

The Bluebird

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI



DAVID PLANK

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S ROOST

By James P. Jackson

In March your president attended the first Midwest Regional Conference of the National Audubon Society at Grand Island, Nebraska. It was a fine chance to meet kindred spirits, to hear excellent presentations, and to see about 50,000 to 200,000 sandhill cranes which yearly congregate in spring on the Platte River. The next Midwest Conference will be in 1974 and your Missouri delegation made a strong plea to have it in Springfield. Our chances for such a conference in Missouri will be much enhanced if a National Audubon chapter could be organized in the Springfield area to serve as host.

In April your president attended the Annual Convention of the Conservation Federation of Missouri, with which we are affiliated. Good news there was that enough signatures have been secured to place the soft drink tax proposal on next November's statewide ballot. The proposal is a great opportunity to advance conservation in Missouri. But it also poses a challenge. The soft drink bottlers will fight the tax proposal with big money, mostly through the urban mass media. Conservationists must therefore also use the mass media to win their cause and the cost will have to be borne by contributions. Have you given yet?

Our early May meeting with the Missouri Prairie Foundation and the Nature Conservancy was enjoyable and fairly well attended but, of course, we should have a much better turnout at our Annual Meeting next October. The place will be Camp Rising Sun, Lake of the Ozarks State Park, October 13-15. Details will be furnished in the next issue of The BLUEBIRD which should reach you in late August.

Our Campship for 1972 has been awarded to Mr. Jack L. Hilsabeck, teacher at Rosendale High School; he plans to attend one of the two-week sessions at the Audubon Camp of Wisconsin.

THE SPRAYING GOES ON.

A friend of ours, who has hunting dogs, was out in the field with other men on a training exercise for their dogs. The dogs ran through an alfalfa field - two died as they came out of the field, one died in the owner's car, and all the others were taken to a veterinary hospital.

The dead birds are seldom found. -- Nathan Fay

A CAMPING WE WILL GO

By Patricia James Easterla

With good weather on the way, are your thoughts already turning towards spring-fever type activities? Fishing? Hiking? Camping?

About this time two years ago my thoughts were running along this line and not to discourage anyone or anything like that, I still feel there's a tale worth telling.

It came about this way. I suddenly realized that although we had lived in some of the wilderness spots of America through Dave's work as a summer ranger-naturalist in national parks, we'd never been on an honest-to-goodness camping trip. I mean, when you live in the middle of America's greatest camping areas you just don't go out and camp in them.

Little fragments of conversation with our children filtered through my mind: "How come other people get to sleep in tents and we have to sleep in bedrooms?" "I wish we could eat outdoor food instead of stove food."

Nothing would do but that we go on a full-fledged, three day camping trip to one of Missouri's beautiful state parks. Piling tent, camping gear, and kids into the station wagon, off we sailed.

The park was really a lovely place. It was also extremely crowded. I mean fishermen were elbow-to-elbow with waiting lines behind them and tents were elbow-to-elbow with..... come to think of it, there weren't many tents. There were campers, sleepers, trailers, and deluxe jobbies so fantastic that I couldn't start to give them a name. Between a deluxe jobby and a very efficient-looking tent and flanked by a pick-up camper, we finally found a resting place. It had taken a while to find that little wilderness pigeon-hole and by now the sun was sinking.

We took all our gear out of the station wagon and turned our attention to the tent. By the light of our flashlight we read the instructions and started fitting all the A poles into B sockets and connecting with C ropes. Reading by that flashlight was murder and now that total darkness had descended, locating all the pieces was a chore. I realized, looking around me, that no one else was suffering from darkness. The camper had a porch light, the deluxe jobby had super neon lighting throughout and even the tent next to us had a powerful Coleman lantern. After a bit, we saw the Coleman lantern come our way with a helpful camper carrying it. The man looked at our crumpled mass of a tent and the poles laid out in all directions, and then looking at Dave (the naturalist who has explored great wilderness areas and often stood in places rarely visited by human beings before him), the man drawled out, "This the first time in the woods for you folks?"

To make a long story short, this friendly neighbor had that tent up in a matter of minutes. He even had a special stake hammer which really impressed me as we were using the end of a shovel. From there on we were O.K. as putting cots and bedrools together we had done often when sleeping out in the open. In fact, the thought crossed my mind that probably most of these people around us had never slept out under the stars. But spring is unpredictable in Missouri and no time to be without a tent.

However, the night was calm and peaceful as we climbed onto our cots for the night. "Listen", I whispered to my family, "you can hear the stream

running." Suddenly the stream stopped. I sat bolt upright in bed. "Dave, streams don't just stop do they?"

"No, but I think the people next door just finished draining the water out of their sink and down the pipes."

So end of my isn't-nature-great comments.

It's a good thing I didn't make any more comments as directly following a whip-poor-will call came this remark from out of the darkness:

"Shut up about that cotton-pickin' fish I missed or I'll kick you out of this camper." And then silence settled in.

The next thing I remember was a bucket of cold water slopped in my face. In reality, our fine spring weather had turned into a violent storm and rain was pouring directly into by bed.

"The flap, the flap, you didn't get the crummy flap down," I screamed, as I floundered out of bed.

"Stay in here," Dave shouted, "I'll get it down."

He started out of the tent when he realized that he had on his insulated outdoor underwear. "Here," he yelled, stripping down to the nude in a flash, "I don't want to get this wet; it'll never dry out."

Reaching out I managed to grab a patch of bare flesh as he started out the door. "People," I screamed, "there are people around here."

"What are they doing here?" he asked and then remembered that this was wilderness, but not unpopulated wilderness. "Dig out my bathing suit then but hurry or the tent will fill up because the built-in floor is sewn to the sides."

We survived the night, but the next morning when I opened my eyes I felt that good old Missouri humidity and knew I must surely be covered in mildew with the mold forming in my ears. I can't honestly say we ever did totally dry out on that camping trip.

Filling our bellies proved to be an interesting thing. Hot dogs and marshmallows roasted over the fire, potatoes baked in the coals, and all my Campfire Girl menu was decidedly out-dated. As we sat waiting for our hot dogs to sizzle, smells from the T-bones grilling outside the deluxe jobby wafted across our campsite. Out of the corner of my eye I saw tossed green salad and (did my eyes deceive me?) shrimp cocktail. As I was digging out marshmallows, the boys disappeared and came back moments later with bowls of sherbet and tea cookies which the kind lady next door, in great pity I'm sure, gave them.

So our first experience on a "civilized" camping trip turned out to be a memorable camping trip - as I said in the beginning, a tale worth telling. For people who have always back-packed in and slept under the stars, who think a baked potato in the coals tastes like glory itself after a day in the elements, who are used to having nothing by a tail-flicking squirrel or curious jay for company, it was an experience.

But least you feel I was disappointed in our camping trip, it had its

own brand of compensation. At Christmas time we had a warm card from our neighbors in the deluxe jobby and recently received a birth announcement from the people in the camper next door. Now that's worth having too, isn't it?

MINI-SAFARI TO SOUTHEAST MISSOURI

By Paul E. Bauer

In a recent issue of the American Birding Association's magazine BIRDING, the Swainson's warbler is listed as number 17 on a list of the "40 most wanted birds". Missouri is most lucky to have the Swainson's warbler as a regular nester in Big Oak State Park. On June 5, 1971 Dick Anderson and I went to southeastern Missouri in search of breeding Swainson's and Hooded warblers, and as things turned out, a few other surprises.

Dick made arrangements to have Jim Haw of Charleston, Mo. meet us. Nothing improves a birding adventure more than being guided by a local expert. If the name James Haw does not quickly ring a bell, you surely will recall that it was Jim who first discovered the Rufous Hummingbird in the fall of 1969 - a new Missouri record. In quick succession Jim took us to several of his favorite birding haunts. First to a rookery of herons; hundreds of nests, mostly little blue herons and black-crowned night herons. Sadly, I must report that we saw no snow egrets.

The next stop was most unusual; a remnant of long ago - a long shallow lake-swamp surrounded by extremely dense lush woods. Truly a touch of tropical-like jungle right here in Missouri. We briefly entered this hushed green cathedral at several spots to the music of numerous warblers and too many mosquitos. We were awed, and vowed to return (earlier next year before the mosquitos) to explore this swamp by canoe. If ever there was a right place to find the rare Bachman's warbler, this swamp-woods seemed likely. If the Bachman's warbler could be located here, steps should be taken to preserve this remnant swamp. (Bachman's warbler is #1 on the ABA "most wanted list".)

On this day the real thrill-birds at the swamp were kites, not warblers. Several recent articles have described the sudden population increase for several species of U.S. kites. (The reverse is true for almost all other birds of prey.) We could believe the articles, when in a matter of minutes we counted six different Mississippi kites circling over the swamp. They were feeding on dragonflies that they caught in flight just above the tree-top level. As their name implies, they are skillful acrobatic fliers. Through binoculars we watched them repeatedly dive and twist to catch a dragonfly with their talons. They would continue their smooth flight as they moved the clutched food forward to be eaten. They were so close that we could easily see the light gray on the back of the head as they twisted in flight. I was impressed. I had never seen kites so close nor seen their manner of feeding, and had never before seen more than two kites in one day.

Next we headed for Big Oak State Park; a 1000 acre scrap of the enormous swamp forest that formerly covered most of "swamp-east" Missouri. The park supervisor told us the huge trees were constantly being pruned by lightning, because the park was such a local tall spot on a large flat plain. We noticed numerous examples of apparent lightning damage, and that several of the tallest record trees were protected by lightning rods to reduce the risk of damage. In this small remaining woods were more than 50 record sized trees; some of these are national champions for their species. We felt very humble.

We met the George Barker family from the St. Louis area and another ABA member from California. All of us were here in search of the Swainson's warbler and all of us were successful in our quest. Early the next morning Dick, Jim Haw and I headed out for the southeast part of the park that looked promising. Dick was armed with a tape recorder and high faithful 12 x 60 binoculars and I was loaded down with binoculars and my 400mm lens and camera on the gunstock. We came, we saw and we photographed the Swainson's warbler. Although I must say the photographs are not satisfactory; we must return again some spring after I can develop a telephoto light source to illuminate birds in dense woods such as these.

The behavior of the warbler in response to the taped song was exciting to watch. Dick would stand in an open spot on the trail with the tape at half volume. Within minutes the Swainson's was flitting rapidly from tree to tree in a circle around us. (All of my motion in trying to get photographs did not help calm the bird.) The bird could of course see us, but could not find the competing singing "male" in his breeding territory. Frequently the warbler would fly right at us, literally parting our hair in search of his (electronic) competition. After the tape was stopped, the warbler sat out in the open singing its heart out to reclaim its territory. Later that morning the same behavior was observed for the hooded warbler when the tape recorder was used.

We returned to St. Louis via southern Illinois very satisfied with the results of our weekend mini-safari. During a brief stop at Fort Kaskaskia, Ill. we enjoyed the flight maneuvers of two more Mississippi kites to crown the trip.

A WEEK OF BIRDING IN SOUTHERN MISSOURI

By Mark Robbins

With migration over in northwestern Missouri, Floyd Lawhon and I left our part of the state to bird in southern Missouri for a week.

We left Maryville and St. Joseph in the early morning hours of June 1, 1971. Our first stop was Tucker Prairie in Callaway County. We gladly listed the Henslow's sparrow for the year. We estimated there were 20 of the birds present at the prairie.

After two more hours of driving we arrived in St. Louis. Our first European tree sparrow was seen in the yard of Jerry and Nancy Strickling. In the afternoon we birded at Creve Coeur and Busch Memorial Wildlife Area. Birding activity was best at Busch along one of the streams running through the area.

That evening we visited with Jim and Florence Comfort at the home of Dick and Mitzi Anderson. After a birding conversation we moved on to spend the night at Trail of Tears State Park along the Mississippi River.

Up early the next morning, June 2, fog hampered our birding for the first two hours. While listening to a fish crow along the river, we heard and saw a male blackpoll warbler! The late straggler was a long way from his breeding grounds. Several other warblers were seen in the state park, they were: worm-eating, parula, cerulean, prairie, Kentucky, yellowthroat, chat and redstart.

After stopping and looking over some flooded fields for herons and shore-

birds we headed to Miner heronry in Scott County. Little blue herons, cattle egrets, common egrets and black-crowned night herons were seen. While in the northern section of Mississippi County, we spotted a Mississippi kite soaring just above some cypress trees. It was seen joined by another. Both birds circled around us for a closer view.

Big Oak Tree State Park was our next stop. That afternoon we looked and listened for the Swainson's warbler. The bird could not be found. Two hooded warblers were seen in the undercover of the park. Two Mississippi kites were seen circling the park late in the afternoon. We spent the night at the park hoping to see the Swainson's warbler the following morning. Again in warbler. The heronry in Scott County was visited again where the same species seen the first visit were listed again with the addition of a snowy egret.

Mingo National Wildlife Refuge was visited next with disappointing results. Most of the refuge was closed off. Blue-winged warblers were common on the refuge. A red-shouldered hawk was also seen. We then birded the Duck Creek Wildlife area. One black vulture was observed and several tree swallows were seen. We spent the night at Gaylord Lab (Duck Creek).

The next morning, June 4, we birded Duck Creek again and found a king rail taking a bath. Eight young hooded mergansers were seen at the wildlife area.

We headed for Mark Twain National Forest near the southern border of the state. From highway 160 we headed north on state road C, Ripley County. Pine and yellow-throated warblers were found in the pines along this road. Several broad-winged hawks were seen in the national forest. A black-billed cuckoo was seen along highway C, Ripley County. We again found yellow-throated and pine warblers in pine trees between Eminence and Round Spring. Very few Bewick's wrens were seen during the trip. We stayed the night at Mark Twain National Forest, Douglas County. Whip-poor-wills were the predominant goat-sucker in the national forest.

The next morning, June 5, we headed farther west in hopes of seeing the roadrunner and painted bunting. Blue grosbeaks were seen more frequently the farther west we went. On state road JJ, Stone County, we found a female scissor-tailed flycatcher. We came to the end of the road, where we stopped and looked up the song of the painted bunting. On the way back down JJ, we stopped near some small cedar trees. A male painted bunting was heard singing in a tree behind the small cedar grove! We finally spotted the bird singing in the shade. After watching the bird for a few minutes we headed down JJ to highway 86, when a roadrunner flew across the road and landed under a small cedar. The bird remained there for about a minute then disappeared into the grove of cedars.

We stopped and talked to Bob Bright at Baxter Boat Dock, Stone County. He told us of seeing 13 black vultures along highway 86 just a few days before we arrived. We stayed at Kimberling City that night. The next day we headed home. On the way we saw several scissor-tailed flycatchers. A pair was observed in Lawrence County, a single male in Jasper County and another male in St. Clair County. We stopped at Taberville Prairie in hopes of seeing prairie chickens, but a fire in late March has scattered the birds from the booming grounds.

A total of 122 species was observed on the trip. I added ten lifers while Floyd added one.

25 May 1972

Dear Cooperator:

An attempt is being made to get an accurate annual count of ciconiiform birds nesting in Missouri. It is hoped that all heronries can be located as well as counts made of the non-colonial nesting birds such as the Green Heron and the Yellow-crowned Night Heron.

To help make the census as complete as possible, assistance is welcomed from all persons willing to participate in the count.

To aid in reporting you may wish to use the accompanying form.*
Please send returns to:

David K. Goering
Cottey College
Nevada, Missouri 64772

Your help is very much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

David K. Goering
David K. Goering

DKG/r1

Encl:
Reporting Sheet

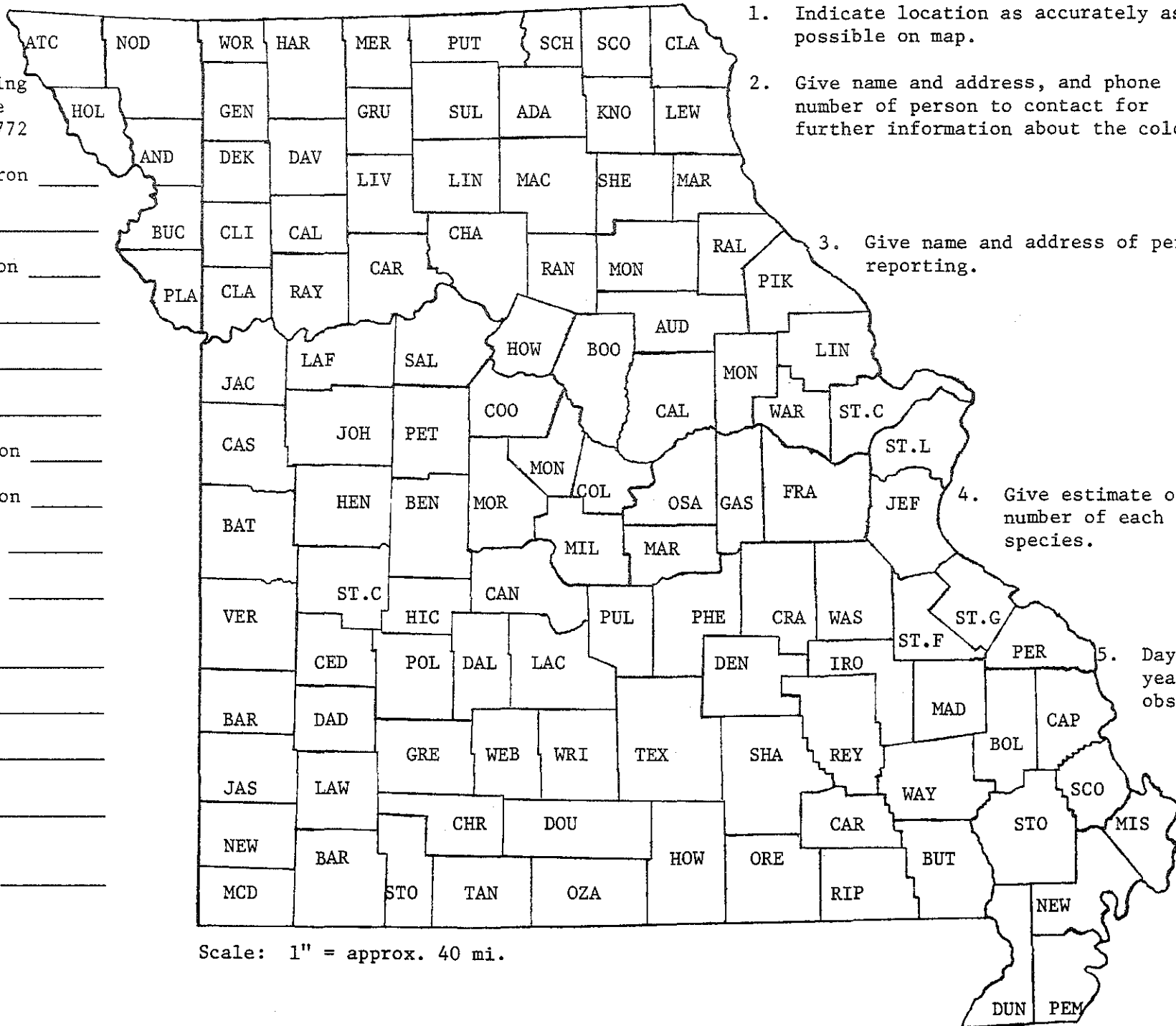
*More forms available on request

HERON COLONY REPORTING SHEET

Please return sheet to:

David K. Goering
Cottey College
Nevada, Mo 64772

- Great Blue Heron _____
- Green Heron _____
- Little B. Heron _____
- Cattle Egret _____
- Common Egret _____
- Snowy Egret _____
- B-c Night Heron _____
- Y-c Night Heron _____
- Least Bittern _____
- Amer. Bittern _____
- Glossy Ibis _____
- W.F. Ibis _____
- White Ibis _____
- Anhinga _____
- Others (Name _____)



1. Indicate location as accurately as possible on map.
2. Give name and address, and phone number of person to contact for further information about the colony.
3. Give name and address of person reporting.
4. Give estimate of number of each species.
5. Day, month, year colony observed.

Scale: 1" = approx. 40 mi.

MOTORBIKES VS NATIONAL PARKS

By Paul E. Bauer

On July 1, 1972 the Clark and Mark Twain National Forests in Missouri plan to start a new policy that would permit motorbikes and all other types of Motorized Recreational Vehicles (MRV) to be used. Several concerned individuals, like myself, requested and received a copy of the proposed policy to permit usage of MRV's in the Missouri National Forests.

The rather long letter that follows this paragraph expresses some of my concerns about this proposed new use of the wilderness areas in Missouri. If you share in the concern that I have expressed below, I beg you to help by also writing a letter to explain your beliefs. Write your letters to:

Mr. Donald L. Rollins
Supervisor, Clark National Forest
P. O. Box 937
Rolla, Missouri 65401

Mr. John E. Ledgerwood
Acting Forest Supervisor
Mark Twain National Forest
Belcrest and East Trafficway
Springfield, Missouri 65802

This is a serious and urgent request; please lend your support by writing as soon as possible. After a forest wilderness is damaged, it cannot be replaced.

Dear Sir:

After careful review of the proposed Motorized Recreation Vehicles (MRV) use policy for the Clark and Mark Twain National Forests, I would like to provide comments that I hope will be considered before any such policy is started.

The numerous controls that you propose on the use of MRV's makes it apparent to me that you are aware of the potential problems that excessive or uncontrolled usage could cause. Let me describe a few that I see.

Policing such a policy would be a major new task for your office. How do you propose measuring and enforcing the 85 db sound limit at 50 ft? Will the engine be at full throttle? These vehicles can move fast and will arrive in great numbers. Your staff will need to be everywhere at once to enforce this policy, or you might need to close trails AFTER damage is caused by improper and excessive usage. Closing trails after they are damaged does not protect the National Forest.

A larger staff and larger budget will be required for policing. Your staff will need MRV's to catch offenders! Many more meaningful uses could be suggested for a larger National Forest budget than policing the use of MRV's.

Promoting (or permitting) the use of MRV's in Missouri is odd since other northern and eastern states are now trying to curtail or avoid the excessive damage vehicles are causing. Why bring this new problem to Missouri?

Many of these vehicles are made in foreign countries. Encouraging or permitting the use of these vehicles increases the sales. These MRV sales contribute to the U.S. balance of payment problems, which is against one of our major governmental policies. The drain of dollars to foreign countries increases prices here, reduces the jobs available for Americans, contributes to inflation and continues to devalue the U.S. dollar. Each little bit hurts!

Once MRV use is permitted, stopping is very difficult; more usage is always demanded. The first sentence of the proposed policy speaks of multiple use demands on the National Forests that requires a plan for optimum accommodation. But multiple use should never plan or permit damage to a National Forest or infringe on the rights of others to use this property.

I firmly believe MRV's should be restricted to private land; public land should not be exposed to this damage; only paved roads that exist should be used.

To promote meaningful usage of a national forest should mean promoting back packing. This is an honest recreation for anyone and is sorely needed by city people who already sit all day and night. Why not encourage family hiking and backpacking on existing forest trails instead of permitting MRV's?

Consider the ideals set out by the father of conservation, Aldo Leopold, in his SAND COUNTY ALMANAC in the chapter titled Conservation Esthetic. One component of recreation is the feeling of isolation in nature. Wild places are scarce; promoting or advertising the use of wild places is self defeating because the more successful you are, the less you have to offer until the wild place is gone. Adding roads, campgrounds, trails, toilets as development of recreational resources is FALSE. The accommodations for the crowd are not developing (i.e., Creating) anything for the wilderness; they only dilute the already thin soup! These are powerful words from a very wise man.

The mood and temperament of many MRV users I have observed is not related to a National Forest for enjoyment. They never see the forest. They seem intent to gun the engines, spin the wheels, and determined to find a hill that their machine cannot climb. Have you noticed this?

I am sure you are aware of the real damage that MRV's cause to the forest floor; the soil is compacted, turf is removed, erosion of already thin soil starts and continues because new growth under the above conditions is impossible. The danger of forest fire is increased because more smokers and machines are in the forests.

So far I have said nothing about harm to wildlife. You probably expected the Audubon Society to be concerned with wildlife; we are concerned, and with where the wild creatures can live. However, there are always many broad aspects to ponder for all environmental problems as I have tried to illustrate above.

Consider the area of forest consumed by a hiker on a trail. Even a noisy hiker will only disturb the wildlife for a distance of roughly 250 feet on each side of the trail; roughly a swath one-tenth mile wide at the rate of 3 mph or less. This (noisy) hiker consumes $(0.1 \times 3\text{mph})$ or 0.3 sq. miles/hour. Now consider the MRV rider; the noise disturbance extends more than 1000 ft. on each side of the trail, and he moves at least at 15 mph. This MRV rider consumes $(0.4 \text{ miles} \times 15 \text{ mph})$ which equals 6 sq. miles/hour. Thus the MRV rider consumes at LEAST 20 TIMES MORE FOREST than even the noisy hiker. The MRV user has an unfair advantage and places excessive demands upon the National Forest and the other people that compete for the existing wild space.

If you really enforced all of the rules listed under section F of the proposed policy for MRV's, there would be few, if any months of the year when MRV's could rightly be used; only when the ground was frozen, no birds were nesting, no hunting was in season, or when fire danger was minimal. Section F-1, protecting wildlife from intrusion by man during nesting would exclude

March through July. Woodpeckers, owls and hawks nest very early (during March) and migrant birds nest twice with the second brood ready to leave roughly in late July. Section F-2, avoiding disturbance during hunting season would exclude much of fall, winter and spring. Section F-3 would exclude usage during periods of high forest fire danger, which can occur at any time; this has been a dry winter! However, fire hazard would usually exclude MRV usage during late summer and early fall. Section F-4 is concerned with erosion during wet periods, such as after the winter thaw and during the spring rains.

Our family has enjoyed the privilege of hiking and camping in National Forests from the state of Washington to North Carolina, and many states in between. We have never seen the Milky Way more crisp and clear than from our own Clark National Forest in Missouri at Silver Mines campgrounds.

We beg you never to permit the National Forests in Missouri to be raped by machines such as MRV's, or by people that have no real love for a wilderness.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Bauer, Vice-President
The Audubon Society of Missouri

The federally sponsored Breeding Bird Survey, now in its fifth year in Missouri, is becoming an annual tradition for its cooperators. The procedure is to travel a predetermined route of 25 miles by car, stopping every half mile to record all birds -- both species and numbers -- which can be identified by sight or sound in a period of three minutes. The basic idea is to follow precisely the same techniques, over the same route, year after year.

During his 1971 census this cooperator made one of his three-minute stops by a junction where some road construction had been taking place. While he stood by the roadside, binoculars around his neck and clipboard in hand, a car pulled up and the driver leaned out of the window. "What are you doing?" he asked. "I'm conducting a bird census." Silent pause. "How much more digging will they do here?" "I don't know a thing about that, sorry." "Don't you work for the Highway Department?" "No. I wasn't joking when I said I'm conducting a bird census." Another pause. "Then why don't you go over in those woods over there? There are lots of birds over there." - J. Jackson

WINTER SURVEY - DECEMBER 1, 1971 - MARCH 31

Compiled by Dick Anderson

Weather - This winter was relatively mild, but very dry. December was warm and cloudy with little precipitation. In January we had cold, but dry weather with a cold snap on January 15-16 sending temperatures below zero from Kansas City to St. Louis. February was normally cold (but dry) until the last week when abnormally high temperatures melted all freeze-ups. March was above normal in temperature, but again dry. The key word in all reports was "dry". Most areas were three inches behind in precipitation for the first three months of 1972.

Loons through grebes - A late common loon was at Big Lake December 4 (F.L., M.R.) and an early spring loon was at Maryville March 26 (M.R.). Horned and eared grebes were seen at Kansas City and St. Louis in normal supply, while the high count of 62 horned grebes in breeding plumage was made at Table Rock Lake March 28 (J.C.). A late (and rare) western grebe was at Browning Lake December 10 (F.L.).

Waterfowl - Mild weather during much of the period left a lot of open water. A long, slow duck migration found many species over a longer period of time than normal. Rare ducks were also more often seen. An immature whistling swan was at Maryville December 7 (M.R.). Two adult whistling swans were at Mark Twain Refuge December 26 (D.A., S.V.). These swans stayed well into January, were later seen at Busch Wildlife (E.C.) and again returned to the refuge and were last seen February 29 (S.V.) (it is leap year). Geese were about normal with white-fronts more common in western and eastern Missouri. Ross' geese were again at Squaw Creek until late December and appeared again March 10 and 20 (F.L., M.R.). Puddle ducks were seen in good numbers at Squaw Creek, Kansas City and St. Louis areas. An almost daily coverage of Little Dixie Lake near Columbia by Ike Adams, often accompanied by Bill Goodge, revealed good numbers of puddle and diving ducks. Our only rarity with puddlers was a cinnamon teal at Browning Lake March 12 (L.G., F.L.)

All diving ducks were commonly seen in the St. Louis area, but we failed to see the huge flocks of lesser scaup and ruddies that were present years ago. An old squaw was at Table Rock Dam February 21-22 (N.F.). Two old squaws were at the Alton Lake area, one on March 9 (E.C.) and a different bird on March 12 (D.A.). A white-winged scoter was found on Wyandotte Lake January 10 (S. Patti), while one was found at Fellows Lake and Lake Springfield on several dates (N.F.). One stayed on Alton Lake for several weeks and was seen by a host of birders. A very rare common scoter was found on Alton Lake March 25 by Jim Ruschill. A scoter (sp.) was at Jacomo December 12 (Felicia Bart). Red-breasted mergansers were common at Alton Lake, while common mergansers in unusually high numbers were at Big Lake Park March 10 (M.R.).

Hawks - Hawk reports varied, but were generally good. They were rated scarce at Springfield (N.F.) and marsh and red-tailed were down at Windsor (E.W.). The turkey vulture migration apparently started on March 6 when 33 were observed at Meramec State Park (J.I.). Red-tailed and rough-legged were about double last year's population in the area (J.I.). Rough-legged were also above normal in the St. Louis area (J.C., D.A., S.V.). On a trip to south-west Missouri Kelly Hobbs reported more red-tailed, Harlan's and sparrow hawks than usual. Up to four Harlan's were commonly seen at Squaw Creek during this period (F.L.). A golden eagle apparently wintered at Squaw Creek (F.L.) and on was near Mark Twain Refuge February 19 (S.V.). Over 200 bald eagles were counted at Squaw Creek December 19 (F.L. et al.). About that many were present in the Mississippi-Illinois river valley, but not until the mid-January cold snap brought them down. Only an occasional eagle was found at Little Dixie Lake (I.A.).

Falcon reports were most unusual. A peregrine was seen at Squaw Creek December 19 and again on January 15 (M.R.). A pigeon hawk was seen near Squaw Creek February 12 (M.R.) and near there February 20 (F.L.). A pigeon hawk was caught (and released) in a sparrow trap at Godfrey, Illinois on January 19 (S.V.). A falcon believed to be a pigeon hawk was seen March 12 south of Kansas City (K.H., E.Cole, et al.). The winter population of sparrow hawks was many times that of the breeding population.

Shorebirds through woodpeckers - March shorebirds were practically non-

existent. An early spotted sandpiper was at East Prairie, Missouri March 8 (M.S.). Golden plovers were at Rosendale March 21 (J.H.). Woodcocks were noted giving their mating flights during mid-March in Springfield and St. Louis. Young woodcocks were out of the nest by early April in Columbia, (F.L., M.R.).

Gulls - Alton Dam lived up to its reputation with seven species of gulls easily found by the end of March. Ring-billed and herring both numbered several thousand (possible 10,000 or more over a 20 mile stretch of river). The first rarity was an Iceland gull on January 8 (D.A., P.B.), which stayed 9 weeks. Within a week three glaucous were in the area and were seen off and on into April. A Bonaparte's appeared January 22 (D.A., D.E.), which is most unusual for January. Franklin's (and Bonaparte's) were in by mid-February and stayed through March. (Bonaparte's were seen in each of the first five months of 1972). Then to cap things off an immature black-legged kittiwake was found March 29 and stayed three weeks. Not only did a throng of local birders see these species, but out-of-towners were attracted also. Bill Goodge and Ike Adams came in for the Iceland and glaucous; Floyd Lawhon and Mark Robbins call all the way from the great northwest for the Iceland and kittiwake and Dave Easterla came down from Purdue to pick up the glaucous for a Missouri lifer.

Most observers reported long and short-eared owls either down or missing completely, but their number has always fluctuated greatly from year to year. (They also change their local wintering grounds.)

A red-shafted flicker was at Rosendale March 25 (J.H.). A few were at Squaw Creek, but below normal (F.L., M.R.). Red-headed woodpeckers were conflicting. They were scarce at Springfield (N.F.) and were abnormally low near Sullivan (J.I.), but unusually common in northwest Missouri (F.L., M.R.) and were more common in the greater St. Louis area than last winter (S.V., D.A.). A pileated woodpecker stayed at Swope Park for a short time in mid-January. It was the first reported in two decades (K.H.).

Perching birds - Because of a fairly mild winter, many out of season birds appeared. Earl Comfort listed 17 unusual species for the St. Louis area from December 1 to January 21. Included were Bewick's wren, short-billed marsh wren, catbird, brown thrasher, ruby-crowned kinglet, rose-breasted grosbeak and Lincoln sparrow. A Lincoln sparrow was also at Columbia February 12 (B.G.), as was one near St. Joseph December 19 and another on December 20 (F.L.).

Red-breasted nuthatches were seen in small numbers; it was not an invasion year. Winter wrens were absent from Springfield, but this may be why they were more common further north. As there have been no ice storms for several years, the Carolina population seems to be at peak level. Robins and bluebirds were reported in goodly numbers from almost all reporters. Myrtle warblers also wintered in above normal numbers in most areas.

Sparrows were scarce in Springfield, but again this may explain why they were more common in northern Missouri. Floyd Lawhon reports more Harris' and white-crowned than in several years. Kelly Hobbs also reports goodly numbers of sparrows from the Kansas City area.

Winter finches - The erratic finches were just that this winter. Evening grosbeaks apparently had a northeast to southwest flight pattern from St. Louis to Springfield. They were first noted just north of St. Louis in late December (S.V.). They then spread to west St. Louis County (Festus), were in

the Sullivan area in early January in good numbers (J.I.) and a few had reached Ozark, Missouri by late January (N.F.). They were still in the St. Louis area in late March, but none were recorded in northwest Missouri. Purple finches were similar. They were more common in Windsor, Missouri (E.W.), were up to 60 in one flock at Columbia, (I.A.) and were seen in large numbers at window feeders in Springfield (N.F.). They were normal at St. Louis and Kansas City, but not mentioned in northwest Missouri. Redpolls were the opposite. They came into northwest Missouri and peaked at over 100 at Maryville with a few reaching St. Louis by late February. Crossbills apparently came from the northeast as only St. Louis recorded them. Six white-winged and two red crossbills were at one home in St. Louis County. These came (as did the redpolls) in late February when strong southern winds were pushing flocks of robins, blackbirds and other early migrants in from the south. For over a week there was a criss-crossing of southern and northern migrants.

Small flocks of Lapland Longspurs were noted from St. Louis to Kansas City, but no concentrations were noted.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| I.A. - Ike Adams | J.H. - Jack Hilsabeck |
| D.A. - Dick Anderson | K.H. - Kelly Hobbs |
| P.B. - Paul Bauer | J.I. - Jim Irvine |
| E.C. - Earl Comfort | F.L. - Floyd Lawhon |
| N.F. - Nathan Fay | M.R. - Mark Robbins |
| L.G. - Leo Gallaway | M.S. - Michael Southard |
| B.G. - Bill Goodge | S.V. - Sally Vasse |
| E.W. - Evelyn White | |

We would like to welcome three new contributors - Jim Irvine from Sullivan, Missouri; Michael Southard from East Prairie and Evelyn White from Windsor. We hope to be hearing more from them next time.

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