark Rivers Audubon: [www.ozarkriversaudubon.org](http://www.ozarkriversaudubon.org). Plan on visiting this new birding location to appreciate how a small group of volunteers can make such an impressive difference for our state and prairie species of birds and plants!



View of the restored prairie at Audubon Trails Nature Center, Phelps County. (Photos by Mike Doyen)



Nature Center Entrance at Audubon Trails Nature Center.

# A Field Season on the Edge of America

Curtis Twellmann

My mosquito bites from the Great Texas Birding Classic had not yet healed when I boarded a plane aimed at Anchorage, Alaska. Anchorage was not my final destination for the field season but it helped me transition from the triple digit west Texas heat to the frigid **temps of the North Slope in May. It is only when you are “on the slope” as locals say, when you can mention Point Lonely and hope** that someone in ear shot has ever heard of it. That was my field site, an area few have seen and far fewer have seen twice. For three months my home was the aptly named Point Lonely.

Point Lonely only has a name because it was an Air Force Base during the Cold War era. It is between Barrow and Dead Horse on the coast of the Beaufort Sea in northern Alaska. When we arrived on May 18<sup>th</sup> the snow and ice was such that you could not tell where the land turned to sea. The tenacious Greater White-fronted Geese that had already arrived waited patiently for the snow to melt into the tundra so they could nest. We waited less patiently.

Being on the fringe of North America and in a place void of rare bird alerts, my anticipation for the coming migration and all the rarities I would see was almost unbearable. The old buildings of Point Lonely acted like a magnet for migrating birds, being the only structures for over a hundred miles in any direction. From their wintering grounds in sub-Saharan Africa, a few Northern Wheatears stopped in for a little relief from the biting wind and thus gave me my first Point Lonely lifer.

My attention quickly went from birds to mammals when I saw a young male polar bear walking towards camp while I was out checking on our resident Peregrine Falcon pair. My initial response was to reach for my camera but then better judgment had me head for the nearest shelter before snapping some pictures. The bear acted like it had never seen man nor any of our byproducts as it sniffed everything that stuck above the snow. When it finally saw us standing in the door to our conex it adjusted its course by a few degrees and **headed right for us. Several bluff charges (that we didn't stay outside long enough to see if they were actually “bluff” charges) brought**



Curious young male polar bear.

the bear to within mere feet of us. We were peering out of the barely open door watching the bear circle our conex like a shark. This bear had no fear of man, no knowledge of its ever shrinking habitat, not a care in the world and embodied all that is wild in North America. The bear slowly walked on westward once its desire to travel outweighed its curiosity for our camp. Our attention shifted back to birds and our field work but with a new respect for the wildness of this place. We did not have the right-of-way here, we were not on top of the food chain and from that day forward we stepped out of our camp with all the acuity of any other potential prey.

In mid-June the snow started disappearing and we located our first white-fronted goose nests. We found and monitored nearly 200 within a three-mile semi-circle from our camp. This kept me busy, but while on nest checks I managed to see quite a few lifers between **nests. Some of my favorites were: Steller's and Spectacled Eider, Long-tailed Jaeger, White-rumped Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Loon and Sabine's Gull. I saw several other birds that were seemingly out of place on the tree-less tundra, including: Varied Thrush, American Robin, Tree Swallow and Barn Swallow.**

We did molting drives and then brood drives and managed to band over 2000 Greater White-fronted Geese. This entailed many long



Red-necked Phalarope.

days in helicopters and small planes chasing birds and was an absolute blast. We also did some more tedious vegetation work manipulating some grazing lawns used primarily by Black Brant to try and predict how the future of forage quality and thus Arctic nesting goose tendencies may change over time.



Flightless Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese gathered for banding.



Greater White-fronted Goose goslings.

Our field season at Point Lonely ended on August 13<sup>th</sup>. We recorded **65 species of birds, beating the previous year's total by nearly 10.** Of course the best bird is always the one that gets away and we had two that fit that category. Another crew member and I saw one probable **Red-necked Stint for a brief period but didn't get a definitive** enough look to count it. And we saw one mystery bird for just a couple of moments that caused much debate among our crew. It was most likely not a common North American breeding bird. Regardless of the dips, the season was a success. We excelled at both our work and play and on many days the distinction between the two blurred to such a degree that I would find myself amazed that I was getting paid to do this. For three months I saw America in a state of pristine wildness that cannot be found in the lower 48.

**Amongst the adventure and long days in some of America's harshest** climates one contemplates why in a land of suspected opportunity would one choose such a career path, a career path that has me living out of a tent for months at a time with none of the comforts of modern society, a path that has me intersecting the paths of dangerous animals like polar bears and diverging from that of my family and loved ones. All my life I have felt most alive when in the wild outdoors and experiencing the spectacles that exist there. No amount of technology or human creativity can begin to compare to what you can see in the marshes, prairies and forests. It is those convictions that have guided my life. I put up with inconveniences so

that I can contribute to the scientific understanding of the natural world with hope that in some way, through understanding, I might help my children and future generations have the opportunity to live in a world where wildness still exists.

Before I left Alaska I had my next field job already lined up. I will be working on a Ring-necked Pheasant research project in southwest Nebraska. So goes the migratory life of the field biologist. I want to thank my family for being so supportive and forgiving of my transient pursuit of my career and I want to thank Northwest Missouri State University for offering me the tools to be successful in that quest.

My mosquito bites from the North Slope had not yet healed when I boarded my car aimed at southwestern Nebraska.....



Sun over the tundra.

## SUMMER 2013 SEASONAL REPORT

### KRISTI MAYO

After the 2012 nesting season, which was marked by extreme drought and high temperatures, the summer of 2013 seemed to be a season of recovery. A cool spring was followed by a cool start to summer, with record-low temperatures being set in several locations (45°F in Joplin and 44°F in St. Joseph on June 3; 46°F in Kansas City on June 4; and 48°F in Rolla on June 8). Much-needed heavy rains in the southwest recharged local streams and wetlands, although this led to flooding in Greene, Christian, Jasper, Vernon, and Barton counties. In the east, extremely high water on the Mississippi River in June caused closures due to flooding, with some damage to roads, structures, and habitat. Areas affected included public land along the St. Louis-area floodplain, such as Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, and Columbia Bottom Conservation Area. July maintained the cooler-than-average trend, and precipitation patterns tended toward drier in the north and wetter in the south.

It is always difficult to say what makes for the “magic” of rare bird sightings, but one might suggest that the lack of weather extremes contributed to a lack of outstanding avian reports this summer. The only rare wader was a Tricolored Heron at Four Rivers Conservation Area. A group White-faced Ibis remained at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge through June 20. A spring-migrant Whimbrel at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge was one of the best shorebird sightings for the season. A total of three Laughing Gulls was found in two locations in June. Missouri is the easternmost stronghold for **Bewick’s Wren**, so it was good to get reports of this species—a number of them relating to nesting activity—in 14 counties. And at feeders, Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins lingered into June, holdovers from the stunning 2012-13 winter finch invasion.

#### WHISTLING-DUCKS THROUGH FALCONS

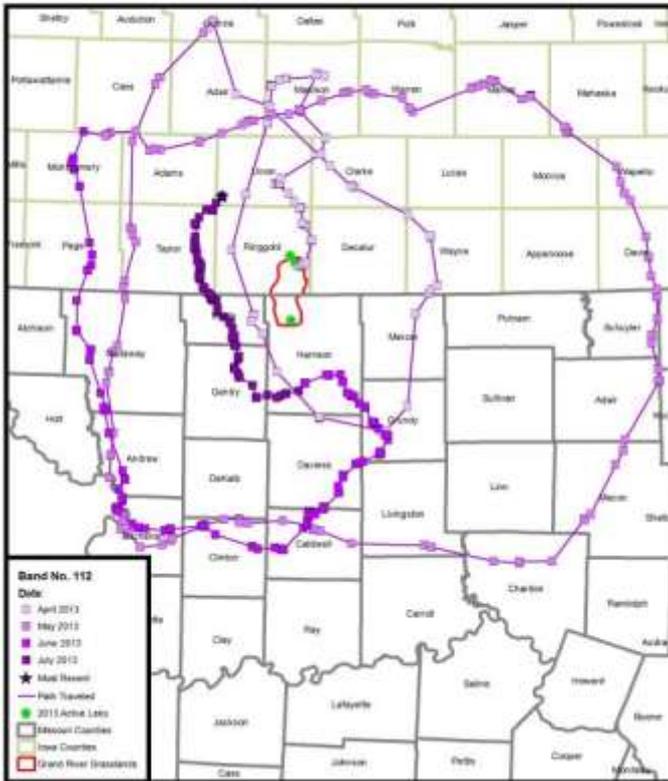
Groups of sick or injured Snow Geese tend to linger through the summer in heavily hunted areas. This summer those sightings included up to 20 from 2 Jun-14 Jul at Lewis and Clark SP *Buchanan* (MR, Paul Habiger); and up to 12 from 1 Jun-28 Jul at OSCA (JU, MP, Nina Koch, Bruce Beck). Three seen 23 Jun in an upland field 6 km east of Doniphan *Ripley* were unusual (BE). The largest late-summer congregation of Wood Ducks was a group of 100+ on 22 Jul at SLNWR (SK). Gadwall, rare summer visitors

statewide, were reported in five locations: 1 ad f and 3 ad m on 29 Jun at OSCA (JU); 1 m on 21 Jun at RMBS (JM, CMA); 41 on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR); 2 on 17 Jun at EBCA (KA); and 1 m and 1 f on 1 Jul at Pershing SP *Linn* (SK). Four American Wigeon\* were reported on 20 Jun at SCNWR (TG, LO). Reports of Blue-winged Teal, rare summer residents, came from all corners of the state: 100+ on 1 Jun (SK) and up to 4 from 17 Jun-11 Jul (m. ob.) at FRCA; 7 on 21 Jun at Lake Jacomo *Jackson* (TG); 10 on 20 Jul at Cooley Lake CA *Clay* (Jeff Wayman); 2-5 from 17 Jun-20 Jul at SCNWR (DM, DW); 3 m on 5 Jul at RMBS (CMA, JM); 2 on 5 Jul at EBCA (CBa); up to 7 from 7 Jun-28 Jul at EBCA (GL, John Besser, KA, CBa, Betty Richey); 12 on 26 Jul at Little Prairie CA *Phelps* (WW); and 16 on 1 Jun (JU, MP) and 6 on 16 Jun (GS, et al.) at OSCA. A single ad m Cinnamon Teal remained on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR). Northern Shovelers, rare summer visitors, were found in two locations: 5 on 1 Jun at FRCA (SK) and a peak of 20 on 16 Jun at OSCA (GS, et al.). Northern Pintails\* remained in two locations: 10 on 16 Jun (GS et al.) and 2 m on 29 Jun (JU) were found at OSCA; and 1 m and 1 f were reported on 27 Jul at CCNWR (JU-ph.). Green-winged Teal sightings included 1 f on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR); 1 m on 20 Jun at EBCA (Jill Hays, Debbie Martin, Steve Martin\*); and 1 ad m in transitional plumage on 29 Jun at OSCA (JU-ph.\*). A single m Canvasback\* molting into basic plumage was found on 6 Jul at RMBS (Lee Sterrenburg, Kathy McClain). A pair plus one ad m (a total of 3) Redheads\* remained on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR); one ad continued there through 17 Jun (DW). Ring-necked Duck sightings included a pair plus one ad m (a total of 3) on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR); and 1 m on 2 Jul at the Carl Junction Lagoons *Jasper* (Lawrence Herbert). A single ad m Lesser Scaup transitioning into eclipse plumage was at RMBS 2-30 Jun (BR, JE, JM, CMA). A single m Scaup sp. observed in the same location on 25 Jul may have represented the same individual, but was not positively identified to species due to distance (CMA, JM). Meanwhile, a group of 6 lingered at SCNWR on 2 Jun (MR), and 2 m were observed 19-20 Jun at Legacy Park *Jackson* (NV, Dan Cowell, Varick Cowell). One Common Merganser\* was reported on 17 Jul at Edwin A Pape Lake *Lafayette* (BC, KA), though it was noted the bird had “been present for months; swims strongly.” Ruddy Duck reports included 1 ad m on 1 Jun at OSCA (JU, MP); a pair plus one f (total of 3) on 2 Jun (MR), 1 ad m 17 Jun (DW-ph.), and 1 f on 20 Jun (TG, LO) at SCNWR; and 2 on 11 Jul at RMBS (Brent Schindewolf).

## PRAIRIE-CHICKEN THROUGH WADERS

Reports of Greater Prairie-Chickens were limited to 1 bird on 4 Jun at Taberville Prairie CA *St. Clair* (JS) and 5 on 6 Jun at Wah'kon-tah Prairie *St. Clair* (JS). In addition, a female prairie chicken made headlines when the Missouri Department of Conservation announced on Aug 1 that she had been tracked traveling in large circles—a total of 1,165 miles—through southern Iowa and northern Missouri. The hen was trapped in western Nebraska and released April 4 in Iowa near the Missouri border. The GPS tracking collar worn by the bird revealed her wanderings through St. Joseph, Kirksville, and Trenton, Mo. Single Common Loons in basic plum-

**Bird Number 112**  
**July 29, 2013**  
**Distance Traveled Since Release = 1,165 miles**



The many travels of a telemetered hen Greater Prairie Chicken after it was released in northern Missouri on April 4. Map courtesy of the Missouri Department of Conservation.

age were recorded 1 Jun at Ten-Mile Pond CA *Mississippi* (JU, MP) and 13-17 Jun at SL (DW-ph.). High counts for American White Pelicans included a stunning 1,595 on 26 Jul at CCNWR (JM, CMA); 200 on 9 Jul at Fountain Grove CA *Linn/Livingston* (SK); 150 on 18 Jul at SLNWR (SK); and 110 on 18 Jul at Four Rivers CA *Vernon* (GS). A group of 21 on 15 Jun near Elephant Rock SP *Iron* wasn't a particularly large number, but unusual for being over the middle of the Ozarks at this date (JU). There were only three American Bittern sightings, all of single birds: 2 Jun and 21 Jul, SCNWR (MR, EA, DM); and 16 Jun *Polk* (JM). The largest concentrations of Least Bitterns came from SCNWR (6 birds on 21 Jul) (EA et al.) and Marais Temps Clair CA *St. Charles* (up to 9 on 6-7 Jul) (JM, MB). Singles and pairs were also reported from locations in *Boone, Clay, Johnson, Knox, Dunklin,*

*Stoddard*, and *Lincoln* (m. ob.). High counts of Great Egrets included 800 on 11 Jul at Four Rivers CA *Vernon* (DW); 566 on 25 Jul at Columbia Bottom CA *St. Louis* (JM); and 400+ on 9 Jul at Fountain Grove CA *Linn/Livingston* (SK). Snowy Egret reports came primarily from the St Louis area, with the highest count, 19, at RMBS on 22 Jun (JU). Little Blue Herons were found in groups of 91 on 20 Jul at Columbia Bottom CA *St Louis* (JM, CMA); 16 on 20 Jun at Four Rivers CA *Vernon* (DW); and 12 on 18 Jun at SCNWR (CR). The season's only Tricolored Heron was seen 17 Jun and 11 Jul at Four Rivers CA *Vernon* (SN-ph., DW). Black-crowned Night-Herons were found in nine locations in the St Louis area, reported in numbers from 1 to 4 at a time (Mary Anne Marjamaa, LR, JM, CMA, Pamela Oleson, MB, Joseph Rockey, DMa, CMc, TB, Peter Connolly). In the southeast, 2 ad and 2 imm were found 1 Jun at OSCA (JU, MP). In the south, 3 were at Roaring River SP *Barry* on 16 Jun (Auriel Fournier). In the west, single birds were found 25 Jun at Watkins Mill SP *Clay* (NV) and 22 Jul in *Cass* (Ginny Culver), while up to 4 were found between 2 Jun and 20 Jul at SCNWR (DW). And in central Mo, 1 was present at EBCA 16 Jun-31 Jul (Richard Stanton, GL). White-faced Ibis stayed well into Jun at SCNWR, with 43 counted there on 2 Jun (MR) and 18 on 20 Jun (LO); and a single bird was at EBCA on 17 Jun (KA).

## OSPREY THROUGH CRANES

Two adult Osprey were tending a single fledgling at a nest site in *Dade* on 21 Jul (GS-ph., CBu). Other Osprey sightings were not directly associated with nests: 1 hunting over the main body of SL on 13 Jun (DW); 2 on 16 Jun and 1 on 1 Jul south of Clinton *Henry* (JMo); 1 on 23 Jul at Perry County CL *Perry* (MH); 1 on 26 Jul at Longview Lake *Jackson* (Sherry Leonardo); and 1 31 Jul at EBCA (GL). The MBRC recently moved Mississippi Kites to uncommon local summer residents, as they have become expected in areas such as St Louis, Joplin, Springfield, FRCA, along the Missouri R., and the Bootheel region. An exception this season was 1 on 7 Jul at SLNWR (LOW-ph.). The high count was 16 on 6 Jul at a private wetland in *Dunklin* (TJ). Northern Harrier sightings spanned the season and were limited to single birds in *Jackson*, *Jefferson*, *Greene*, and *Dade* (Michael Beck, Licina Gille-Rowley, RF, CBu). An individual seen 22 Jun 2 km nw. of Alfalfa Center *Mississippi* was in an unusual location (BE). Similarly, only single Sharp-shinned Hawks were noted in *St Louis*, *Laclede*, *Phelps*, *Christian*, *Howell*, and *Iron* (Woody Walters, Wylie Walters, Jamie Goodspeed, WW, Mike Doyen, Eric Seaman, Scott Block, RF). Only individual Swainson's Hawks were reported, with the nexus of sightings coming from *Greene* and *Webster* (JMo, AK, GS). Other singles were found 17 Jun at Four Rivers CA *Vernon* (SN); 4 Jul in *Montgomery* (Mike Maxwell); 3-6 Jul at Kansas City International Airport *Platte* (Michael Andersen, Nate Swick, MG), and 20 Jul at Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge *Holt* (DM). Summering Sora\* were found in two locations: 2 on 1 Jun at City of Columbia Wetland #4 *Boone* (GC, KL); and 1 on 5 & 21 Jul at SCNWR (EA, DM). Common Gallinule, a rare summer resident, were found in four spots: 1 on 1 Jun at City of Columbia Wetland #4 *Boone* (GC, KL); 3 on 29 Jun at OSCA (JU); 1 on 4 Jul at

Marais Temps Clair CA *St. Charles* (MB); and 1 seen between 3-18 Jun at SCNWR (DW, Sam Manning, CR, Bruce Wendorff). A count of 300 American Coots on 17 Jun (“likely a low estimate”) came from SCNWR (DW). Sandhill Cranes continue to quietly make their presence known as they over-summer in the state. On 3 Jun, 1 ad m, 1 ad f, and 2 juv were feeding in the grassy area near the town of McBaine at the Columbia Wetland Unit #4 *Boone* (GL). The adults are likely the same pair that successfully nested at nearby Eagle Bluffs CA in 2012. On 7-10 Jul, 2 birds (KA) and on 20 Jul, 9 birds were observed at EBCA (Kevin Wehner). On 10 Jun, 2 ad were found on private wetlands near Perry CA *Johnson*; later, on 31 Jul, two juvenile cranes were observed in the same spot (LO, Tom Gaines). A number of sightings had anywhere from 1 to 3 cranes at SCNWR between 2 Jun and 21 Jul (m. ob.).

## SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS

One Piping Plover was at CCNWR on 20 Jul (Allen Smith-ph., JM, CMa). As expected, the highest count of Black-necked Stilts came from the Bootheel, with 40 in *Dunklin* on 29 Jul (TJ). Outside of the Bootheel, 2 were at RMBS *St Charles* on 2 & 21 Jun (BR, JM-ph., CMa); and 4 were at Pershing SP *Linn* on 1 Jul (SK). A single ad American Avocet lingered at SCNWR 2-5 Jun (MR, DW-ph., LOw). The largest count of Spotted Sandpipers was of 30 on 27 Jul at Schell-Osage CA *Vernon* (GS, et al.). The only June report of a Solitary Sandpiper was of a late spring migrant on 2 Jun at CBCA *St Louis* (BR, JE). The first likely southbound Greater Yellowlegs was found on 29 Jun at the Keeteman Rd Sod Farm *Lincoln* (CMa). The highest count was of 80 on 25 Jul at a farm pond in *Webster* (GS). Willets were found in four locations: 1 on 10 Jul at EBCA (NM); 1 on 26 Jul at CCNWR (Al Smith-ph., CMa, JM); 2 on 26 Jul at a farm pond in *Webster* (GS); and 1 on 26 Jul in Jamestown *Greene* (GS). Upland Sandpiper high counts included 24 on 26 Jun at DR (TG); and 14 on 24 Jun during a BBS route in *Sullivan/Adair* (SK, LL). Other reports came from *St Clair*, *Clinton*, and *Linn* (SK, June Newman, BG, KM). A single report of a Whimbrel came from SCNWR on 2 Jun (MR). Solitary Ruddy Turnstones were found at OSCA on 1 Jun (JU) and at CCNWR on 27 Jul (JU-ph.). Sanderlings turned up in three locations: 7 on 2 Jun at Lake Contrary *Buchanan* (MR); 2 on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR); and 3 on 27 Jul at CCNWR (JU-ph.). Western Sandpiper reports were limited to two: 1 ad was at RMBS *St Charles* on 21 Jul (BR) and 1 at CCNWR on 27 Jul (JM-ph., CMa). White-rumped Sandpipers account for the largest segment of our assortment of late spring-migrant shorebirds. A total of 725 stopped by on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR). High counts of southbound Baird's Sandpipers were 45 on 26 Jul at a farm pond in *Webster* and 12 on 26 Jul in Jamestown *Greene* (GS). A late spring-migrant Buff-breasted Sandpiper was documented along Keeteman Rd. *Lincoln* on 2 Jun—notable both for the late date and location in the east, where the species is decidedly less common (David Becher†). Usually a few show up before the big push of migrants in August, but the only southbound summer-season report of these sod-loving shorebirds was on 31 Jul in Jamestown *Greene* (GS). Two Short-billed Dowitchers on 1 Jun at OSCA represented



Among the three Laughing Gulls found this summer was this immature at Smithville Lake, Clay County, June 13-17, shown with a Herring Gull and a Caspian Tern. Photograph by Nick Varvel.

one of very few June records for this species (JU). A quartet of Wilson's Phalaropes flew overhead on 2 Jun at CBCA *St Louis* (BR, JE). Laughing Gulls turned up in two spots: 1 ad was at SL on 1 Jun (Keith Brink\*), followed by an imm observed 13-17 Jun (NV-ph.†, DW-ph.); and 1 ad was found 19 Jun at RMBS (LR).

## TERNS THROUGH NUTHATCHES

A barge intended as artificial nesting habitat for Least Terns at RMBS had a difficult season again: On a barge-monitoring trip 11 Jun, 25 ad terns were counted near the barge, along with 17 nests containing 36 eggs, as well as 12 scrapes that contained no eggs. On 18 Jun, no terns could be located in the area; one deceased tern was located on the barge, all of the eggs were gone with the exception of a few shell fragments. The final sighting of terns in the barge area was of three birds on 20 Jun. It is unclear what caused the nest failure (Megan Karrick). Elsewhere, 1 was at Schell-Osage CA *Vernon* on 6 Jun (DW); up to 5 from 16-23 Jun at EBCA (GL, Richard Stanton, KA, NM, Jenna March); 7 on 20 Jun at Ten Mile Pond CA *Mississippi* (TJ); 1 on 29 Jun at a private wetland *Dunklin* (TJ); 10 on 13 Jul at Keeteman Road Sod Farm *Lincoln* (CMa, JM); 2 on 16 Jul at Red Star Access *Cape Girardeau* (MH); and 3 on 31 Jul at Little River CA *Dunklin* (TJ). As many as 5 Caspian Terns lingered from 2-17 Jun at SL (DW-ph., MG, NV, Jenny Gearheart), and by mid-Jul they were found in suitable habitat: 4 on 11 Jul at Four Rivers CA *Vernon* (DW); 4 on 21 Jul at RMBS (BR); and 1 on 22 Jul

at SLNWR (SK). An impressive count of 225 Black Terns recorded on 2 Jun at SCNWR (MR) surpasses the record-high count provided in R&E. On **26 Jul**, a “**tern-ado**” of 86 terns was found at CCNWR (CMA). Two ad Common Terns and 2 first-summer **Forster’s Terns** lingered until 2 Jun at RMBS *St Charles* (BR). Another **Forster’s Tern** was at **Fountain Grove CA Linn/Livingston** on 1 Jul (SK). Individual Greater Roadrunners were found 10 Jun at Roaring River SP *Barry* (DW); 19 Jun on Z Hwy *Webster* (GS); 21 Jun on Highway KK & Wolf Creek Rd *Taney* (AK); 26 Jul on a farm 3 miles w of Pineville *McDonald* (Joyce Haynes); and 27 Jul in Springfield *Greene* (CBu). Barn Owls were found in *Cape Girardeau*, *Vernon*, *Harrison*, *Pemiscot*, *Dunklin*, and *Jefferson*, with a high count of 3 (1 ad, 2 fledglings) on 1 Jun in *Cape Girardeau* (JU, MP, DW, John McConnell-ph., Joanne Parker, TJ, Terry Freerks, Allen Gathman, MH). A high count of 33 Chuck-will’s-widows was tallied along a 7.3-mile route on the Sugar Camp National Forest Scenic Byway *Barry*, stopping at 0.5-mile intervals to listen for 2-3 minutes (SN, DW). One *Selasphorus* sp. hummingbird was photographed at a feeder on 31 Jul in Republic *Greene* (Melinda McCubbins-ph.). With the exception of the Peregrine Falcons that nest in downtown Kansas City *Jackson*, all other Peregrine reports were of birds in the St. Louis area: 1 on 21 Jul at Columbia Bottom CA *St. Louis* (DMa, Mary Anne Marjamma); 1 on 30 Jul at CCNWR (CMA); 1 from 27-28 Jun at Forest Park, *St. Louis City* (TB); 1 on 29 Jun-27 Jul at Riverlands *St. Charles* (Cathy Spahn, Brent Schindewolf, CMA, JM); and 2 from 3-9 Jul at Washington University



This *Selasphorus* sp. hummingbird appeared at a feeder on July 31 in Republic, Green County. Photograph by Melinda McCubbins.

School of Medicine *St. Louis City* (Kyle McCommis). A late Olive-sided Flycatcher was spotted 3 Jun at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield *Greene* (DT, et al.). Another late-moving flycatcher, the Alder Flycatcher, was found on 3 Jun at Creve Coeur *St. Louis* (JU, Chris Brown, MP). Lingered Least Flycatchers were found 2 Jun at Lake Contrary *Buchanan* (MR) and 3 Jun at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield *Christian* (DT). A nesting pair of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers present throughout the season in *Gentry* could be the farthest-north nesting record in the state (Terry McNeely). Loggerhead Shrikes were reported in numbers of 1-2 throughout season in multiple counties: *Cass, Stoddard, Harrison, Phelps, Gentry, Laclede, Benton, Dade, Johnson, Dunklin, New Madrid, Harrison, Howell, St Clair* (eBird data). The highest counts of Bell's Vireos in the east (where "rare") was 7 on 5 Jun at Weldon Spring CA *St Charles* (CMc); and in the west the high count was 12 on 4 Jul at Prairie SP *Barton* (RC).

## WRENS THROUGH FINCHES

Marsh Wrens were reported in five locations: 4 on 1 Jun at Columbia Bottom CA *St. Louis* (CMc); 2 on 22 Jun at Weldon Spring CA *St. Charles* (CMc); 2 on 16 Jul at Big Muddy NFWR *St. Charles* (Joe Hanfman); 1 on 26 Jul at Little Prairie CA *Phelps* (WW); and 1 2 Jun & 21 Jul at SCNWR (MR, EA). Bewick's Wrens had an excellent showing in the state this year, with reports coming from *Cole, Pettis, Lawrence, Franklin, Cedar, Laclede, Taney, Washington, Webster, Phelps, Jackson, Newton, Miller, and Cass*. The highest count was of 7 (2 ad, 5 fledglings) on 8 Jun in Russellville *Cole* (CBa). An individual Swainson's Thrush still moving north through the state was detected 3 Jun at Creve Coeur *St Louis* (JU). Unusual high counts of 140 American Robins and 18 Brown Thrashers on 22 Jul at Maintz WP *Cape Girardeau* took MH by surprise. A high count of 250 Cedar Waxwings was tallied on 2 Jun at Little Creve Coeur Marsh *St. Louis* (David Rogles). A checklist of 12 Black-and-white Warblers on 8 Jun at Powder Mill Trail *Shannon* was a good count (JU). Swainson's Warblers turned up in three spots: 1 ad m on 8 Jun at Powder Mill Trailhead *Shannon* (JU-ph.); 3 on 30 Jun at Ozark National Scenic Riverways-Blue Spring *Shannon* (Brandon Miller, Laura Makielski); and 1 on 10 Jun at Roaring River SP *Barry* (SN, DW). A nice total of 32 American Redstarts was recorded 8 Jun on the Powder Mill Trail *Shannon* (JU). A single ad m Canada Warbler was found 3 Jun at Creve Coeur *St Louis* (JU). Lark Sparrows were observed to be more common in the Chillicothe *Livingston* area than usual this season (SK). High counts of Henslow's Sparrows included 26 on 14 Jun at Diamond Grove Prairie CA *Newton* (JCa); 15 on 15 Jun at Schwartz Prairie *St. Clair* (JS); 15 on 4 Jul at Prairie SP *Barton* (RC); and 15 on 21 Jul at Hi Lonesome Prairie CA *Benton* (ML). Painted Bunting, a rare summer resident in the southwest and accidental elsewhere, demonstrated that it has a good stronghold in the western Ozarks with at least eight sightings of 1 to 4 birds in *Greene, Barry, Taney, Stone, and Dade* (CBu, GS, SN, DW, Emily Samuel, Kelsey Rumley, AK, JCa, NV). Outlying sightings included 1 from 21-24 Jul at Hi Lonesome Prairie CA, *Benton* (KA, BC, ML); and 1 m on 15 Jun at Windsor Crossing Park *Henry* (SK, BG). The high



**Several Red Crossbills held over from last winter's invasion. This Type 2 female was at a feeder in Stanberry, Gentry County, from May 26 to June 6, where it was photographed by Judy Phillips.**

count for Bobolinks was 43 on 24 Jun while running a BBS route in *Sullivan/Adair* (SK, LL). A rather paltry high count of 9 Yellow-headed Blackbirds came from SCNWR 2 Jun-**20 Jul... and was also the only location** where they were reported (m. ob.). Red Crossbills, held over from the 2012-13 winter finch invasion, were found at feeders in two locations: 9 Type-2 birds were in Marshfield *Webster* on 5 Jun, and 2 remained on 24 Jun (GS); and 1 Type-2 f was in Stanberry *Gentry* from 26 May-6 Jun (Judy Phillips-ph., Jake Phillips). Pine Siskins were also slow to leave, with 1 on 2 Jun at DR (Marky Mutchler); 2 on 2 Jun in Russellville *Cole* (CBa); and 1 f on 8 Jun in Kearney *Clay* (KM).

#### Observers

Edward Allen (EA), Kathleen Anderson (KA), Tom Bailey (TB), Chris Barrigar (CBa), Mike Brady (MB), Charley Burwick (CBu), Jeff Cantrell (JCa), Robert Carr (RC), Bill Clark (BC), Grant Connette (GC), Joe Eades (JE), Bill Eddleman (BE), Rob Francis (RF), Thomas Gaines, Jr. (TG), Brent Gal-

liart (BG), Matt Gearheart (MG), Mark Haas (MH), Tim Jones (TJ), Steve Kinder (SK), Andrew Kinslow (AK), Larry Lade (LL), Katie LaJeunesse (KL), Greg Leonard (GL), Marge Lumpe (ML), Charlene Malone (CMA), Jim Malone (JM), Nicholas March (NM), David Marjamaa (DMa), Kristi Mayo (KM), Christina McClarren (CMc), Don Merz (DM), Joseph Mosley (JMo), Susan Nixon (SN), Larry Olpin (LO), Lisa Owens (LOW), Mark Paradise (MP), Lane Richter (LR), Mark Robbins (MR), Charlotte Ross (CR), Bill Rowe (BR), Josh Smith (JS), Greg Swick (GS), Dorothy Thurman (DT), Joshua Uffman (JU), Nick Varvel (NV), Doug Willis (DW), William Wood (WW).

### Key

- \* Documentation needed for MBRC review but not yet submitted
- † Documentation received by MBRC

### Abbreviations

acc.	Accepted by MBRC
ad	Adult
CA	Conservation Area
f	Female
imm	Immature
juv	Juvenile
L	Lake
m	male
MO	Missouri
m. ob.	Multiple observers
MBRC	Missouri Bird Records Committee
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
ph.	Photographed
R&E	Robbins & Easterla, <i>Birds of Missouri: Their Distribution and Abundance</i> (1992)
SP	State Park

Location abbreviations (counties are in italics)

CCNWR	Clarence Cannon NWR <i>Pike</i>
DR	Dunn Ranch <i>Harrison</i>
EBCA	Eagle Bluffs CA <i>Boone</i>
FRCA	Four Rivers CA <i>Vernon &amp; Bates</i>
OSCA	Otter Slough CA <i>Stoddard</i>
RMBS	Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary <i>St Charles</i>
SL	Smithville Lake <i>Clay &amp; Clinton</i>
SLNWR	Swan Lake NWR <i>Chariton</i>
SCNWR	Squaw Creek NWR <i>Holt</i>

# A BIRDERS' GUIDE TO MISSOURI PUBLIC LANDS

Deepa Mohan

FOREST PARK, CITY OF ST. LOUIS  
Summer 2013

For information, contact Forest Park Forever, <http://www.forestparkforever.org/>, or call the visitors' center during working hours: 314-367-7275.

**Directions:** Forest Park's official address is 5595 Grand Dr., St Louis, MO 63112. However, since the park spans 1,371 acres, it can be entered from several points (see the map at the website above).

Birding opportunities: Forest Park is a large area and offers excellent opportunities to both the beginner and the experienced birder. On a good day, **even the "common" birds are of quite a variety. For an urban park, it has a surprisingly long bird checklist.** See the list at <http://www.forestparkforever.org/experience/thingstodo/bird-watching/>

The interconnection of the various water bodies in the park makes for good riverine habitat for many birds, and the presence of large trees, a carefully-cultivated prairie/savannah area, and mown grass of three golf courses draws many birds to the various habitats.

The pumps installed in the water bodies, and the gradation of the landscaping, ensure that there is water in even the driest of climactic conditions, as in the summer of 2012.

Some highlights:

A. From the Denis and Judith Jones Visitors Center, walk down towards the Muny (Municipal Theatre), and keeping the Muny on your left, turn towards the St. Louis Zoo area. The large cottonwoods, and the area near **them comprised of young woods (behind the World's Fair or Spanish Pavilion)** are home to two Great Horned Owls. In recent years, they have nested and bred successfully, and have augmented the population of these owls in the park. The Muny area is also a good place to watch many varieties of sparrows, and the trumpet flower plants in the Steinberg Plaza of the Muny is a great place, in summer, to watch the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The building also has many Barn Swallow nests that can be watched in summer.

B. The interconnection of the various water bodies in the park, including Post-Dispatch Lake, Jefferson Lake, and the creek leading from the Muny, is excellent for waterfowl; various ducks (especially teal and mallards), herons and greets can be found taking advantage of the crayfish, fish, and oth-

other water fauna. Belted Kingfishers can be seen, too, fishing in the creek. Several kinds of woodpeckers are in the tall trees.

Many land birds also use the water, especially in the summer months, and **it's delightful to watch American Goldfinches and House Finches bathing** in the shallow waters near the Suspension Bridge (Location: [http://www.way-marking.com/waymarks/WM2TQ1\\_Forest\\_Park\\_Suspension\\_Bridge\\_St\\_Louis\\_Missouri](http://www.way-marking.com/waymarks/WM2TQ1_Forest_Park_Suspension_Bridge_St_Louis_Missouri))

C. Kennedy Forest is a wooded area. The southwest area of the Park, including the conifers, is particularly good for migrant birds, especially warblers. **It was voted "the best place to bird-watch, 2000" by the RiverFront Times:** <http://www.riverfronttimes.com/bestof/2000/award/best-place-to-bird-watch-30749/> This listing by Randy Korotev says that 107 species of birds, mostly passerines, pass through in April and May: <http://levee.wustl.edu/~rlk/wgnss/nn99kf/> (Location: [http://levee.wustl.edu/~rlk/wgnss/nn99kf/kf\\_map.gif](http://levee.wustl.edu/~rlk/wgnss/nn99kf/kf_map.gif))

D. Additionally, the areas near the St. Louis Zoo are also very rewarding. In fact, several wild birds are often to be seen in the zoo itself. The regular and reliable availability of food is no doubt a large factor. Entrance to the zoo is free; parking in the zoo lot is \$12. Winter is a better season than others to see raptors in the park, because of better visibility. Red-tailed Hawk, **Cooper's Hawk, and American Kestrel can be seen near the visitors' center and Jefferson Lake area.**

For an illustrated list of the common birds that one can spot in the park, see [http://www.forestparkforever.org/files/landbird\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.forestparkforever.org/files/landbird_brochure.pdf) This list can be **picked up as a brochure, at the visitors' center, too.**

**Toilets:** There are facilities at the visitors' center, and scattered around the park; but early in the morning, expect these to be closed.

**Water:** There are water fountains scattered over the Park, but it's better to carry one's own bottle of water while on birding outings.

Camping: None.

Hazards: None except for the usual mosquitoes in season. But jogging, running, walking, hiking and biking are popular, so it's a good thing to check at the visitors' center if there are events happening, as the area can be very crowded and it may not be a good time for birding.

Do check the weather on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) before going, as it is not fun to be caught in the open parkland during a sudden thunderstorm.

Nearby Birding Sites: There are many parks and conservation areas within easy driving distance. Among these are birding favorites Carondelet Park (checklist at <http://www.mobirds.org/CACHE/AreaChecklist.aspx?site=1334>), and Tower Grove Park.

## WE WELCOME OUR NEW ASM MEMBERS!!

Jerry Wade

A new feature of *The Bluebird* begins with this issue. New members will be acknowledged and thanked. This December issue lists all new members for 2013. Beginning with March, 2014, we will list the new members who have joined in the previous quarter.

**New members are our future. If a new member lives near you, say, “Howdy and welcome to ASM.” In addition, recruit another new member.**

Welcome to these 63 new ASM members in 2013!

First Name	Last Name	City	State
James	Bair	Kansas City	MO
Rosemary	Bauer	Wood River	IL
Brian & A. J.	Bone	Jefferson City	MO
Peggy	Bradley	Fair Play	MO
Kalen	Brady	Rolla	MO
Tommy	Buckley	Overland Park	KS
Bart & Courtney	Carter	Murphy	TX
Mary	Carter	Murphy	TX
Donna	Chance	Wathena	KS
Michael	Crowley	Foristell	MO
Frankie	Cuculich	Brashear	MO
Chase	Darr	Columbia	MO
Katie	Darr	Columbia	MO
Dale	DeWan	Kirksville	MO
Peggy	DeWan	Kirksville	MO
Bob	Eldridge	Kearney	MO
Ryan	Evans	Savannah	MO
Joyce	Fowler	Alexandria	MO
Steve	Garr	Jefferson City	MO
Betsy	Garrett	Columbia	MO
Daniel	Getman	Kirksville	MO

First Name	Last Name	City	State
Kathy	Getman	Kirksville	MO
David	Gibson	St. Louis	MO
Robin	Hankinson	Pocahontas	MO
Catharine	Harris	Columbia	MO
Franklin & Virginia	Havens	Rolla	MO
Doug	Hoff	Ballwin	MO
Kim	Hoffman	Jefferson City	MO
Ginger	Human	St. Louis	MO
Nancy	Jeffers	Rolla	MO
Lois	Kappelmann	Washington	MO
Anne	Leduc	Prairie Village	KS
Holly	Lee	Fenton	MO
Glenn	Longworth	Kansas City	MO
Andre	Loughrin	Fair Play	MO
Christina	Ludtke	Waynesville	MO
Jason	Luscier	Kirksville	MO
Chuck	Malo	Gallatin	MO
Mark	Goodwin	Jackson	MO
Rebecca	Matthews	Springfield	MO
Rhonda	McCann	Gallatin	MO
Max	Michael	Charleston	MO
Sally	Michael	Charleston	MO
Scott	Miller	Leslie	MO
Joseph	Mosley	Raytown	MO
Dorothy	Palmer	Foristell	MO
Mark	Pederson	Kearney	MO
Jake	Phillips	St. Joseph	MO
Barb, Max,	Postal	Sunset Hills	MO
Andrew	Reago	St. Louis	MO

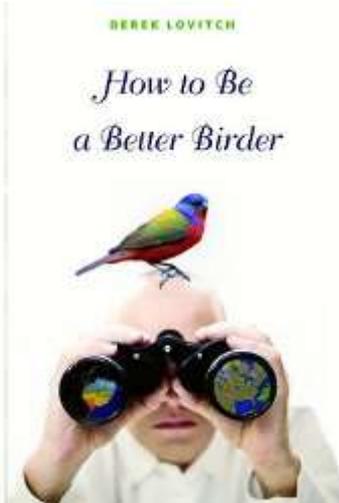
First Name	Last Name	City	State
Megan	Scrutchfield	Centerview	MO
Charles	Shawyer	Ashland	MO
Mark	Sluss	St. Louis	MO
Chao-hui	Starrett	Cape Girardeau	MO
Martha & Laura	Swick	Ozark	MO
Bill	Timberlake	Chesterfield	MO
Lori	Turner	Columbia	MO
Curtis	Twelmann	St. Ann	MO
Sarah	Uffman	Eureka	MO
Corinne	Vogel	Hillsboro	MO
Michael	Winger	Rolla	MO
William	Wood	Rolla	MO
Jimmy	Woodard	Mustang	OK



Green Heron. Photo by Becky Wylie.

## BOOK REVIEW

Bill Eddleman



*How to be a Better Birder* By Derek Lovitch. 2012. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. Paperbound, 208pp, 53 color illustrations & 10 maps. \$19.95. Additional details and ordering information at: <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/9671.html>

**The birder's bookshelf is crowded** with all sorts of books these days. One almost needs a guidebook to guides! However, this book has its **own niche. Don't expect all sorts of** identification hints, although there are some in the first chapter, **"Advanced Field Identification."**

These are presented as examples rather than exhaustive coverage.

**The author's stated purpose for this book is "to give some helpful** hints, spur additional study, and simply provide some information that we can apply to our own birding in pursuit of becoming better **birders, whatever that means to you."** I think the book succeeds well on all accounts. First of all, despite his insistence that all levels of birders can learn (with which I agree), I do think that the book is really of greatest benefit to intermediate-level birders. By that, I mean those who know the basic identification of local birds and have a fair degree of field experience. I will also point out, though, that I learned a great deal as well, so experienced birders may also find the book of great benefit.

Lovitch emphasizes in the first chapter that he is going to use a **"whole bird and more" approach to improving birder skills.** Throughout the book, he gives copious examples to illustrate his points. He also emphasizes repeatedly that there is not substitute for practice and a high degree of field experience. As others have emphasized in the past, we should go beyond the basics with even common birds, and learn all we can about plumages, shapes, and behavior. A great strength of the book appears in this and all subsequent chapters—an abundance of suggestions for further reading, web sites, and additional guides that go into more detail.

The book has one additional chapters on habitat, geography, weather, birding at night, birding with a purpose, and vagrants. The habitat chapter is reminiscent in some ways of an old book I remember reading some years ago, *The Habitat Guide to Birding* by Thomas P. McElroy Jr. Most of us have at least some feel for many (if not most) birds being specific to habitats. Lovitch proposes that to REALLY get the most out of birding, we might need to focus on learning plants and how specific species and groups of species are used by birds. Learning a bit about plants and plant communities can certainly save a lot of effort in finding those “goal” birds. In fact, as he points out, if Red Crossbills are eventually split into 8-9 species, learning those coniferous trees may be essential!

Ever wonder why certain sites are known as real hot spots for migrants? The chapter on “Birding with Geography” explains that, as well as going beyond the range maps most of us consult in our field guides. I think most of us do consider local geography when birding, but some of the tips included here may inform us on other areas to check beyond the well-known sites.

**The chapter, “Birding and Weather,” provides a nice summary of how weather affects migration, and nicely explains how and why groundings, fall-outs (great for birders, bad for birds), and overshoots occur. A brief summary of what happens with tropical storms and birds is included, and the effects of long-term weather patterns are briefly discussed as well. Examples are included that discuss Cave Swallows in the East and the “Siberian Express.”**

A relatively new facet of birding is covered in the chapter on “Birding at Night.” I don’t think I’ve read a more succinct summary of how radar can be used to inform birders, and Lovitch includes suggestions on when and how to take advantage to see more birds. “Birding with a Purpose” includes information on how birders can contribute to various data collection efforts, including Christmas Bird Counts, Breeding Bird Surveys, atlasing, and eBird. Hey, if you’re going to have fun birding, may as well do it in a way that can benefit the birds and knowledge about the birds (including our own CACHE and SPARKS efforts). A chapter on vagrants summarizes identification challenges, documentation, and how to increase your chances of finding them. Everything is then assembled into a grand example of a New Jersey case study—weather, identification, night birding, geography, and habitat.

In short, I found this to be an interesting read, and a refreshing change from the usual “identification and field marks” book. I can recommend this for anyone wishing to improve their birding!

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