



nature notes

Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society

October 1998 Vol. 70, No. 8

Barbecue & Black-chins: Adventures in Texas

Anne McCormack

In June this year I was lucky to be part of a group led by Bill Rowe to south and west Texas—yes, in record heat. We landed in San Antonio and wasted no time. As the eight of us—Bill, Janet Bouffard, Barbara and Paul Johnson, Kent Lannert, Dorcas Sunderman and myself—climbed into our rental van, we talked about the birds we most wanted to see. Janet said she wanted to see a Roadrunner and at our first birding stop—a water treatment area called Mitchell Lake near San Antonio—one appeared, loping along the road.

It's strange country for a Missourian—flat, covered with dark green palo verdes. In one of those strange, feathery-leaved trees we found an even stranger bird, a Groove-billed Ani on its nest. White Pelicans, 200 Black-necked Stilts, a few Avocets and even two Black Terns enjoyed the shallow waters. A group of White-faced Ibis shared their pond with 4 Roseate Spoonbills. No science fiction writer could conceive of the Spoonbill—bald head, long, round-tipped bill, pink body with orange

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Puffins at October

Meeting!

Doug Corbett

Join us on Friday, Oct. 9 at 8 PM for our WGNSS general meeting. Our guest this month will be Mike Grant who will share videotape he took of his birding trip to Maine. This video is loaded with Puffins and Auks seen last June. Mike has led birding groups with WGNSS and Audubon in the past and will share his knowledge with us on his birding adventure through Massachusetts and Maine.

We meet at the St. Louis County Library Headquarters, on Lindbergh just south of Clayton, in the west meeting room. In December, we'll meet at Tyson Research Center along with the St. Louis Audubon Society. ∞

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Welcome to new members...

Doug & Judy Richey Grover MO
Mary Anne Auer..... Richmond Heights
Steve Whitworth Glen Carbon IL
Norma Wolfrum..... Richmond Heights
John Zalewski.....Kirkwood
Mary Ladish..... St. Louis
Ed & Regina Lynch.....Frontenac
Rich & Ariel Walters University City
Ron Giljum Barnhart
Rich & Fran Glass.....Crestwood
Dr. Michael Hatlelid..... Ladue
Sue Sehrt.....Gray Summit

Tyson Research Center Seeks Volunteer Instructors

The Field Science Department of Washington University's Tyson Research Center is seeking volunteer instructors to help present nature programs. Depending on schedule and preference, volunteer instructors work with students, scouts, or families on weekday mornings, afternoon, Friday evenings, or Saturdays. Volunteers will learn about a variety of natural history topics as well as teaching techniques that stimulate and encourage investigation and discovery of the natural world.

No special educational qualifications are necessary, only interest and enthusiasm for the wild and natural whether it be crayfish or third grader!

Tyson is located just east of Eureka. Please call Janice Starke at the Tyson Field Science Program 935-8437. ~

Audubon Society of MO's Fall Weekend Meeting 9/25-7

The annual fall meeting of the Audubon Society of Missouri will be held at Camp Clover Point in Lake of the Ozarks State Park on September 25, 26, 27. For program and directions, call Paul Bauer 314-921-3972. ~

Photographers Needed

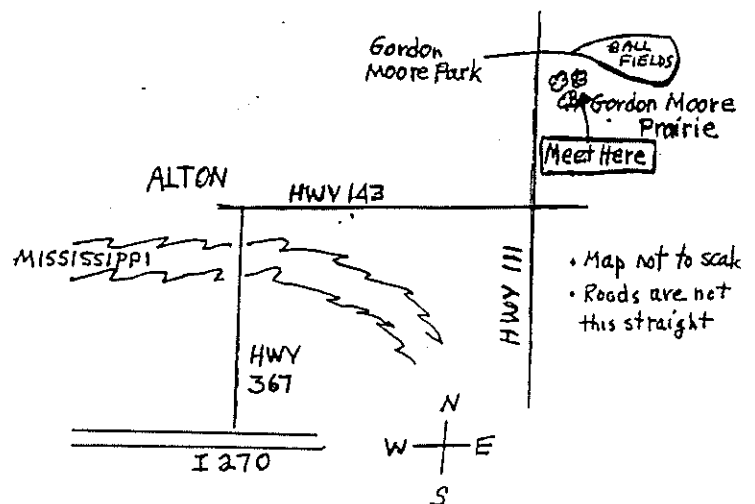
Jim Ziebol

It's becoming increasingly apparent that a photo will often make the difference for a successful documentation. If anyone in the area has the equipment and time and can come at very short notice, please call Jim Ziebol at 781-7372. The documentation situation now is greatly reliant on photos and videotapes. ~

Kennedy Woods Savanna

Restoration Seed Collection

WGNSS is supporting the restoration of a prairie in St. Louis's Forest Park. On Oct. 10 we'll collect seeds for the project at the Arboretum; meet at the visitor's center. On Oct. 24 we'll collect at George Moore Prairie, east of Alton IL. We will begin at 10:00 AM both days. We'll finish about 3:00. If you plan to stay past noon, bring a lunch. Bring garden clippers, paper grocery bag and a large pet food or bird seed bag. Pants made of nylon or slick material will help repel sticky seeds such as a tick trefoil.



Birth of a Butterfly

Linda Virga

"Look Linda! I think this butterfly is stuck!" Mom was getting ready to hang up wash and was bent down, peering at the side of the little wooden basket which held clothespins.

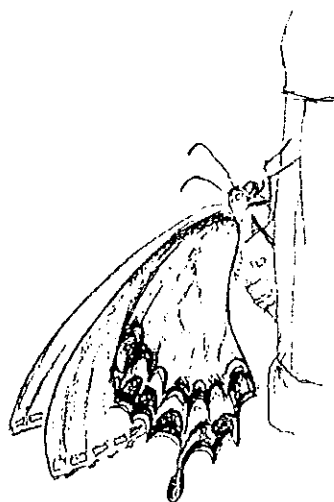
To my amazement, I saw a large dark butterfly, half-way out of its chrysalis. The wings were visible but looked limp and wrinkled. My sister who was also working the backyard, came and we watched as the butterfly began pumping its wings. I had seen such an event in films but never witnessed it in real life.

We knew right off that it was a swallowtail. We had observed the caterpillars of the black swallowtails on our parsley, so we know that this species was a possibility. But we also had seen many yellow tiger swallowtails gloating about our tulip and black cherry trees. After the wings were spread more, we could tell that it was a female tiger swallowtail. We double-checked in a book. She was the darker version rather than the usual yellow.

How did a chrysalis get on the clothespin basket? Most likely, an adventurous caterpillar crawled down from a host plant, across the grass, and onto the basket many washdays ago.

The butterfly was still only part-way out of the chrysalis. It was such an opportunity to see up close the wonderfully pure colors and patterns, I ran for my sketching supplies. I began with black pencil. Then I turned to colored pencils, even the lines would become fuzzy. I couldn't resist the colors.

Then it dawned on me. She had not moved from her original position. It was taking too long. Some thing was amiss and the butterfly might die in front of my eyes. It was not right to indulge myself in drawing and coloring This lovely creature should have the chance to live and to fly.



Sept 16, '78
Female
Tiger
Swallowtail
emerging
from
chrysalis
on
Mom's
clothespin
basket
by
Linda Virga

I jumped up and called to my mother. We hunted up some emergency surgical tools: tweezers and a dental pick. We took the clothespin basket into the front yard to our butterfly garden, island of flowers attractive to bees and butterflies.

Should we free or feed her first?

If her "birth" had been a routine delivery, she would have flown off to find nectar after wings were fully spread. But had this little one been caught in the chrysalis overly long? Would she pull out on her own if nourished a little?

We consulted Heitzman's book on Missouri lepidoptera, the little Golden book on butterflies and moths, and Tylka's booklet on butterfly gardening. Nowhere did we find answers to the questions we were now asking. We didn't think there was time to peruse the Britannica!

We took her, still half-enveloped in her chrysalis attached to the basket, to a spot between the butterfly bush and lantana. We offered her a flowerhead of butterfly bush. She wasn't interested.

I felt she must be freed. While my mother held the basket, I used the dental pick to pull gently at a thin thread that appeared to act as a safety belt. I moved it but it didn't break that tiny thread seemed stronger than nylon. Just then our butterfly wiggled her body mightily—and suddenly she was free!

But she didn't fly off. Instead, she

crawled from the basket onto my mother's hand and rested. Her right rear leg seemed cut off at the "knee." Was she weak from a stressful emergence? from lack of food? from both? Or was this rest normal?

This time we offered lantana, another great favorite of many butterflies. She didn't uncurl her shiny black proboscis.

It was a temptation to keep her on our hands, a few inches from our admiring eyes. However we thought it was better for her to be amidst the food plants. Again, more questions than answers. Should she go on the flat white rock to bask in the sun? Near the pan of water Or in the shade? Placing her out of the wind was the one thing I knew for certain.

Suddenly she released a flow of liquid on my mother's hand. Was that a good sign that her little body was working in a healthy manner? My sister wondered if her abdomen was swollen from an abnormal struggle to exit from her chrysalis. We flipped through Heitzman again and noted that the female's abdomen seemed bigger than the male's. No mention of liquids.

As she crawled along my mother's hand, we were relieved to see that all six legs were fully formed and all working. Perhaps everything was going to turn out all right after all.

We decided on the rock and place her down gently. She crawled toward the shade at the base of some tall celosia, then rested. Was she too weak to get into sunlight which would help her? We put her atop the lantana blossoms. Now my sister worried: Was she an obvious target for birds? We coaxed her into shade beneath branches of the butterfly bush. Were we tiring her out by moving her?

We're told we are not to intervene but to let natural selection take its course. Yet we didn't really want to see this lovely creature perish before our eyes.

Suddenly she flew upward, into the mid-

dle of a young red cedar. Oh, not a good place, I thought. In retrospect, I wonder if that would have been the best secret place for her, a safe place in which to hide while she rested. But at that time I thought of her fragile wings and of how cedar branches scratch against my hand. I decided to "rescue" her once again.

Back she went, into the shade of the celosia. She seemed content to hang there, catching a little dappled sunlight when the wind blew. My mother and sister returned to chores in the backyard.

I began deadheading the butterfly bush and marigolds, cutting a few roses, puttering about so I could make periodic checks and also to notify any birds lurking about that this area was off-limits!

I wondered: do freshly emerged females mate before they fly? I've never heard of this, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't happen. Who knows these things?

While "our" swallowtail was resting, I watched all the other butterflies flitting about: cloudless sulphur, silver-spotted skipper, monarch, sachem skipper. All seemed so fortunate in their seemingly effortless rides in the air. I reflected on how I had so quickly presumed that this delightful scene came without any effort the butterfly's part.

I knew insect mortality is high. I think my friend Jim said that of a hundred eggs, only one or two make it to adult-hood. That is a statistic. Our swallowtail was a living, breathing creature right in front of us. She was not a lifeless statistic.

I caught sight of her just as she decided to fly out of the butterfly garden to a nearby tulip tree. She clung to the underside of a leaf. Too taxing? Too many birds? Too far from nectar? Too exposed, definitely? I decided to move her back to the part sun, part shade area of the celosia.

While I was walking back to the house, I saw a yellow tiger swallowtail flit by. it

could have a yellow form of a female, but I spoke to it as though it were a male and told “him” to stay in the area. A lovely young female might soon be ready for courting.

When I came out a few minutes later to check on her, our swallowtail was gone. I looked about the area, hoping I wouldn’t find her lifeless on the ground. I didn’t.

It’s possible that a bird dove in and gobbled her up, but I don’t think it’s likely.

I’d rather believe that after resting from her ordeal, the exquisite young tiger swallowtail maiden floated off in joyful flight. Then we was joined by a male and they happily populated our backyard with their offspring, which we will delight in next year. That’s what I want to believe. ∞

Barbecue and Black-chins, cont.

shoulders. Strangest and most thrilling of all were the two white heart-shaped heads that stared at us from a small shed—fledgling Barn Owls.

On to more familiar terrain: the Texas Hill Country’s Kerrville—home of the Fighting Antlers. Kerr Wildlife Management Area reminded me of dry, south-facing slopes in the Ozarks—limestone ledges and cedar trees. The dusty, rocky terrain reminded others of the 1967 Paul Newman film, *Hombre*. We hiked a long, thirsty time, straining our ears for the that sought-after resident of the Hill Country, the Golden-cheeked Warbler. Although there were Rufous-crowned and Lark Sparrows, and abundant Ash-throated Flycatchers, no Golden-cheek warbled. Two graduate student researchers we met guided us to a favored spot where we found a woodrat, but no *rara avis*. Most likely, the Golden-cheeks had already left their breeding grounds. In the words of Kent Lannert, “The Hill Country yielded its bounty with reluctance.” But not *too* much reluctance. Dorcas Sunderman found a singing Canyon Wren—a life bird for me.

After searching through the shrubs at noon, the a few endangered Black-capped Vireos appeared—a life bird for most of us.

Our drive through Kerr County took us along the Guadalupe River with its cypress trees and large herds of Sika deer. Imagine a full-grown Whitetail deer with the coloration and spots of a fawn—that’s the Sika. They were introduced from India, along with black Axis deer, by the hunting lodges of the Hill Country.

We bought sandwiches at The Store in Hunt and ate them on picnic benches near the feeders, watching Black-chinned Hummingbirds to our hearts’ content. Besides great barbecue, The Store sells jalapeño jelly and jackalope postcards. Lunch at The Store in Hunt, Texas—someone should write a song about it.

My baby left me

Left me down at The Store...

So I’m gon’ watch them Black-chins

Till I cain’t watch no more!

Something like that.

An isolated grove of Big-toothed Maples gives its name to our next stop, Lost Maples State Natural Area. Golden-cheeked Warbler is found here—but not that day. I took a great photo of our group here. No two of us are looking the same direction. It’s a gorgeous area; lush by Texas standards. The Sabinal River flows through a canyon where the Zone-tailed Hawk has nested. We missed the Zone-tail, but we did find nests of Scott’s Oriole and Black-chinned Hummingbird and enjoyed watching the female at each.

The Zone-tail made its first appearance the next day along the Rio Frio near Concan, flying low over our heads as we admired a Golden-fronted Woodpecker. A Red-shouldered Hawk seemed to be enjoying the view that morning too as he shared the phone wire with a nervous White-winged Dove. Here too we got our first good look at Cave Swallows. Further down-

stream we found two beautiful little Green Kingfishers. Bewick's Wrens were common, luring us with their varied calls.

Next Bill drove toward the Nueces River and area called Chalk Bluffs. The green turquoise water looked mighty inviting as we scanned the huge bluff for raptors. In a grove near the river Bill found a pair of Brown-crested Flycatchers. Similar to the Great Crested Flycatcher, the Brown-crested's range in the US is limited to Arizona and south Texas. It's listed on my record, *Field Guide to Western Bird Songs*, as Wied's Crested. We also had great looks at that Rio Grande specialty, Couch's Kingbird.

Vermilion Flycatchers demanded our attention everywhere at Chalk Bluffs, as did Summer Tanagers. The bird that caused the most commotion however was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that appeared to have a wounded shoulder. Suddenly he launched from his perch and flashed those blood-red axillaries that extend just barely to the shoulder. We estimated 40 Scissor-tails that day and not one Starling!

After dinner at Neal's Lodge, we headed for Frio Bat Cave, located on a private ranch nearby. Enroute we spotted a strange mass of wriggling black and white—a family of striped skunks! As we approached the cave at dusk I wondered what that group of swallows was doing. They were Cave Swallows, and in a moment they were followed by Brazilian Free-tailed Bats—the first of an estimated 17 million! The flight of bats was so dense they almost obscured the cave entrance. We were surrounded by them—so close we could see their faces; hear, even feel the air under their wings. They flowed across the open skies like a dark ribbon. Up on the ridge, Red-tailed Hawks and a Peregrine Falcon were waiting for them. When it was too dark to see, we could still hear and even smell them as they poured out. Suddenly all was quiet.

Now, west to Lake Amistad near Del Rio. The reservoir was at a record low because of the continuing drought; 19% of capacity at that time. Least Terns flew with Turkey Vultures across the bare shore on the Mexico side. We managed to find a Laughing Gull crossing the water. Up on the dam, a little Rock Wren played hide and seek with us under the blazing sun.

We joked about the expensive bridges that spanned the Rio Grande—at the time, only a creek by Missouri standards. About six weeks later, Tropical Storm Charlie changed that, wreaking havoc and bringing the water depth at Del Rio to 26'. The Rio Frio left its banks too, destroying about 100 campsites near Concan. The floods recharged the Amistad Reservoir as well as the Falcon Dam area down stream. As we go to press, floods continue in Mexico, with a death toll in the hundreds.

Harris's Hawk patrolled the road as we drove on to Langtry, home of the law west of the Pecos—Judge Roy Bean, and home to a pretty good barbecue stand too. But not much else.

Shortly after we arrived at the lodge in Big Bend National Park, we met a couple wearing Zeiss binoculars. "Lucifer Hummingbird? First agave on the Window Trail," they advised. The agave may be more familiar to Midwesterners in its liquid form; tequila. This member of the amaryllis family, *Agave havardiana*, is also known as century plant, maguey, and mescal. The Chisos Mountains of Big Bend NP is the only place it's found in the US. It grows a rosette of spine-tipped, blue-green leaves for 25 years or so till one day it sends up a flower spike ten feet or so into the air. The reservoir of moisture in the leaves is drawn upwards till the leaves crumple, but the flowers begin to open in short horizontal bouquets of brilliant yellow. Then the hummingbirds arrive. Broad-tailed Hummingbirds had not been reported in the

area, possibly because of the drought and heat. We were too early for south-bound Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds, but the Lucifer Hummingbird was the one we wanted to see.

There were quite a few trips, camera, scope and all before we did, but no one could complain about tramping the Window Trail. At 4600 feet, the "Window" is formed by the outline of the mountains, looking west across the Chihuahuan Desert. Signs along the trail warn, "Do no take children on this trail. Mountain Lion area." Along the trail grow Rainbow Cactus with its red-tipped yellow spines, Giant Fishhook Cactus, Creosotebush, and Lechugilla. Also in the *Agave* genus, the Lechugilla is the signature plant of the Chihuahuan Desert—it occurs nowhere else in the world. Its name means "lettuce," from its yellow-green cluster of succulent, spiky leaves. At last the Lucifer, with its distinctive down-curved bill, made its appearance.

One more point about the Window: it's famous. It may not be quite as well known as the peaks called Maroon Bells in Colorado, but I saw it the other day in an ad for Christian contemporary music CD's called "Songs 4 Life." *They* didn't mention the Lucifer.

Dugout Wells is a small oasis in the desert surrounding the mountains. Here was one of the highlights of the trip: a pair of Elf Owls, roosting in the shade around the well. Bill and Kent quietly set up scopes, and, holding our breath, watching an owl the size of a bluebird. We returned at night to hear their barking call. As we listened, we saw the silhouette of another owl. It flew over, calling—a Western Screech Owl. Along with the smallest owl, in the headlights of the van we saw the smallest nightjar, the Common Poorwill.

Almost 3,000 feet below the Window is Rio Grande Village and campground. Bare rock bluffs line the Mexican side of the

river to form Boquillas Canyon. The water is slow and muddy, but in the heat, it looked inviting. Not too many folks in the campground; only a group of 30 javelina foraging. The javelina is a wild pig or peccary, smaller than a golden retriever but heavier. Their big heads make them look rather endearing.

A pair of Common Black-Hawks nested nearby in a cottonwood grove by the river. Not wanting to disturb them, we scanned the trees and sky from the road but saw no sign of them. Bill noted that the US population of Black-Hawks is only around 200 pairs, mostly in Arizona.

As we cruised along in our van, we watched a coyote chase a desert cottontail. A Roadrunner trotted out to watch the coyote miss—a Warner-Brothers moment. Everywhere the Bell's Vireos called from the bushes: "I don't know what the hell ya talkin' about! What the hell ya talkin' about?" (For this transcription I am indebted to Greg Voight.)

We drove through Green Gulch the next morning on our way down to the river and stopped to watch a Black Bear. Along the river that day we saw an almost unbelievable sight. The lawn at Cottonwood Campground was a shallow pool of little birds: dozens of House Finches, 15 Blue Grosbeaks, one plum and indigo Varied Bunting and 30 Painted Buntings! The male Painted Bunting's colors—purple head, green back and red rump, chest and belly—are stunning seen high in a tree—but so many, and so close! In the trees we counted 15 Summer Tanagers, along with Ash-throated Flycatchers, noisy Western Kingbirds and even Tropical Kingbirds. Trying to upstage the buntings were more than a dozen Vermilion Flycatchers. In the shrubs surrounding the grass, Bell's Vireos called constantly. As the temperature climbed, a Gray Hawk—one of the rarest

raptors in the US—called and flew overhead.

Before we were even aware of his presence, birds began to shriek as a Prairie Falcon zipped overhead. One little Vermilion popped 15' straight up from his fence post, blasting the intruder; a moment later, with the falcon out of sight, he sputtered vertically back home, every feather fluffed with outrage.

A bit further upriver is Santa Elena Canyon. Within the narrow walls, we craned our necks to follow the flight of a Peregrine Falcon. Along the bank, a Canyon Wren sang. It could not have been more perfect...

Stay tuned for next month's episode, as our intrepid birders set their sights on the Colima Warbler, meet another skunk, and sample more Tex-Mex cuisine. ∞

August 1998 Birding Report

Jim Ziebol, Yvonne Homeyer &
Kevin Renick

Inadvertently omitted from a previous report was the May 5 sighting of 3 Red Knots and 2 Upland Sandpipers (JMo) in St. Charles County. This is an impressive record for the St. Louis area.

Least Bittern was seen at the Borrow Pit on August 8 (DK). A well-viewed Tricolored Heron was first observed on August 2 in the same place (B. Rowe, JVB). R. Bodman observed a large mixed flock of herons and egrets, numbering about 200, on August 30 along the South Levee Roads. Two Northern Shovelers summered at Riverlands and both Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal were present in the area by about August 12. Chain of Rocks had a good concentration of Wood Ducks on August 2, with 150 counted (FH). A Whimbrel was found on July 30 at the Swan Lake access (L. Hanes) (+). On August 24, a Marbled Godwit was found at the same location (L. Hanes). A Wilson's Phalarope



was seen at Stump Lake on August 31 (HW). Three Willets were present for several days at Mark Twain Refuge around August 22 (HW). Tringa sandpipers and peeps were reported moderately. A Western Sandpiper was seen with other sandpipers in St. Charles County on August 2 (B. Rowe, JVB). Buff-breasted Sandpipers were reported at Sauget (DB) and Cora Island Road (MB, BK) on August 15. Six additional Buff-breasteds found on Bischoff Road on August 29 were hotlined (TB et al.) Sanderlings were reported at Cora Island Road on August 15 (Viola Buchholtz) and August 16 at the Chain (FH). An Avocet was found on August 13 at Heron Pond (G&TB). A young Franklin's Gull spent part of the summer at Riverlands with the 60 or so Ring-billed Gulls. Black and Forster's Terns were seen at Riverlands on August 23 (MT).

Mark Peters reported three juvenal Cooper's Hawks in the valley near his home. A first-year Sharpie with a wing injury was also seen there on August 18. This is a good breeding hawk for this area. A Broad-winged Hawk was noted on August 4 and an *anatum* Peregrine Falcon was seen on August 16 in Monroe County (DK). Broad-winged Hawks successfully bred in Castlewood State Park this summer (MB). Northern Harriers were seen on August 15 and 17 in St. Charles County (J&CM).

Whip-poor-wills appear to still be on the decline in our area. A leucistic hummingbird was observed for some time at a feeder in Hermann, MO (L. Merridith). An immature Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was observed at Fort Chartres along the South Levee Roads on August 18 and a Western Kingbird was found there on August 14 (DK). Another Western Kingbird made an appearance on August 1 on Weiss Road (MB, BK). Gilbert Lake produced a possible early record in Illinois for Solitary Vireo on August 27 (TB). Early land-bird migrants included an immature female Black-and-White Warbler on August 20 and a male Golden-winged Warbler on August 23, both at Tower Grove Park. A Bay-breasted Warbler was noted at Hazlett State Park on August 23 (DK). A cold front on August 25 brought in 13 species of warblers, 2 vireo species, Oriole, Veery and various flycatchers on the morning of August 26 at Tower Grove Park (MP, JZ). Mourning and Canada Warblers were among 9 warbler species seen at the park on August 29 (R. Bodman et al.)

Finally, several encouraging reports were received from the area on both Cuckoo species. Tent caterpillars were numerous and so were the Cuckoos. Both species, young and adults, were seen flocking in Leslie, Mo. (C. & D. Delashmit). Sedge Wrens were abundant in the area (T&GB).

Contributors: (CA) Connie Alwood; (T&GB) Terry & George Barker; (PB) Paul Bauer; (DB) Dave Becher; (TB) Tom Bormann; (DBz) Dennis Bozzay; (MB) Mike Brady; (DC) Dick Coles; (FH) Frank Holmes; (YH) Yvonne Homeyer; (JJ) Jim Jackson; (DK) Dan Kassebaum; (BK) Bob Kleiger; (RK) Randy Korotev; (J&CM) Jim & Charlene Malone; (J Mo) Jeanie Moe; (MP) Mark Peters; (KR) Kevin Renick; (MT) Mike Treffert; (JVB) Jack Van Benthuisen; (L&MW) Larry & Michelle Wells; (BW) Bruce Wetteroth; (HW) Helen Wuestenfeld. ∞

1998 Annual Botany Trip

Carl Darigo

This year's annual Botany Group trip was to the flatlands, cemeteries, mud and swamps of the southeast Missouri Bootheel, June 7—June 12, headquartering in Hayti. Present were six members, Father James Sullivan, Jeanne Clauson, Carl Darigo, Pat & Jack Harris and Betty Nellums. George Yatskievych and Bill Summers of the Flora of Missouri Project were on hand for three days, along with Jeanine Latch, Department of Conservation biologist from the Cape Girardeau office on the first day. John Doggett, Sikeston MONPS member stayed for two days, while Jeanne's husband, Gene, joined in occasionally, but mainly preferred to patronize the local golf courses. Weather was generally good, although hot, humid and windy, with sporadic rain usually at night, mainly serving to magnify hazardous conditions of the region's treacherous muddy roads. In addition to the many interesting plants seen, certain other unique experiences occurred that will linger in memories of some participants.

Sunday, June 7—three members met at Sikeston in Scott County to do some "en route" botanizing. In a sandy field adjacent to the Hardee's, were found *Cyperus lupulinus* (slender cyperus), *Conyza ramosissima* (dwarf fleabane) and *Trifolium striatum* (rabbitfoot clover). A cemetery, lake and several sloughs were checked near Charleston in Mississippi County, finding unusual *Glyceria septentrionalis* (eastern manna grass) and two *Carex* species, James' sedge (*C. jamesii*) and the aptly named bristly sedge (*C. comosa*).

Monday, June 8—two Pemiscot County cemeteries yielded tiny *Dichondra carolinensis* (creeping morning glory) and gave George Yatskievych the opportunity to enlighten the group on the spore dispersal mechanics of winter scouring rush (*Equisetum hyemale*). A roadside ditch al-

most swallowed a new Ford pickup's front wheel, but the truck was able to extract itself with traction enhanced by the group piling into the rear bed. At Warbler Woods in Dunklin County, *Trepocarpus aethusae* (long fruited chervil) and *Cynosciadium digitatum* (finger dog shade), two uncommon members of the Apiaceae family were found. Also seen here were *Lathyrus hirsutus* (Caley pea), *Carex muskingumensis* (Muskingum sedge), *Trachelospermum difforme* (climbing dogbane) and an usually large possum haw (*Ilex decidua*) tree, closely matching Missouri Botanical Garden's state champion. A visit to Department of Conservation's leaky Coombs Lake revealed *Bacopa rotundifolia* (water hyssop), *Heteranthera limosa* (smaller mud plantain) which Bill Summers spotted in the marshy lake bottom, *Carex crus-corvi* (raven's foot sedge), *Cyperus pseudovegetus* (fan cyperus) and *Bumelia lycioides* (southern buckthorn), the latter identified only after lengthy study.

Tuesday, June 9—the day was spent crisscrossing between New Madrid and Pemiscot Counties visiting cemeteries, roadsides and muddy swamps. A Pemiscot cemetery, weedy with overgrowth, had a good stand of green dragons (*Arisaema dracontium*) along with the “vine of the week”, *Gonolobus gonocarpus* (angle pod). At a New Madrid roadside ditch, George Yatskievych pointed out swamp cottonwood (*Populus heterophylla*) and Bill Summers found water meal (*Wolffia brasiliensis*), this genus having Missouri's smallest flowering plants. The Ford pickup's questionable reputation continued when a rear wheel dropped off a steep embankment, this time requiring the welcome aid of another truck and strong chain, courtesy of two friendly employees from a nearby Bunge Grain Elevator.

Wednesday, June 10—today's major goal was Big Lake National Wildlife

Refuge, located a short distance into Arkansas. An early stop was made at Oak Grove Cemetery in Pemiscot County en route to Arkansas and the day concluded with a short visit to Hornersville Swamp Conservation Area in Dunklin County. At the cemetery *Ludwigia glandulosa* (cylindric fruited ludwigia) and *Rhynchospora corniculata* (horned rush) were the highlight plants while the Hornersville swamp yielded *Berchemia scandens* (supple jack) and *Paspalum dilatatum* (dallis grass). Big Lake NWR borders Dunklin County and receives output from the five “big ditches” which drain the Bootheel watershed. The refuge has 11,000 acres, consisting of water, swamp and bottomland hardwood-cypress forest. Mississippi kites (listed as S2 or “imperiled” in Missouri) were seen circling overhead, while yellow-billed cuckoos were inhabiting the forest. Pat and Jack Harris were able to identify snout butterflies (*Libytheana bachmanii*), after one became inadvertently trapped in their car. Sections of the lake were covered with fragrant water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*) blossoms. Bill Summers found an uncommon moss, *Dicranum flagellare* (flagellate broom moss), on a bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) trunk and also pointed out two water plants, *Spirodela polyrhiza* (duckmeat) and *Limnobium spongia* (American frogbit), the latter listed as S2 in Missouri. George Yatskievych explained that what appeared to be plants growing in the muddy lake bottom were actually stonewort algae (*Chara sp.*). Other plants of interest were *Urtica chamaedryoides* (weak nettle), *Carex tribuloides* (blunt broom sedge) and *Vitis palmata* (red grape). The group finished the long day with dinner at the Aztec Casino's restaurant, on the Mississippi River at Caruthersville, saving money by not playing the slots.

Thursday, June 11—with the group diminished to two hold-outs, plans were made to access several swampy areas in Dunklin County. The car's defective air conditioning unit plus 90°+ temperatures were of little concern as the pair imagined that Steyermark must have suffered under similar conditions in his day. In the Hornersville Swamp, *Cyperus iria* (black-seeded cyperus) was seen, as well as two trees common to the Bootheel habitat, *Quercus phellos* (willow oak) and *Planera aquatica* (water elm). No water moccasins were encountered, but Father Sullivan did find a cobra caterpillar (*Timandra amaturaria*), whose common name refers to an expanded frontal segment which is waved when alarmed. This caterpillar is usually seen on *Polygonum scandens* (false buckwheat), but here was feasting on the ubiquitous *Brunnichia ovata* (ladies' ear-drops) of the same family. Ben Cash Swamp yielded one of the more unusual finds of the week, an ordinary white mulberry (*Morus alba*) tree, but with gigantic fruits, apparently enlarged due to a smut infection. At Frisbee Access on the St. Francis River, among interesting plants seen were *Quercus nigra* (water oak), *Gratiola neglecta* (clammy hedge hyssop) and *Riccia fluitans* (slender riccia), a strap-like liverwort which inhabits mudflats. Also found here was *Eryngium prostratum* (prostrate eryngium), "plant of the day and of the week"; the tiny blue flowers and crawling habit are very different from other species of this genus.

Friday, June 12—before leaving for home, an abundant growth of *Eleocharis macrostachya* (long head spike rush) was observed in the wet highway "rich ditch", in front of the Comfort Inn, edging out *Coreopsis tinctoria* (plains coreopsis) for "motel plant" honors. ~



Nov. Deadline: Oct. 9

Since we mail our publication on the third Monday and the month begins on a Thursday, we have a late deadline for the next issue. Take advantage of this time and send an article! Submissions—handwritten, typed, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122. Computer wizards: It's safest to send a printout along with your disk. ~

Tyson Nature Line

Call 935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area. Please report any unusual birds to Jack Van Benthuisen, 961-3390 ~

Sigma Xi Seminars

Sigma Xi Science Seminars are co-sponsored by the St. Louis Zoo and the Academy of Science, on Wed. evenings, 7:30–9 PM, at the Living World, on the north side of the zoo. Free parking is available in the zoo's north lot. All events are free. For further information, call 768-5466 or 533-8083.

- Oct. 7: "El Niño and its Impact on Global warming," by Ben Abell, Dept. of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences," St. Louis Univ.
- Nov. 4: "Elementary Particles," Dr. Carl Bender, Washington Univ
- Jan. 13: Forestry in the Ozarks
- Feb. 10: Textile Conservation
- March 10: Paddlefish ~



Conservation Forum Program

Afternoon Breakout Sessions: 5:00 to 6:10 p.m.
 Dinner and Displays: 6:15 to 7:00 p.m.
 Evening Session: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
 Reception and Displays: 9:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions: 5:00 to 6:10 p.m.

Dr. Walter C. Crawford, Jr.,
 World Bird Sanctuary
*"Live Animals in Education: Preserving
 Species and Biodiversity through Interactive
 Educational Programs"*

Ron Goellner, General Curator, or Bill Houston,
 Assistant General Curator, Saint Louis Zoo
*"Field Conservation Programs through the
 Saint Louis Zoo"*

Dr. Susan Lindsey, Executive Director,
 Wild Canid Survival and Research Center
*"One Man's Vision: A Dream Fulfilled (How
 Midwesterners Saved the Endangered Red
 and Mexican Wolves)"*

Drs. Bette Loiselle and Patrick Osborne
 (Moderators), Director and Executive Director,
 International Center for Tropical Ecology
*"Growing up Amidst the Rain Forest: A View
 of Conservation Issues from Tropical
 Residents"*

(Please select 2 afternoon sessions)

Dinner and Displays: 6:15 to 7:00 p.m.

Evening Session: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Dr. Alan Templeton, Professor
 Dept. of Biology & Genetics, Washington University
 Trustee, The Nature Conservancy, Missouri Chapter
*"Landscape Management: The Collared Lizard
 vs. Smokey the Bear"*

Dr. Brien A. Meilleur, President and
 Executive Director, Center for Plant Conservation
*"Plant Conservation in the United States Tropics
 and Sub-tropics: The Role of the Center for
 Plant Conservation"*

Dr. Amy Vedder, Director of Africa Programs,
 Wildlife Conservation Society
*"Conservation in the Midst of Conflict: Lessons
 from Africa"*

Reception and Displays: 9:00 to 10:00 p.m.

The four afternoon sessions will run simultaneously from 5:00 to 5:30 p.m. and be repeated from 5:40 to 6:10 p.m. in the classrooms of The Living World. Participants are invited to choose two of the four sessions. The evening presentations will be given in the Anheuser-Busch Auditorium in The Living World. Each presentation will last about 30 minutes and speakers will entertain questions following their presentations.



SAVE THE DATE! Tuesday, October 6, 1998



Reservation Form

Please reserve _____ tickets in advance at \$7.50 per person (\$10.00 at the door, students \$5.00)

Please provide dinner (sandwich, two side dishes, dessert and soda) for _____ at \$7.50 per person

TOTAL: _____

Please indicate with number required, meal choice: Ham and cheese Turkey and cheese Vegetarian sandwich

Please indicate two preferences for the afternoon breakout sessions:

Animals in Education Zoo/Field Conservation Wolves Rain Forest Conservation

Name(s) and Affiliation (optional) for Name Tag: _____
Address: _____ Telephone No.: _____

Your check, made payable to The International Center for Tropical Ecology, is your reservation. Please mail your reservation BY SEPTEMBER 18, 1998 to Ms. Tracie Drake, Chair, c/o The International Center for Tropical Ecology, University of Missouri-St. Louis, Department of Biology, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, MO 63121-4499. For more information, please contact Ms. Bernadette Dalton at (314) 516-6203 or by e-mail at bdalton@jinx.umsl.edu.

If you prefer, you can pay by bank card: MasterCard Visa
Account #: _____ Exp. Date: _____
Signature: _____



International Center for Tropical Ecology
at the University of Missouri-St. Louis

SAVE THE DATE! FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23 - 1998 WORLD ECOLOGY DAY,
J.C. Penney Building at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

This year's program, titled "Getting off the Ark: the new role of zoos in endangered species conservation," is geared toward college students and faculty, advanced high school students and members of the community who are interested in ecology and the environment.

The schedule of the day will be as follows:

- 8:45 a.m. Greetings
- 9:00 a.m. First speaker
Dr. George Amato, chairman
AZA Systematics Advisory Group at the Bronx Zoo
- 9:45 a.m. Second speaker
Dr. Louise Bradshaw
Saint Louis Zoo
- 10:30 a.m. Environmental displays and lunch break
- 12:00 p.m. Third speaker:
Dr. Devra Kleiman,
National Zoological Park, Washington, D.C.



Need directions?

Arboretum, Gray Summit

- Take 44 west to Gray Summit (100) exit, left over highway, right onto service road and immediately left into Arboretum.
- Meet at visitor center.

West County Shopping Center

- Located at 270 & Manchester.
- Meet at the south (lower) parking lot, near Penney's, at lamp post #1.

1998 WGNSS Board

President: Sue Gustafson, 9007 N. Swan Circle, St. Louis MO 63144, 968-8128.

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Ornithology: Kevin Renick PO Box 31785, St. Louis MO 63131, 918-1085.

Botany: Fr. James Sullivan, 124 Holy Family Church Rd., New Haven MO 63068, 573-459-6441.

Entomology: Marshall Magner, 516 Bacon Ave, Webster Groves MO 63119, 961-4588.

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Member at Large: Ginnie Young, 1306 S. Geyer, St. Louis MO 63122, 822-9006.

Member at Large: Tom O'Gorman, 465 N. Geyer, St. Louis MO 63122, 821-8079.

Member at Large: Jim Ziebol, 3900 Berger Ave., St. Louis MO 63109 781-7372. ~

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Do we not already sing our love for the land of the free and the home of the brave? Yes, but just what and whom do we love? Certainly not the soil, which were are sending helter-skelter down-river. Certainly not the waters, which we assume have no function except to turn turbines, float barges, and carry off sewage. Certainly not the plants, of which we exterminate whole communities without batting an eye. Certainly not the animals, of which we have already extirpated many of the largest and most beautiful species.

A land ethic cannot prevent the management and use of these "resources" but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state. In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it.

Aldo Leopold. *A Sand County Almanac*

Meetings

Wednesday, Oct. 7

7:00-8:30 PM Board meeting at Kirkwood Library on Jefferson in Kirkwood. All members welcome.

Tuesday, Oct. 6

5-9 PM Conservation Forum at the Living World, St. Louis Zoo. \$7.50 to: Int. Center for Tropical Ecology, UMSL Dept. of Biology, 8001 Natural Bridge, St. Louis MO 63121-4499.

Friday, Oct. 9

8:00 at St. Louis Co. Library HQ; our guest speaker will be Mike Grant who will share videotape of his birding trip to Maine. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Botany

Beginners are welcome. Bring lunch, drink, insect repellent & weather gear.

Thursdays Sept.-Oct.

Field trips usually meet at 9:30 AM; trip is normally 3-5 hr. plus travel time. Led by Fr. James Sullivan. Call Catherine Filla, 481-5298, after 5 PM Wed. for location.

Saturdays Oct. 10

10-3:00 Arboretum, Gray Summit MO. Meet at the visitor's center to collect seed for Forest Park Savanna Restoration.

Saturdays Oct. 24

10-3:00 Gordon Moore Park, Hwy 111 east of Alton IL. Meet at the park to collect seed for Forest Park Savanna.

Entomology

Sunday, Sept. 27

7-9:00 PM at Magners', 516 Bacon Ave., Webster Groves. "Show & Tell." Member share collecting, travel and experiences of the summer. Bring specimens, photos, slides, etc. Projector and screen will be available.

Sunday, Oct. 25

7-9:00 PM at Magners'. Jane Stevens will tell us about the next "oh wow!" exhibit at the Zoo.

Birding

Open to all. For more information, call David Becher 576-1146. Bring lunch.

Thursdays Sept.

8:00 AM meet at West County shopping center, south lower lot behind Penney's, lamp post #1.

Saturday, Sept. 26

7:30 AM Tower Grove Park; meet at first picnic area west of tennis courts. Bring lunch.

Thursdays Oct.

8:30 AM West County; see above. Note time change.

Saturdays Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31


8:00 AM West County. See above.

Saturday, Oct. 3

8:00 AM WGNSS/Aud. All day at Carlyle Lake. Meet at McDonald's in Carlyle, IL at 8. Call Jim Malone 314-536-1119 for information.

Deadline for Nature Notes

Friday, Sept. 11

 Webster Groves
Nature Study Society
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St. Louis MO 63119

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The objectives of the society are: To stimulate interest in nature study on the part of adults and children; to cooperate with other organizations in nature study; to encourage amateur research in the natural sciences; to promote conservation of wildlife and natural beauty. Open to all with an interest in nature.

established in 1920