

The

BLUEBIRD



THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

Vol. 33, No. 1

Winter-Spring 1966



The Audubon Society of Missouri

Founded 1901

It is the purpose of the Audubon Society of Missouri to further conservation education in all its aspects with particular emphasis on wildlife. This purpose will be implemented by assisting in securing legislative controls, when necessary, the establishment of refuges and in the promotion of habitat improvement. The Audubon Society of Missouri is dedicated to the proposition that only through education can a total conservation consciousness be insured and will constantly try to further this education at all levels.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Family or individual	\$4.00	Student individual	\$2.00
Family sustaining	8.00	Local affiliate	2.00

Homer R. Bolen, Treasurer, Southeast Missouri State College, Cape Girardeau

OFFICERS

Lisle Jeffrey	Columbia	President
David Easterla	Maryville	Vice President
Homer R. Bolen	Cape Girardeau	Treasurer
Esther O'Connor	Kansas City	Director
Mrs. O. R. Johnson	Columbia	Director
Oscar Hawksley	Warrensburg	Director
Richard Anderson	St. Louis	Director
Paul L. Heye	Cape Girardeau	Director
Floyd Lawhon	St. Joseph	Director
Henry Harford	La Grange	Director
N. Irving Fay	Ozark	Director
Bonnie Mae Dunlap	Jefferson City	Director
Alberta Bolinger, 5079 Waterman, Apt. 106, St. Louis, Secy.		

RESOLUTION

NOTE — *The following resolution was adopted unanimously at the 1965 Annual Business Meeting of the Society:*

Whereas, the members of the Audubon Society of Missouri assembled at Camp Rising Sun, Lake of the Ozarks State Park, October 10, 1965, for the 31st Annual Meeting, do hereby acknowledge the many contributions of James F. Comfort —

Whereas, James F. Comfort was the editor of *The Bluebird*, official publication of the Society, for nine years and developed the publication into the present excellent format, and in recognition of his many years of service to the Audubon Society of Missouri —

Now therefore be it resolved that the Society express its appreciation and gratitude for his untiring efforts and outstanding accomplishments —

And be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be spread on the pages of *The Bluebird*.

To all members of the Society:

I would like to thank Mr. Richard Anderson for acting as secretary at the ANNUAL MEETING and also Miss Dorothea Vogel for mailing the last issue of THE BLUEBIRD for me while I was on vacation.

Alberta M. Bolinger, Secretary

NOTICE—Postal regulations make it necessary that the ZIP Code be shown on the mailing sticker for all third class mail. Please notify the secretary if the number on your sticker is incorrect. Thank you.

THE BLUEBIRD

Volume 33

Number 1

Editor's Comments

Among the many projects instigated by conservation-related agencies, some are poorly tailored to suit the real needs of natural resources. Part of the reason for this is that political motives sometimes get woven into the fabric of agency planning. When more than one agency gets involved, as illustrated below, their efforts may become trammled by bad advice.

Big Oak Tree State Park, in Missouri's bootheel, is a show place for champion-sized hardwood trees. Its eighty acres of virgin timber are a mere remnant of that great swampy forest where the ivory-billed woodpecker made its last stand in the state, many years ago. The park also includes about nine hundred acres of second-growth timberland which has been mostly undisturbed the last thirty years.

In the past, Big Oak Tree Park has suffered from certain errors in management. For example, the unique remnant of virgin timber — with giants of oak, hickory, gum and others — has never been protected as an ecological entity: all camping and picnic facilities have been developed right smack in the midst of the virgin tract instead of where they should be, in the second-growth area. Then too, some forty acres of the second-growth timberland was cleared in 1959 to make way for a lake of twenty acres, built by the Missouri Department of Conservation. This lake was engineered on totally flat land by constructing a circular levee, one to encompass a somewhat elevated bowl of water. High evaporation and a probable seepage problem have made the regular use of pumps imperative to maintenance of a fishable body of water.

Now the Conservation Department is studying the feasibility of clearing more of the park's second-growth timberland to construct another, much larger lake of possibly two hundred acres. Questions might be asked about how such a project can economically be engineered in a park which is completely devoid of hills. One might also wonder if lake-building is really compatible with the original intent of the park; that is, to preserve a prime sample of Mississippi bottomland forest and its indigenous forms of plant and animal life.

Yet another aspect is to consider that two of the Conservation Department's present commissioners hail from the bootheel of Missouri, our present governor hails from Mississippi County — where Big Oak Tree Park is located — and the director of Missouri State Parks hails from an adjoining county. This matter may not involve partisan politics, but it doesn't have to be truly partisan to have porkbarrel overtones.

You are invited to attend
A JOINT MEETING SPONSORED BY
Missouri Chapter, Nature Conservancy

and

The Audubon Society of Missouri

★ ★ ★

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

APRIL 30 AND MAY 1, 1966

★ ★ ★

Meeting place will be the National Council of State Garden Clubs Building, 4401 Magnolia, in St. Louis. The program will begin at 9:30 a.m. on April 30, and will feature a number of outstanding speakers. Box lunches will be available. The evening dinner and program will be at Holiday Inn South, Lindbergh and Highway 66, and will require advance reservations. May 1 will be devoted to field trips to significant natural areas within easy driving distance of St. Louis

Theme: "Time for Action"

*(Send dinner reservations to
Mr. Joel Massie, 6 Indian Hill, St. Louis, Missouri 63124)*

THE BLUEBIRD is the official quarterly publication of the Audubon Society of Missouri. Articles, essays and reports on all phases of natural history and conservation are welcomed and will be printed within limits of space available. Manuscripts should be typed, double-space, on one side of 8½x11 paper. Illustrations should be in the form of glossy prints, 5x7 or larger, or as original drawings. Send articles and other correspondence to the editor: James P. Jackson, 105 Terry Lane, Washington, Mo. 63090.

THE LITTERBUG — Homo Slopus

By August Ulbrich

Reprinted from Webster Groves Nature Notes

The litter tossed is really not a new phenomenon on the national scene. With prosperous times he has been able to purchase more, chew up more, waste more and make himself more conspicuous by scattering more refuse over the countryside than at any time in history. He is of the genus . . . Homo: "Any of the genus of primate mammals that consists of mankind and is usually held to include a recent species *Homo sapiens*." A strange disgusting characteristic has, however, been noted in many individuals of the species and for proper identification of the divergent the application of a new term might be in order — *Homo slopus*.

Drive anywhere over the country roads and one may soon catch sight of the decorative talents of *Homo Slopus*. He just loves the country roads, where there is less chance of being challenged, to dump his bags and cartons of family trash. He particularly likes the little-traveled roads in wooded areas with sharp hairpin bends at the head of deep ravines. He reasons that these ravines need filling up.

In the less affluent and wasteful days almost anywhere in the Ozark hills a deep roadside cleft offered a pleasant vista down into a wooded glen with a clear, rippling brook and usually some wildlife present. Today one finds many of these woodland coves upholstered and plastered with piles of refuse — and rats.

Whenever the accumulated junk at his home has grown to a pop-eyed magnitude, *Homo Slopus* avails himself of a pickup truck or trailer, which he loads to capacity with discarded and wrecked household utensils, bottles, tin cans and plastic containers, rusty and battered auto body parts, old tires, stripped down television cabinets and gas stoves and even stripped down refrigerators, and highballs off to his favorite dumping place. The heavy items get the tumble treatment and roll clear down to the bottom of the ravine; the lighter stuff is pitched wherever it will land to be carried down by the next gully-washer and spread all over the valley. *Homo Slopus* knows full well that he is depositing his junk on someone else's property and if detected could mean trouble for him. So to minimize the chances of being caught, he performs in the role of a moonlighter.

The only and effective way to curb the sloppy and disgusting performance of this character is by law and stiff fines, the money to be used to educate his kids and possibly implant in their minds an appreciation for a clean and wholesome countryside, which he lacks.

NOTICE

The ANNUAL MEETING of The Audubon Society of Missouri will take place at Camp Rising Sun, Lake of the Ozarks State Park, October 8 and 9, 1966. Do set aside that weekend for the always enjoyable October outing.

Fall Survey – August 16 to November 30

Compiled by Richard Anderson

1147 Grenshaw Dr., St. Louis, Mo. 63137

Weather—The last half of August was near normal in temperature and rainfall. One half of the days in September were above normal in temperature, the other half below. However, rainfall was generally above normal. The huge low pressure system, which was called Hurricane Betsy until it finally moved inland, pushed warm moist air into Missouri for two solid weeks. Cool fronts were stalled to the north and west causing heavy rains. As this low moved into the Ohio Valley, a cold front accompanied by heavy rains slowly moved into Missouri. This, of course, caused flooding in northwestern Missouri for the second time this year. As the cold front moved east, it picked up speed and less rainfall occurred in eastern Missouri. However, the distant heavy rains did cause the Mississippi River and Illinois River to flood. This meant that the U. S. Mark Twain Refuges were flooded out, also for the second time this year. Early ducks were, therefore, we'll dispersed.

The first week of October was cool, but then a long warm, dry Indian summer set in and lasted until late November. Then, at last, on November 27 a large fast moving cold front dropped temperatures about 50 degrees throughout the state. St. Joseph had a low of 11 degrees on November 30. Although western Missouri fared much better in rainfall, St. Louis was eight inches below normal by December 1. If this sounds like a familiar line, it is. The Weather Bureau reports rainfall in St. Louis has fallen *six feet* below normal in the last 15 years.

Winter erratics — Most birders considered the shorebird flight unspectacular and likewise the warbler and other land bird flights. With the failure of the northern cone crop, most birders anxiously awaited an invasion from the north. As expected, red-breasted nuthatches began to arrive in September and were common during October. Pine siskins arrived in early October and steadily increased. Two years ago red crossbills, snowy owl, goshawk and snow buntings were reported during this period. However, they did not appear this fall. At last in late November, Dave Easterla came up with pine grosbeak and white-winged crossbill. Both extremely rare for Missouri. Whether this is the beginning of a good winter flight or only represents a few wanderers, will be told in the winter survey. This points out that no two northern flights are the same and a big reason why bird study is so interesting.

Other rarities covered in the report are western grebes, brant (third straight year), Ross' goose, glossy ibis, yellow rail and Sabine's gull.

It is now obvious that Kansas City's loss is Maryville's gain, as Dave Easterla is now teaching there.

Loons through Cormorants—The loon flight was extended over a longer period this fall. They were reported in Kansas City from late October into

December (T.A.). One loon was on Swan Lake, Illinois, on October 27 (S.V.), two at Alton Dam on November 11 (K.A., D.A., et al), four were at Fellows Lake near Springfield on November 12 (I.F.) and one found in a hunter's bag near Squaw Creek (H.B.). Two horned grebes appeared on the early date of August 22 at Squaw Creek (F.L.). Five, an unusually high count for Kansas City, were found on November 14 by Elizabeth Cole. They were not reported in St. Louis until November 29, when one was seen at Swan Lake, Illinois (S.V.). The eared grebes were rare. Only one was seen at Squaw Creek on October 3 (D.E.). The big grebe news was two westerns seen at Squaw Creek on November 2 and 3 (F.L., D.E., et al). Three thousand white pelicans were using Squaw Creek on October 2 and a few were still there on November 28 (F.L.). Double-crested cormorants were down from last fall at St. Louis (high count of 21 on October 27 (S.V.) and were completely missing from the Springfield area. Floyd Lawhon's actual count of 239 cormorants at Squaw Creek on October 2 is the highest for the state in some years.

Hérons—Great blue herons were numerous in the St. Louis area during the period until November 26 when a cold front pushed many on their way. Mrs. Andereck reports an abundance of great blues in the Trenton area. Common egrets were numerous at St. Louis and Swan Lake, Illinois, during the September floods. Over 100 were noted in one field near Alton Dam on September 25. Cold fronts soon sent them south. One late egret was found at Swan Lake, Illinois, on November 18 (S.V.), but did not stay.

Three glossy ibises were found at Squaw Creek on September 19 (D.E.) and another was found in Platte County (north of Kansas City) on October 10 by Mrs. Paul Ticknor. These very well could have been white-faced, but, of course, it is impossible to tell during the fall.

Waterfowl—Mild weather with a lack of real strong cold fronts allowed waterfowl to trickle through. There were no concentrations at St. Louis until the cold front of November 26 and 27. The front moved very fast through Missouri and apparently overran many ducks. As evidence, it was not until December 1 that Refuge Manager Dick Vasse estimated an influx of at least 250,000 mallards. Even though the temperature moderated quickly, the numbers dropped off rapidly in the next few days. Early duck counts in the Swan Lake, Illinois, area were hampered by flooding in mid to late September.

Squaw Creek figures include 2000 white-fronted geese on October 2, 100,000 plus blue and snow geese on November 20 and 300,000 mallards on November 20 (F.L.). For those who are interested in subspecies and races, we recommend Squaw Creek Refuge. On November 20 when the giant Canadas were common at Squaw Creek, Manager Burgess stated that there were *five* races of Canadas using the refuge. He also reported our only rare waterfowl: two brants and one Ross' goose, were picked up in hunters' bags.

Swan Lake, *Missouri*, figures include 69,100 ducks, 77,000 Canada geese and 6000 blue and snow geese. Only 13,000 of the 15,000 limit on geese had been taken there by December 1. In mild weather the birds require less food, do less flying and, therefore, fewer are shot.

Good ring-necked duck flights were noted at St. Joseph (F.L.) and St.

Louis (S.V., D.A.). The only red-breasted mergansers reported were four at Fellows Lake (I.F.).

Hawks—The only Harlan's hawks reported were two at St. Joseph on November 25 (F.L.). Twelve broad-winged hawks were seen on October 2 at Gilbert Lake (S.V.). The only Swainson's hawk was at St. Joseph on October 13 (F.L.). An extremely early date for rough-legged hawks was one at Kansas City on September 27 (T.A.). A golden eagle was found at Maryville on November 13 (D.E., et al). A record early date for the bald eagle in the St. Louis area was one at Swan Lake, Illinois, on September 11 (S.V., K.A., E.C., et al). None was seen after that until October 30. Fourteen bald eagles seen at Squaw Creek on November 20 were all immature birds.

Although out of season, we feel the following marsh hawk nesting notes should be printed. Suspected marsh hawk nests are not too rare in Missouri, but actual observations are; the following are notes from Joe Roller (M. U. student) at Tucker Prairie. A female marsh hawk was flushed from a nest of six eggs on May 31. By June 15 all six had hatched with the youngest only a day old. On June 22 there were only five young. The male had disappeared and the female was doing all the feeding. On July 6 two young were flying and three were still in the nest; by July 18 all five young were flying.

Ospreys were exceptionally common in the St. Louis area during September and October with as many as five on September 11 (K.A., E.C., et al).

Quail through Coots—Quail did well except in river bottoms, which were flooded twice this year. Several new hatches were noted at St. Louis on September 26 (D.A.). A sandhill crane was observed on the Duck Creek area on November 6 by John Rogers and Homer McCollum. A late Virginia rail was found at Swan Lake, Illinois, on October 24 (D.A.). A rare yellow rail was flushed with many soras at Gilbert Lake on September 11 by 12 birders (E.C., K.A., S.V., et al). An aerial survey on October 11 at Swan Lake, Illinois, by Frank Bellrose revealed 45,000 coots (S.V.).

Shorebirds—The shorebird flight was not outstanding. This must be partly due to lack of habitat. There was an overabundance of water at St. Joseph and there was a lack of it at St. Louis. A knot was reported at Creve Coeur Lake on September 22 by Steve Hanselmann. A sanderling was also found at Creve Coeur on August 27 (E.C.). After much frustration, court costs, etc., Dave Easterla has at last found the buff-breasted sandpiper. This was thanks to Floyd Lawhon who had located three at St. Joseph September 7 to 16. One avocet was at Squaw Creek September 30 to October 3 (F.L., D.E.). Two or possibly three were found at St. Louis from September 1 to September 26.

Gulls and Terns—Ring-billed gulls were first noted at Swan Lake, Illinois, on September 15 (S.V.). Franklin's gulls were not reported from eastern Missouri, but thousands were found at Squaw Creek in early October (D.E.). Nine Bonaparte's gulls were counted at Creve Coeur Lake on November 14 (K.A.) and 20 were checked at Lake of the Ozarks on November 27 (D.E.). A sight record for the Sabine's gull was recorded on September 12 at Alton Dam (D.A.). Thirty-five least terns were noted at Lake Springfield on August 19 (I.F.). Four caspian terns, uncommon at Kansas City, were found on September 26 at Swope Park by Walter Cunningham. Caspians were very

common at St. Louis with a dozen or more seen throughout the month of September.

Doves through Woodpeckers—Doves moved out of the St. Joseph area during early September, but were still common at St. Louis on December 1. Cuckoos, especially black-billed, were more common than usual at St. Joseph (F.L.). Our only roadrunner report was one near Bradleyville (40 miles southeast of Springfield) in November (I.F.). The only long-eared owl was one at Maryville during November (D.E., F.L., et al). There were many reports of whip-poor-wills and chuck-will's widows in southern Missouri in October. Flights of a thousand or more night-hawks were commonly reported in eastern Missouri and in nearby Illinois from late August through mid-September — much greater numbers than last year. Many night-hawk fatalities were reported along Highway 66 near Eureka by Steve Hanselmann. Few swifts stayed into October this year. Hummingbirds had a good flight at St. Louis during September with many on the move September 26. Red-shafted flickers were first seen at Kansas City on September 26 by M. L. Myers and were rather common at St. Joseph after September 30 (F.L.). Red-headed woodpeckers were generally found, but all reporters found numbers down from last year.

Flycatchers through Waxwings—A few eastern kingbirds were seen into October at St. Louis. Unusual was an evening gathering of about 90 kingbirds on the Gasconade River on September 6. At least eight of the birds were of the western species (D.A.). Scissor-tailed flycatchers were last seen at Springfield on September 30 (I.F.). A very late crested flycatcher was found at Little Dixie Lake on November 6 (J.R.). The first of several olive-sided flycatchers was found at St. Joseph on August 29 (F.L.). An estimated 5000 tree swallows were at Swan Lake, Illinois, on September 12. About that same number were still there on September 25 (S.V., D.A.).

Blue jays were in flight in late September at St. Louis. There was a good flight of red-breasted nuthatches, but this was predictable and expected. They were at St. Joseph on September 15 (F.L.) and were fairly common throughout most of the state (except southern Missouri) by late October. Carolina wrens were about the same as last year. Marsh wrens were very uncommon at St. Louis. A late catbird was at Kansas City on November 6 (T.A.). Three late Swainson's thrushes were at Lake of the Ozarks on October 10 and one at Krug Park, St. Joseph, on October 13 (F.L.). Bluebirds were definitely up at St. Joseph (F.L.) and flocks up to 50 were seen in the Salem area (D.P.). Waxwings varied greatly. Apparently there is great movement in the state in small to medium-size flocks. Best numbers were reported from the Kansas City area where they are taking advantage of a bumper crop of wild grapes (T.A.).

Warblers through Orioles—As usual the fall warbler report was on the sparse side. Of interest was a male black-throated blue on September 24 at Kansas City by M. L. Myers. Her other good finds were Blackburnian on October 1 and bay-breasted on September 23 and October 6. The pine warbler, also rare at Kansas City, was found by Felicia Bart. Floyd Lawhon reports a good warbler wave on September 4, 5 and 6. He also lists an early Wilson's on August 26 and a late orange-crowned on October 30.

(Continued on page 10)

A GLIMPSE OF SPRING

Spring promises long, lazy days of warmth and greenery but not for some woodland wildflowers. Their glory is fleeting, their place in the sun soon to be terminated by summer's enveloping shades of green. Here are two of Missouri's favorites whose beauty is enhanced by the brevity of their display.



Jack-in-the-pulpit (Arisaema triphyllum) is a modest flower which hides its true beauty under a miniature canopy of green.

J. P. Jackson Photo



Due to its rarity as well as its beauty, the yellow lady slipper (Cypripedium parviflorum) is one of our most cherished wildflowers.

J. P. Jackson Photo

Most unusual was bobolinks listed as common during early September at St. Joseph (F.L.). Western meadowlarks were common as usual at St. Joseph and had reached the St. Louis area by October 24. The only yellow-headed blackbird was one at Weldon Springs on September 22 by Steve Hanselmann. A late orchard oriole was found at Little Dixie Lake on November 6 (J.R.).

Seed eaters—The most interesting fall flight had to be this family. Rare northern finches added considerably. Blue grosbeaks were more common at St. Joseph after the breeding season than during. Four were last seen on September 12 (F.L.). A painted bunting was seen feeding two young just out of a nest in Barry County near Eagle Rock, Missouri, on August 24 (D.E.). Two evening grosbeaks were found near Grafton, Illinois, on October 31 (S.V.). A very rare pine grosbeak was found at Maryville on November 13 by Larry Watkins and Charles Bell. It was later confirmed by Dave Easterla and on November 14 by Floyd Lawhon. A redpoll was found at Maryville on December 4 (D.E.) and one at St. Louis on December 5 (K.A.).

The siskin flight was extremely good. Siskins were first sighted at Trenton on October 7 (Mrs. Andereck); a large flock was seen at Columbia on October 9 (J.R.), at St. Joseph on October 13 and at St. Louis on October 24. The flock of siskins in Bellefontaine Cemetery grew from 200 in early November to over 1000 by December 1 (D.A.). This is the biggest number since the 1952-53 winter. When crossbills are mentioned, birders think of red crossbills. This fall only one red crossbill has been reported and that at Maryville on December 4. However, a pair of white-winged crossbills was found at Maryville on November 20 by Dave Easterla and later seen by many. Five additional white-winged crossbills appeared on December 4 at Maryville and six were found near Grafton, Illinois, on December 5 by Mrs. Simon. One was also collected at Kansas City by Jim Rising.

LeConte's sparrows were uncommon or missing. Five sharp-tailed sparrows were reported at Weldon Springs on September 22 by Steve Hanselmann. An early junco was seen at Kansas City on September 5 (T.A.). A clay-colored sparrow was found at St. Louis on October 30 and November 20 (E.C., K.A.). Most remarkable was a sparrow gathering near Salem on October 17. Large numbers of common sparrows were studied along with 20 clay-colored by David Plank. Lapland longspurs were not numerous at St. Louis and were completely missing from Kansas City, where they are usually numerous. The only Smith's longspurs were reported at Trenton on September 26 by Mrs. Andereck.

- D. A. — Dick Anderson
- T. A. — Ted Anderson
- K. A. — Kathryn Arhos
- H. B. — Harold Burgess
- E. C. — Earl Comfort
- D. E. — Dave Easterla

- I. F. — Irving Fay
- F. L. — Floyd Lawhon
- D. P. — David Plank
- J. R. — Joe Roller
- S. V. — Sally Vasse

SHRUBS, VINES AND BIRDS

By Mrs. O. R. Johnson

It is surprising to learn that some nature lovers do not recognize the redbud after it is through blooming in the spring. They may not know native plants at all, yet they acknowledge that all of them have a vital place in the scheme of things and are necessary to birds for food and shelter. A true naturalist wants to recognize the native shrubs and vines in which birds are found, for they are interdependent and of great value.

Perhaps autumn is the time to learn the identity of shrubs and vines because of their conspicuous seeds, and the knowledge that these seeds will be important as winter food for birds. Let us review some of the shrubs first, as we might see them in autumn.

Close together might be found the wafer ash, its round-winged seeds hanging in clusters, and the bladder-nut with its paper-like brown pods, seeds inside rattling with every breeze. The seeds of wahoo turn from green to brown and pop open with the first frost; the leaves turn red and it's no wonder the Indians called it fire plant. All during fall, the elderberry has huge bunches of blue berries hanging low, especially evident along country roads. The pokeberry is really not a shrub, since it dies to the ground every winter, but should be mentioned here for its rich reddish-purple berries which hang in long, narrow sprays. They make a beautiful dye but collapse with the first killing frost. The pawpaws, if not harvested early by the raccoons, will turn from green to yellow to black-mottled, as they ripen in small clusters. They're not bad to eat if you don't mind spitting out all those big black seeds; they have an interesting flavor.

Thickets of sumac turn red in the fall — both leaves and berries — and the aromatic species has berries which can be pressed and used as a lemonade substitute.

One shrub which has always interested me in particular is the service berry. The fruit is a dainty little apple just made to be picked. The Indians were very fond of them and sought them out. To make it easier picking, they would cut down the shrubs, then sit down and pull off the berries at their leisure.

Among the best known native vines attractive to birds are the smooth and prickly smilax, with bunches of blue berries, and the bittersweet, wild grape, moonseed and Virginia creeper. There are other shrubs and vines to be noticed and appreciated, of course. But never be guilty of complaining, as one bird enthusiast did, that shrubs kept hindering his view of the birds and that vines did nothing but trip him up.

EDITOR'S NOTE — *Although this article might not seem appropriate for a spring issue, don't forget that to have a harvest of seeds in future autumns, planting should be done in the spring. Have you ever tried growing native shrubs and vines in your garden?*

CONSERVATION ALERT

The wild and lengthy Colorado River has been harnessed in its lower reaches by seven dams; another dam, the mighty Glen Canyon, is not far upstream from Grand Canyon National Park. But now the big dam squeeze is pressing in upon the boundaries of the Park itself, from both ends.

Proposed Marble Gorge Dam would impound all of the river between the Park and Glen Canyon; the proposed Bridge Canyon Dam would actually impound all of the river in Grand Canyon National Monument including 13 miles of common boundary between the Monument and Grand Canyon National Park.

These proposed dams are incorporated in a multimillion dollar "Colorado River Basin Project Act" which has been approved by the states involved and is now in its final stages of revision by the House Interior Committee. An excellent article in the Jan.-Feb. issue of *Audubon Magazine* explains in detail why these dams would be a waste of taxpayers' money, and why they would destroy much of what remains as one of the outstanding natural wonders of the world. Read the article if you can, but do write to your congressman before the issue comes to a vote.



This is the wild, free-flying flamingo which was observed by many people during its stay at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge from May 13 to June 11, 1965. Though possibly an escapee from some zoo, the bird was extremely wary. This photo is by Don Reynolds of the St. Joseph Museum, taken with a 400 mm. lens.

Winter Survey – December 1 to February 28

Compiled by Richard Anderson

1147 Grenshaw Dr., St. Louis, Mo. 63137

Winter almost didn't make it to Missouri and, when it did, it was brief and not very severe. December temperatures were much above normal. The first half of January was also above normal, but at last winter struck the last half of January and early February. Southern Missouri received much more snow than northern Missouri. In fact, Arkansas generally received much more snow than Missouri.

The mild winter had an obvious effect on birds. When the normal cold snaps of mid-December did not appear to drive the stragglers on south, an unusual number of birds lingered through the Christmas census period and on into January. A mid-winter report that mentions 25 species of waterfowl, four species of warblers, four species of shorebirds and six species of wrens had to be rated abnormal. Obviously the mild weather does not account for the large number of pine siskins and the flight of redpolls and white-winged crossbills. The mixture of these rare northern species with the winter stragglers makes this winter survey a most interesting study.

Loons through Bitterns—Eleven common loons turned up on the Mingo census on Lake Wapapello on December 28 (D.E. et al). A horned grebe was at Montrose Lake on December 21 (D.E., S.H.). Pied-billed grebes were generally reported, even at St. Joseph on December 26 (J.H.). A late white pelican was at Squaw Creek on December 5 (J.H.). Twenty-two great blue herons were counted during the St. Louis counts, 11 at Montrose on December 21 (D.E., S.H.) and were common at Springfield. Harold Burgess reported an American bittern at Squaw Creek in early February.

Waterfowl—As expected with a mild winter, waterfowl counts were unusually high. There were 25 species reported in the state during the Christmas counts. The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service reported for the first time that there were more snow and blue geese wintering in the Mississippi flyway than in coastal Louisiana. The flock of 10,000 birds at Swan Lake, Illinois, left about February 1 at the time of an eight-inch snow and did not reappear until late February. One white-fronted goose was at Montrose on December 21 and one at Swan Lake, Missouri, on December 23 (D.E., S.H.). Large numbers of ducks were generally not reported as many stayed north and many others were widely dispersed.

Mallards numbered only near 10,000 at Swan Lake, Illinois, until the late January cold pushed 150,000 down from the north. Most puddle ducks were common until the January freeze. Three blue-winged teal were at Mingo on December 28 (D.E. et al). Canvasbacks were common at St. Louis, but U. S. Fish & Wildlife reported 40,000 wintering on the Mississippi River near Keokuk, Iowa. An old squaw turned up on Lake Wapapello on December 28 (D.E.). One red-breasted mersanser was at Lake Wapapello on December 28 and two at Montrose on December 26 (D.E., S.H.). Ten bufflehead had returned to Stump Lake by February 25 (S.V.).

Hawks—Hawks were up or down, depending on where you lived. The only goshawk was one on the Swan Lake, Illinois, census on December 26 (R.A.). Floyd Lawhon reports Cooper's and red-shouldered up, but red-tailed and Harlan's down, rough-legged common, but below normal numbers. A Harlan's was at Schell-Osage on December 26 (D.E., S.H.) and two wintered near Swan Lake, Illinois (R.A., S.V.). Bald eagles were not common until late December. A few over 300 were reported for the state by late January. Many observers reported the ratio of adults over immatures higher than it has been. Counts in the Mississippi River-Illinois River confluence area were generally in the 80's with the adult-immature ratio near 50-50. Golden eagle reports include one at Squaw Creek on January 9 (J.H.), one at Mingo on December 28 (D.E.), two near Hannibal on January 27 by a St. Louis group and one near St. Louis by Steve Hanselmann.

Quail through Gulls—Floyd Lawhon reports bob-white up, while pheasant was down in his area. Coots were not rare before the January freeze with 47 counted on the St. Louis census. There is usually little to report on shorebirds during winter but not so this winter. Killdeer were numerous. Common snipe were common as far north as St. Joseph until early January and had returned by late February to most of the state. A woodcock was flushed on the Swan Lake, Missouri, count, but most surprising was a *dunlin* seen on that count by a large number of observers. Herring and ring-billed gulls were seen at Squaw Creek during January (J.H.), which is unusual for that area. Herrings outnumbered ring-billed at St. Louis only during the late January freeze-up. Unusual was no reports of glaucous gull. Four Bonaparte's gulls were seen at Lake of the Ozarks on December 21 (D.E.).

Owls through Woodpeckers—Owls were near normal. The first saw-whet reported in several years turned up on the Squaw Creek count on January 1 (D.E., F.L., et al). Mourning doves evidently stayed farther north. They were more common at St. Joseph (F.L.) and as many as 500 could be found in one cemetery at St. Louis (R.A.). Kingfishers were fairly common to St. Joseph. Woodpeckers were reported in good numbers, except for red-heads which were down from last year. Redshafted flickers were commonly reported in western Missouri and one was seen at Swan Lake, Illinois. Sapsuckers were quite common.

Flycatchers through Warblers—Two phoebes were found on the Swan Lake, Illinois, count on December 26 (S.V.). As expected, red-breasted nuthatches were well reported. They were common at St. Louis, Columbia (J.R.) and "seemed to be everywhere" at St. Joseph (F.L.). A house wren found by Steve Hilty on January 29 was later called by Belshe in Taney County. Winter wrens were generally uncommon. A Bewick's was found at Gray Summit, Missouri, on December 22 (J.E.C.). A wintering record for the short-billed marsh wren was established near Mingo on December 28 and was later collected (D.E.). Carolina wrens apparently enjoyed a good winter. An accidental rock wren was reported from the Bull Shoals area on January 23 by Irving Fay. Brown thrashers were not rare with one at St. Joseph December 24-26 (J.H.). Robins were very common but no large roost as last year's was noted. Bluebirds were up at St. Joseph (F.L.), at Grafton, Illinois (S.V.) and at Salem, Missouri (D.P.). More hermit thrushes than usual were reported in the state. Golden-crowned kinglets were common throughout the state which is not unusual, but the ruby-crowned at St. Louis and Montrose

in late December was most unusual. Cedar waxwings were widely reported, but in lower than normal numbers. Myrtle warblers were common in the right habitat. A very late orange-crowned warbler was found at St. Louis on December 8 by Steve Hanselmann. Four wintering pine warblers were noted at Winona, Missouri, and one was collected (D.E., S.H.). The yellow palm warbler is a very rare subspecies in Missouri, at any time, but one in December is unprecedented. However, one was collected at Montrose on December 21 (D.E., S.H.).

Meadowlarks through Finches—Western meadowlarks were numerous at St. Joseph and were uncommon at St. Louis until late February when a large wave passed through. All species of blackbirds wintered in good number, even rusties and Brewer's were frequently seen at St. Joseph (F.L.). The finch family was well represented with reports of some sparrows well north of where they should be, mixed with redpolls and crossbills. Late dickcissels have turned up at St. Louis in November or early December before, but never as late as December 29, when John and Julie Hamilton reported one in St. Charles County at the short range of only 25 feet through 10-power binoculars. Irving Fay reports a small flock of evening grosbeaks at Ozark, Missouri, in December while one which seemed to be slightly crippled lingered all winter. Purple finches were down at St. Joseph, but numerous everywhere else. Flocks were reported in the Ozark-Springfield area (I.F.), very high numbers in the Columbia area (Jeffrey et al) and rated unusually high in the Salem, Missouri, area (D.P.). They were abundant in Taney County (S.H.). Common redpolls were found from early December to late February near Maryville. Dave Easterla found a pine grove where up to seven roosted daily. There were several reports of small numbers in the St. Louis area. This was a big winter for pine siskins. A count of 335 was made at St. Joseph on December 26 (J.H.), while approximately 2000 birds were seen in Bellefontaine Cemetery at St. Louis. They were greatly reduced by mid-January, indicating the birds moved further south. Goldfinches were numerous, but were overall outnumbered by the pine siskins.

The only red-crossbill was one at Maryville December 5-8 (D.E., F.L.). White-winged crossbills were the big news, but unfortunately they were concentrated in only two areas. Several individuals were found in the Maryville area in December by Dave Easterla. In St. Louis no more than two white-winged crossbills have ever been reported in one winter. This winter during December and January a total of 14 individuals were found. Rufous-sided towhees were much above normal with one spotted form noted in St. Louis on January 2 (R.A.). Several savannah sparrows were reported. LeConte's were not uncommon with as many as 40 reported at Lowry City, Missouri, on January 14 (S.H.). A vesper sparrow turned up at Swan Lake,

(Continued on next page)

In December of last year a ballot was distributed to all Society members, to determine their pleasures regarding two constitutional changes. The proposed changes dealt with clarifying the proper tax exempt status of the organization. Among those who returned their ballots, 107 were for the proposed changes, two were against. This does constitute the required two-thirds majority of members who voted.

Illinois, on January 27 (S.V.). Field sparrows were regular in southern and eastern Missouri and one was noted at St. Joseph on December 26 and February 6 (F.L.). Lincoln's sparrows were seen at St. Joseph in December and January (F.L.) at Warrensburg, on December 11 (S.H.) and at Gravois Mills on December 24 (D.E.). Laland longspurs were either missing or very few in numbers. A lone Smith's longspur was noted on December 21 at Montrose (D.E., S.H.).

J. E. C. — J. Earl Comfort
R. A. — Richard Anderson
D. E. — Dave Easterla
I. F. — Irving Fay
J. H. — John Hamilton

S. H. — Steve Hilty
F. L. — Floyd Lawhon
D. P. — Dave Plank
J. R. — Joe Roller
S. V. — Sally Vasse

HAWK UNABLE TO FLY WITH PREY

By *Larry C. Watkins*

On 26 July 1965, at Miriam Cemetery, Maryville, Nodaway County, Missouri, I found an immature Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) on the ground and unwilling to fly. Closer examination showed a three-foot Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer (*Coluber constrictor flaviventris*) wrapped around the body, legs and talons of the hawk. Also a tall clump of Italian Millet (*Setaria italica*) was grasped by the talons.

After the snake was freed, no puncture wounds were found and only a few body scales were damaged; otherwise, the snake appeared healthy in every respect. The hawk had large abnormal sores or callouses at the juncture of the tibiotarsus and tarsometatarsus. Upon preparing a live mount of the bird I noticed several sores on the body and the muscles of the sternum (*pectoralis major*). The muscles were thin with an excessive amount of flaking or chafing of the skin.

From the above comments I offer the following conclusions as possible reasons as to why the hawk could not fly.

1. Perhaps the bird could not fly because the snake was wrapped around it.
2. Possibly the bird refused to release its grip on the Italian Millet for fear of losing its prey.
3. The bird may have been afflicted with a disease that weakened its condition to where it could not fly.
4. The bird may have injured itself in capturing the snake.
5. Perhaps this was the first attempt at capturing prey by the bird.

Editor's NOTE — Larry C. Watkins is a student at Northwest Missouri State College, Maryville.