



nature notes

Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society

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Jim Rathert at Audubon/WGNSS Meeting in February

Doug Corbett

WGNSS and the St. Louis Audubon Society will meet together Feb. 12 at 8 PM in the auditorium of the St. Louis County Library Headquarters building on Lindbergh Boulevard. This year our guest speaker will be Jim Rathert, photographer for the Department of Conservation. His great photos can be seen throughout the *Missouri Conservationist*. His presentation, "An Illustrated Lecture on Nature Photography and the Natural Realm," will discuss wildlife photography. Come early, this slide show will dazzle your eyes! ~

A Cheap Recirculating Bird Bath

Randy Korotev

Last May, while watching a Hooded Warbler take a bath in the bird fountain at Tower Grove Park, we decided that somehow we were going to get something like that for our yard. We had recently had an all-purpose room addition put on our house. The room has a wall of windows looking over the back yard and we spend most of our time there now. Unfortunately, our lot is small and there's only 13 feet from the windows to the back fence. The good news is that there are shrubs along the fence line and over the years we've seen quite a few birds there.

One Saturday last August, Betty was landscaping and planting the area outside the windows, repairing the inevitable damage caused by the construction and giving us something nice to look at. Coincidentally, when I checked the mail, there was a pamphlet from our local BH&G Realtor, who seems determined to list every house in

the neighborhood. The pamphlet included instructions for building a recirculating birdbath from a flower pot. We looked it over, made a quick trip to the local nursery, and about 4 hours later had a functional bird bath right outside our windows.

The BH&G pamphlet suggested using a large clay pot, plugging the hole with masonry cement, and waterproofing the inside. That seemed like too much trouble to us, so we bought a ~10 gallon plastic pot without a hole that looks like a decorative clay pot—\$30. (Besides, the plastic pot goes better with our new plastic siding.)

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Fall Botanizing

Carl Darigo

The weekly Botany Group outings continued into fall with the following attending one or more weeks, Father James Sullivan, Janis Ammons, Leonard Blake, Marvin Boisseau, David Bruns, Jeanne Clauson, Carl Darigo, Jane Deschu, Catherine Filla, Fran & Rich Glass, Karen Haller, Pat & Jack Harris, Ty Harris, Marilyn Higgins, Louise Langbein, Barbara Lawton, Marilyn Meyer, Anne Mitchell, Rick Moll, John Molyneaux, Betty & Bob Nellums, Tom O'Gorman, Mark Peters, Suzy & Dick Russell, Albert Seppi, Dorothy Spalding, Jan Surbey, James Trager and Erica Weis.

September 3, Shaw Arboretum, Franklin County—accompanied by Arboretum naturalist James Trager, 10 members enjoyed a warm 90° walk along the Wetland Trail and portion of Labadie Trace Trail. Near the Labadie Trace Trail, James pointed out the recently discovered fly poison lily (*Amianthium muscivorum*); Reynolds County in the Ozarks is the closest known habitat. He also described two insects which dine on butterfly larvae, a colorful bug, *Stiretrus anchorago* and an underwing moth of the *Catocala* genus. Other interesting plants noted along this trail were *Allium stellatum* (pink wild onion), *Prenanthes aspera* (rough white lettuce), *Helianthus hirsutus* (bristly sunflower) and *Onosmodium molle* (marbleseed). At the wetland, showy displays were seen of *Agalinis tenuifolia* (slender gerardia), *Polygonum pennsylvanicum* (pinkweed), *Eupatorium coelestinum* (mist flower) and *Physostegia virginiana* (obedient plant), with yellow *Ludwigia peploides* (floating primrose willow) and both pink and white forms of *Nymphaea odorata* (fragrant water lily) floating on the pond surface. Additional good plants were both red (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and blue (*L. siphilitica*) cardinal flowers conveniently growing side by side, the rare *Boltonia decurrens* (decurrent false aster), *Chelone obli-*

qua (rose turtlehead) and *C. glabra* (white turtlehead), the latter spotted from the observation platform. To cap the day, Jack Harris discovered a nice stand of late coral root orchids (*Corallorhiza odontorhiza*) not far from the wetland parking lot.

September 10, St. Joe State Park, St. Francois County—nine people gathered on a sunny, fall day to walk a portion of the bicycle trail. Seen blooming were stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*), harsh blazing star (*Liatris aspera*), pink wild onion (*Allium stellatum*), spiny toothed gumweed (*Grindelia lanceolata*), smooth false foxglove (*Aureolaria flava*), slender gerardia (*Agalinis tenuifolia*) and the aster turned goldenrod, white upland aster (*Solidago ptarmicoides*). A small fen along the trail yielded boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), autumn sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*) and Virginia mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*). Several interesting non-plant sightings were a fat, black goldenrod beetle munching tall goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*) flowers, gaura moth larvae (*Schinia gaurae*) feeding on leaves of large flowered gaura (*Gaura longiflora*) and a white crab spider lying in wait on an obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*).

September 17, Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, St. Louis County—only five persons managed to survive an intermittent drizzle and tenacious mud, while checking out the levee and cornfields of this new site, recently purchased by the Department of Conservation from the City of St. Louis. The wet conditions probably contributed to several bigger-than-normal plants, including prickly sida (*Sida spinosa*), conobea (*Leucospora multifida*) and the nefarious jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*). *Bidens* was prevalent, with four species found, *B. discoidea* (small beggar ticks), *B. vulgata* (tall beggar ticks), *B. frondosa* (beggar ticks) and *B. tripartita* (swamp beggar ticks). Father Sullivan came up with

“plant of the day,” *Bergia texana* (bergia), only Missouri stations being in four other counties along the Missouri River and listed as S2 (imperiled) in the state. Several grasses found included *Panicum dichotomiflorum* (fall panic grass) and *Leptochloa filiformis* (red sprangletop), while Jack Harris spotted an interesting sedge, *Cyperus acuminatus* (short pointed cyperus). A Viceroy butterfly (*Limenitis archippus*), looking almost exactly like the Monarch, but of a different genus, was seen along the levee; for the technically-minded, written on a culvert near the parking lot was the elevation, 433.38 feet.

September 24, Valley View Glades Natural Area, Jefferson County—in what perhaps is a Botany Group rainy day record, 15 persons turned out for a wet tour of this natural area’s forests and hilly glades. The group welcomed back birder Mark Peters and also new members Jan Surbey and Anne Mitchell. A dainty, fluffy appearing grass, *Panicum flexile* (wiry witchgrass) was found along the parking lot roadside, as well as abundant *Aster patens* (spreading aster) in the nearby forest. Delicate Great Plains ladies’ tress orchids (*Spiranthes magnicamporum*) were numerous in various areas of the glades. Father Sullivan pointed out the characteristic upright flowers of *Agalinis skinneriana* (pale gerardia), while Mark Peters not only found the first orchid, but also successfully identified the “test” plant, *Sabatia angularis* (rose pink). Large patches of the common, bright green, tiny *Weissia controversa* (controverted green moss) with wet, spreading leaves, were found covering rock ledges on the glade; when dry, leaves darken and are tightly curled.

October 1, Victoria Glades, Jefferson County—glades appear to be a big attractant, although a perfect, sunny, 65° fall day didn’t hurt, as another large group of 15 as-

sembled to walk this Nature Conservancy preserve. New member Janis Ammons was welcomed, as was Pat and Jack Harris’ son Ty and his friend Erica Weis. Janis showed up the regulars, as she was first to spot one of many Great Plains ladies’ tresses orchids (*Spiranthes magnicamporum*). Some other interesting plants seen were clammy cuphea (*Cuphea viscosissima*), rigid goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*), false pennyroyal (*Trichostema brachiatum*) and slender heliotrope (*Heliotropium tenellum*). Three asters were found, *A. oblongifolius* (aromatic aster), *A. sericeus* (silky aster) and *A. praealtus* (willow leaved aster), the latter requiring some detailed study of flowers and leaves. A much more uncommon *Weissia* was found this week, *W. sharpii* (Sharp’s controverted green moss), with minute differences in leaf structure.

October 8, Katy Trail State Park, St. Charles County—a crowd of 11, including new member Rick Moll, checked out the trail southwest of Pitman Hill Road in chillier-than-expected 60° weather. Among interesting plants noted were *Aster lateriflorus* (white woodland aster) with lateral inflorescences, *Acalypha ostryifolia* (hornbeam three seeded mercury) with leaves resembling those of the *Ostrya virginiana* (eastern hop hornbeam) tree, *Polymnia canadensis* (small flowered leaf cup) and *Smallanthus uvedalius* (bearsfoot), whose genus was recently changed from *Polymnia*. Striking fruiting plants were blue berries of *Passiflora lutea* (yellow passion flower), candelabra-like vertical spikes of *Agastache nepetoides* (yellow giant hyssop) and huge Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) pods overhanging the trail. Jack Harris demonstrated the popping fruits of spotted touch-me-not (*Impatiens capensis*), then found a tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) plant at trail-side. Father Sullivan noted a late-season Helopsis bug (*Lygaeus turcicus*) record on

Heliopsis helianthoides (ox-eye) and near the end of the walk came up with the plant-of-the-day, *Dioscorea batatas* (Chinese yam). In our climate, this exotic vine has no flowers or fruits, but reproduces vegetatively via deciduous tubers, resembling tiny potatoes.

October 15, Robertsville State Park, Franklin County—six persons turned out on another fine, 70° fall day, to almost get lost while wandering through the bottomland forests of the park's northwestern section. The copious stand of *Aster praealtus* (willow-leaved aster) along the railroad across from park entrance was still present, as was woolly pipevine (*Aristolochia tomentosa*) at edge of the boat-ramp parking lot. The group looked in vain for pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) fruits among the abundant tree population; apparently the carrion beetles needed for pollination were scarce. Father Sullivan pointed out the characteristic peltate (petiole is attached away from margin) leaf of moonseed (*Menispermum canadense*). The open and wet area below high-tension wires produced *Onoclea sensibilis* (sensitive fern) and two *Ptilimnium* species, *P. costatum* (coarse mock bishop's weed) and *P. nuttallii* (Nuttall's mock bishop's weed). In the same place Jan Surbey found cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) while Albert Seppi spotted a northern harrier and sharp-shinned hawk flying high overhead. After the long forest trek, the plant-of-the-day, freshly blooming *Heliotropium indicum* (Indian heliotrope), was found on the mowed, park road shoulder.

October 22, Allenton, St. Louis County—a chilly day which eventually turned sunny and 60°, greeted seven people who assembled at the 6-Flags Denny's prior to walking the Fox Creek road along railroad tracks just west of Allenton. Notable plants still flowering were *Tradescantia ohioensis* (Ohio spiderwort), *Viola sororia*

(common violet), *Aster drummondii* (Drummond's aster) and *A. novae angliae* (New England aster). Abundant along the roadway was the grass *Muhlenbergia schreberi* (nimble will), while a variety of fruiting plants included *Triosteum illinoense* (scarlet fruited horse gentian) with pinkish-orange oval fruits, *Humulus lupulus* (common hops) sporting sticky, leaflike fruits, bright red fruits of *Arisaema triphyllum* (Jack-in-the-pulpit), hairy capsules of *Croton glandulosus* (sand croton) and *Solanum ptycanthum* (black nightshade), whose round berries are poisonous green, but edible when turned black. Father Sullivan found numerous twelve-spotted cucumber beetles (*Diabrotica undecimpunctata howardi*) eating *Solidago altissima* (tall goldenrod) flowers; these black-spotted, yellow beetles with the long name are colorful, but not exactly friendly to farmers.

October 29, Rockwoods Reservation, St. Louis County—eight members, including Rockwoods naturalist David Bruns, walked the Quarry Trail on a typical fall day. Some fruiting plants of interest were anise root (*Osmorhiza longistylis*), smooth rock cress (*Arabis laevigata*), native American bitter-sweet (*Celastrus scandens*), goat's beard (*Aruncus dioicus*) and prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza violacea*). Ferns listed were northern maidenhair (*Adiantum pedatum*), Christmas (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), broad beech (*Thelypteris hexagonoptera*) and cut-leaf grape (*Botrychium dissectum*). Items of a non-flora nature which attracted attention were a broad-winged hawk nest, carolina wren, western white-lipped snail and a pregnant walking stick (*Diopheromera femorata*).

November 5, Castlewood State Park, St. Louis County—chilly, but pleasant fall weather greeted eight persons, including returnee Marilyn Higgins and guest Dorothy Spalding, who checked out sections of the park road and river trail. Before

starting, Father Sullivan explained differences between silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) and red maple (*A. rubrum*) leaves. Plants still in flowering stage were *Verbesina alternifolia* (yellow ironweed), *Physalis heterophylla* (clammy ground cherry) and *Solanum ptycanthum* (black nightshade). A large shellbark hickory tree (*Carya laciniosa*) drew comment, as well as the "ghostlike" appearance of fruiting bloodleaf (*Iresine rhizomatosa*).

November 12, Greensfelder Park, St. Louis County—good weather continued as 10 people, including another long-lost member, Barbara Lawton, covered roadsides and portion of a horse trail, the latter requiring careful attention to foot placement. The day was dedicated to tree study with five oaks being found, scarlet (*Quercus coccinea*), red (*Q. rubra*), white (*Q. alba*), post (*Q. stellata*) and black (*Q. velutina*). Father Sullivan demonstrated the "salt crystal" appearance of black hickory (*Carya texana*) twigs and buds, then called a tough "test" involving osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) leading to much guessing among the participants.

November 19, Creve Coeur Park, St. Louis County—good 55° and sunny weather probably contributed to a likely November record crowd of 15, who walked the Dripping Springs Trail along the south lake shore to get one more look before the Page Avenue bridge goes through the park. Two new members present were Jane Deschu and Marilyn Meyer. Several plants were still blooming, including *Aster cordifolius* (blue wood aster), *Polymnia canadensis* (small flowered leaf cup) and *Physostegia virginiana* (obedient plant). Jack Harris found his favorite plant, *Cuscuta gronovii* (Gronovius' dodder), trying to strangle *Salix exigua* (sandbar willow) shrubs, then later came up with *Conocephalum conicum* (great scented liverwort) growing on a moist rock ledge. This thalloid liverwort

emits a somewhat "earthy" aroma when crushed. Several people were confused by American elm (*Ulmus americana*) buds, until Father Sullivan came to the rescue. Birders in the group spotted horned grebes and many Ring-billed Gulls enjoying the lake.

Thanks to Jeanne Clauson, Pat Harris and Jan Surbey for contributing to this article. ~

Bird of the Year

What bird made the biggest impression on you in 1998? Send your nomination to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122, or call 965-8091. ~

Year List

If you wish to be included in the list of birders who saw 200 species in the St. Louis area in 1998, please leave a phone message with your total for Anne McCormack, 314-965-8091 by Feb. 5, 1999. ~

December 1998 Birding Report

Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer
Common Loons remained fairly steady in the area, with 4 seen on 12/13 (m. ob.). White Pelicans numbered 21 at Riverlands on 12/24 (PB, MT). A Western Grebe was located at Riverlands on 12/6 (DB) and was seen by visiting birders from Columbia, Springfield and other areas of Missouri. Both Pied-billed and Horned Grebes continued to be seen in good numbers, with 100+ at Carlyle Lake on 12/13 (CA) and 25+ at Horseshoe Lake on 12/6 (FH). Two Eared Grebes joined the Horned Grebes at Horseshoe on 12/12 (RK) and one Eared Grebe appeared at Carlyle on 12/20 (1)K). Seven Double-crested Cormorants were still at Horseshoe on 12/13 (FH). Several reports of a few Great Egrets in early December were easily topped by the 17 seen at Eagle

Park Lake on 12/13 (13R), a record high count for wintering Great Egrets in our area and possibly for all of Illinois. There were 18 Black-crowned Night Herons at Bend Road (Horseshoe) near the railroad tracks on 12/13 (YH) and 3 were seen at Riverlands on 12/23 (MT). Seven Mute Swans were seen at Carlyle on 12/26 (DK). The Thursday group had 1 Ross's Goose at Baldwin Lake on 12/10. Ducks were down in numbers. There was a Wood Duck at Horseshoe on 12/13 (FH). Common Mergansers were not observed until 12/22. Twenty-five to 30 Hooded Mergansers were observed on 12/13 at Riverlands (13R, MT). All 3 Merganser species were observed at Horseshoe on 12/26 (J Mo).

Thirteen species of ducks were counted at Riverlands on 12/24, including Bufflehead and Black Duck (PB, MT). The female Black Scoter present at Riverlands since 11/19 was in obvious difficulty on 12/12 (CM, MT), but apparently recovered and was relocated on 12/20 with no obvious impairment (CA). A White-winged Scoter was hotlined on 12/26 from Carlyle (AS, DK) and another was hotlined from Horseshoe on 12/27 (DBz et al.).

A Turkey Vulture appeared over Tyson Research Center on 12/9. On 12/13, Bill Rowe's group encountered 4 Cooper's Hawks area-wide and a Sharp-shinned Hawk at the Chain. An adult female Cooper's Hawk was seen dining on Rock Dove in Tower Grove Park on 12/11 (JZ). A Cooper's Hawk was sighted on Collinsville Road on 12/27 (DBz). Cooper's are abundant this winter but Sharpies are less common than normal. Two Rough-legged Hawks, one light-phase and one dark-phase, have established territories at Carlyle (DK). In a farm field near Horseshoe on 12/16, two Least Sandpipers were most unexpected and a high count of 8 Killdeer were also present (FH). Two Franklin's Gulls were found at the Borrow Pit on 12/5 (H). About

4000+ Bonaparte's were reported on 12/20 at Carlyle (CA). On 12/11, 1500+ Ring-billed and a few Herring Gulls were at the Borrow Pit (m. ob.), and by 12/19, 3500+ Ring-billed Gulls had arrived (FH). Lesser Black-backed are making a very good showing this year with one adult at Ellis Bay on 12/23 (MT). Winter's first Glaucous Gull was seen at Horseshoe on 12/27 (FH).

Riverlands' Short-eared Owls were seen on 1242 (SG, DR), on 12/13 (BR) and on 12/23, one was perched in daylight (MT). There were 17 Short-eared Owls at Carlyle on 12/20 (DK). An Eastern Phoebe was observed at Tyson on 12/9. Another Eastern Phoebe was found at Castlewood on 12/19 (MB). This species winters 100-150 miles to the south of us and these are the first winter reports of Eastern Phoebe in about 15 years. A Hermit Thrush was observed at Castlewood on 12/19 (MB). Two Pileated Woodpeckers were found at Busch on 12/12 (YH). At Coldwater Creek Park on the same day, 1 Pileated and several Hairy Woodpeckers were seen (KP, MT). Dan Kassebaum noted that the Sapsucker flight was very short this year. Two Sapsuckers were observed on 12/11 at Tower Grove Park (JZ). Bluebirds are numerous at Busch, particularly at Lake 21, and Yellow-rumped Warblers are also abundant (YH). December 12 & 13 were good sparrow days, and many LeConte's were reported: 2 at Wise Road, a possible one at Lake 21 in Busch, and 1 at Riverlands; 2 were also seen by the Thursday group on 12/10 near Baldwin Lake. Savannah Sparrows were reported from Riverlands on 12/12 (J&CM) and 12/24 (MT). Fair numbers of White-throated and a few Fox and Swamp have also been seen in the area. On 12/26, Lapland Longspurs were found at Carlyle (G&TB).

Comments: Four immatures and 16 adult Trumpeter Swans were counted at Riverlands on 12/24 (B, MT). Two

Trumpeters were mysteriously killed along Hwy. 367 near Riverlands on 12/12. On 12/6, Frank Holmes and Lawrence Schriewer watched thousands of ducks at Horseshoe flying south ahead of a cold front. On 12/19, another cold front pushed thousands of ducks southward, and that flight was observed at Mark Twain Refuge (BR, HW). Most winter reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers have been along the major rivers in the area. The editors would be interested in hearing of sightings of this species from other areas such as Busch, Arboretum, etc. Also, if any birders have reports from areas such as Castlewood, Arboretum, and Tyson, please pass your observations on to the editors. Numbers as well as individual species are important.

Christmas Count Highlights:

Pere Marquette 12/19: 84 species total; 7 Ross's Geese (BR), 1 White Pelican, 21 Red-tailed Hawks in 5. Calhoun County (HW), 22 Red-headed Woodpeckers (MT), 60 Red-headed Woodpeckers (CA), 101 Bald Eagles, 800+ Robins, 2 Rough-legged Hawks.

Horseshoe Lake IL 12/19: 11 Black-crowned Night Herons, 1 Common Loon, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 6 gull species: 120 Bonaparte's, 1 California, 1 Franklin's, 2 Thayer's, 3500+ Ring-billed, and 150+ Herring Gulls.

Mark Peters' property (Jefferson Co.) 12/26: 2 Winter Wrens, 1 Hermit Thrush, 3 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 5 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, and a Brown Thrasher. Carlyle 12/28: 96 species total; Snow Bunting, Ross's Goose, 100+ White-fronted Geese, Spotted Towhee, 16 Brewer's Blackbirds, American Pipit, Short-eared Owl, Long-eared Owl, Least Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Snow Bunting, LeConte's Sparrow, Turkey Vulture.

Weldon Springs/Busch 1/3/99: Purple Finch & Red-shouldered Hawk (BR); 1

Black Duck, 1 Snipe, 1 Pied-billed Grebe, 2 Cooper's Hawks, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 23 Turkeys, 4 Hermit Thrush, 3 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 6 Fox Sparrows.

Orchard Farm 1/2/99: Canceled due to snow storm.

Contributors: Connie Alwood, George & Terry Barker, Paul Bauer, David Becher, Dennis Bozzay, Mike Brady, Sue Gustafson, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, Dan Kassebaum, Randy Korotev, Jim & Charlene Malone, Jeannie Moe, Kraig Paradise, David Rabenau, Bill Rowe, Al Seppi, Mike Treffert, Helen Wuestenfeld, Jim Ziebol, and (m. ob.) many observers. ∞

Report from Busch Wildlife Area Xmas Count

Tom Parmeter

The annual Christmas bird census was held in the snow on Jan. 3 at Busch. It was a good hiking day—especially since the roads weren't passable. Eight people participated in a very active day. The total number of species was 68; the fourth best in the history of the count.

Some notable species recorded:

Spotted Towhee
Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk
Hermit Thrushes—7

expected by absent were:

Cedar Waxwing
Pine Siskin
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Barred Owl
Red-headed Woodpecker
Great Blue Heron ∞

 **our website**

<http://levee.wustl.edu/~rlk/wgnss/>

Everyone Has To Eat Something!

Paul Bauer

Every time I go birding some unique experience occurs. After more than 50 years of birding, I might worry about getting jaded, since I have seen it all! *Not so!!* Early in 1998 I experienced an event that I had never seen before. The very fact that this can occur is proof that the thrill of birding never ends.

That day it snowed lightly, and Mike Treffert and had planned a full day of birding. The new snow made it more interesting since birds would be very actively feeding. We were at Busch Conservation Area, had parked behind the Lake 33 dam, and walked to Dardenne Creek. Birding was slow at first, but then I noticed a small woodpecker across the creek, high in a tree, creeping up the trunk. My first thought was: "It's a Downy." However I have learned over the years to look at every bird, since that is how you find the unusual or rare bird. I was hoping for a Hairy Woodpecker.

With my binoculars raised to view the woodpecker, I was aware of a flash of movement out of the right side of my eye. With my binoculars trained on the Downy, I witnessed a Sharp-shinned Hawk swoop in, flair for a landing, pluck the woodpecker off of that tree trunk, and return to land on a limb overhanging the creek. There the hawk proceeded to pluck feathers off of the small woodpecker.

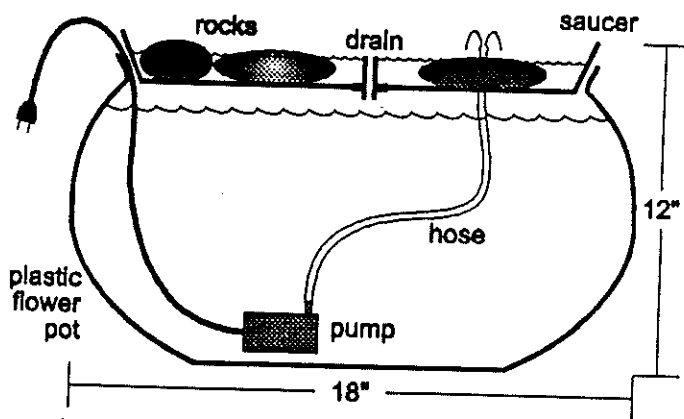
In all those years of birding, I had never before witnessed this experience. I had seen other kills of waterfowl or shorebirds, but never a forest bird caught by a hawk. Of course Mike and I felt sad for the woodpecker, but then reflected that we were happy because the hawk caught a good meal. Our excitement and discussion caused the hawk to move twice to a different perch, and then finally to fly off carrying the meal to a more private eating place.

This experience was the highlight of birding that day! However that may be hard for some to understand.

Nature and indeed all of our lives are filled with life and death experiences. Everyone enjoys the sight of baby animals or birds, because this is new life. Each of us realizes that for every beginning there must be an end. This is natural and the realistic progression of events, and should in no way reduce our enjoyment of nature. Always have fun—*go birding!* ∞

Bird Bath cont.

The BH&G pamphlet suggested burying most of the pot in the ground, but we decided to set it on top near the fence because we knew that we'd have to clean it frequently. For the actual bowl of the bath, we found a clay-colored plastic saucer (\$8) intended for use under a flower pot that we instead put on top so that it nests in the opening of the pot.



The key component is a submersible pump, the kind available in garden shops for fountains. We didn't want a gushing fountain, so we bought a pump with the smallest flow rate we could find (70 gallons/hour at 1 ft; \$30). Unlike the toasters and hair dryers, these pumps actually must be submersed in water before you plug them in.

All of the rest of the parts we had around the house, mostly in my collection of old plumbing supplies I can't bear to discard. I drilled two holes in the saucer, one (3/8") through which to pump the water from the reservoir up into the saucer and the other (3/4") to allow the water to drain back into the reservoir. I attached an 18-inch-long piece of flexible hose to the outlet port of the pump and pushed it through the hole in the saucer, bottom to top. Left over from a toilet repair project was a metal supply line connector that I used as the nozzle of the fountain. I drilled a hole through a piece of decorative limestone, stuck the metal connector through the hole, and attached the other end of the hose to the connector (a piece of copper tube would have worked as well, but the connector had a nice rounded end).

You know that thing in the back right corner of the kitchen sink where the rinse hose comes through the sink base? It's basically a short black plastic tube with threads on the outside. I had a spare, which worked ideal as a drain tube. I screwed it part way into the second hole on the saucer. In this way, the saucer filled to 1-1/2" inches before draining back into the pot. We put a few more rocks in the saucer to act as perches. All that was left was to attach an extension cord and plug it into our outdoor electric outlet. We set the flow rate on the pump low so that the water only "shot" up about an inch.

It took several days before we got any customers. A catbird was the first bird I saw use it. During September I saw three species of migrant warbler take a drink, or at least stop to take a look. Since August, I've seen 18 species of birds bathe in, drink from, or gawk at the fountain (some appear intimidated!). In December I decided to buy a birdbath heater (\$40), which I put in the pot, not the saucer. I am writing this on January 2, the day I had to cancel the

Orchard Farm Christmas Bird Count on account of 9 inches of snow. More birds have been using the fountain today than any day so far, which is what prompted me to write this article. Birds need water in winter. I watched a Flicker take no less than 20 sips of water and the goldfinches and juncos are constant customers.

Like any birdbath, it needs frequent cleaning. I looked hard in summer to see if mosquitoes were breeding in the reservoir, but never found any larvae, presumably because the water was circulating.

Having said all this I should mention that many garden shops, nurseries, and bird feeding stores (some which are WGNSS members) can provide you with attractive, ready made, recirculating bird baths and fountains. ~

Vacationing? Moving? Call me!

Linda Virga

If you are going to be "temporarily away," the post office will not save your *Nature Notes* unless you pay for first class postage.

If you are moving, please notify us. The post office will not forward third class mail. You miss an issue or two and we must pay a fee for your new address. Please send the information to the membership chair:

Linda Virga

9734 Antonia Dr.

St. Louis MO 63123

A postcard will suffice. Thank you. ~

Birding Festival

St. Louis Audubon Society and the Missouri Department of Conservation at Powder Valley will present a program about bird finding on Thursday, January 28, 1999, 7 to 8:30 PM at Powder Valley Nature Center Auditorium (limit 200). No cost, but reservations are required: call 314-301-1500; reservations taken starting January 14, for ages 10 and up. ~

Jack Van Benthuisen Memorial

Randy Korotev

The WGNSS thanks the following people for contributions to the memorial fund for Jack Van Benthuisen:

Rose Ann Bodman
Jim and Margot Holsen
Everette and Peggy Leonard
Marjorie Richardson

We have collected about \$400 thus far. One popular idea for a fitting tribute is another bench near the bird fountain in Tower Grove Park. Any other ideas? ~

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 Connie Alwood, 524-8111. ~



Next Deadline: Feb. 5

Uh-oh! Next month starts on a Monday so we have the **earliest possible deadline!** Submissions—handwritten, typed, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122. Computer wizards: Thanks for sending a printout along with your disk.

Last minute change? Short article? Call me at 965-8091, voice mail 965-7205 or e-mail: finearts@mail.stjosephacad.com

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 available in north lot. All events are free. More info, call 768-5466 or 533-8083.

Feb. 10: Textile Conservation
March 10: "Paddlefish: Biology of a Freshwater Whale," by Dr. Lon Wilkens, UMSL. ~

1998–9 WGNSS Board

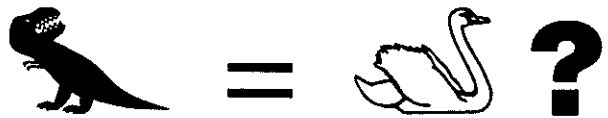
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internet address

<http://levee.wustl.edu/~rlk/wgnss/>

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1998 St. Louis Year Bird List

Red-throated Loon
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe
Red-necked Grebe
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
American White Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Cattle Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night Heron
Yellow-crowned Night Heron
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis
White-Faced Ibis
Fulvous Whistling-Duck
Tundra Swan
Mute Swan
Great White-Fronted Goose
Snow Goose
Ross' Goose
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Green-winged Teal
American Black Duck
Mallard
Northern Pintail
Blue-winged Teal
Cinnamon Teal
Northern Shoveler
Gadwall
Eurasian Wigeon
American Wigeon
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Oldsquaw
Black Scoter
Surf Scoter
White-winged Scoter
Common Goldeneye
Bufflehead
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Mississippi Kite
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Northern Goshawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Golden Eagle
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Ring-necked Pheasant
Wild Turkey
Northern Bobwhite
King Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora Rail
Common Gallinule
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Black-bellied Plover
American Golden-Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Piping Plover
Killdeer
American Avocet
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Solitary Sandpiper
Willet
Spotted Sandpiper
Upland Sandpiper
Whimbrel
Hudsonian Godwit
Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone

prepared by Jim Malone

Red Knot
Sanderling
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Dunlin
Stilt Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher
Common Snipe
American Woodcock
Wilson's Phalarope
Parasitic Jaeger
Laughing Gull
Franklin's Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
California Gull
Herring Gull
Thayer's Gull
Iceland Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Glaucous Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Sabine's Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Least Tern
Black Tern
Rock Dove
Eurasian Collared Dove
Mourning Dove
Black-billed Cuckoo
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Eastern Screech Owl
Great Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Long-eared Owl
Short-eared Owl
Northern Saw-whet Owl
Common Nighthawk
Chuck-Will's-Widow
Whip-Poor-Will
Chimney Swift

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Rufous Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Wood Pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Acadian Flycatcher
Alder Flycatcher
Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Western Kingbird
Eastern Kingbird
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Horned Lark
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
N. Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow
Black-capped Chickadee
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Northern Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush

American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
American Pipit
Cedar Waxwing
Loggerhead Shrike
European Starling
White-eyed Vireo
Bell's Vireo
Blue headed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Warbling Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue-winged Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Northern Parula Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Pine Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Palm Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Black & White Warbler
American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Louisiana Waterthrush
Kentucky Warbler
Connecticut Warbler
Mourning Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Canada Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager

Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Dickcissel
Spotted Towhee
Rufous-sided Towhee
American Tree Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
LeConte's Sparrow
Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Harris's Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Lapland Longspur
Snow Bunting
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Rusty Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
Purple Finch
House Finch
White-winged Crossbill
Pine Siskin
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow
Eurasian Tree Sparrow

Total = 298

Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Meetings

Wednesday, Feb. 3

7:15-8:30 PM Board meeting at Kirkwood Library on Jefferson in Kirkwood. All members welcome.

Friday, Feb. 12

WGNSS general membership meeting (with St. L. Audubon) Friday, Feb. 12, 8 PM at the St. Louis Co. Library HQ on Lindbergh. Our guest speaker is Jim Rathert, discussing wildlife photography. This slide show will dazzle you!

Entomology

Sunday, January 24

7-9 PM at Magner's, 516 Bacon Ave. Webster Groves MO (961-4588). James Trager Entomologist/Naturalist Missouri Botanical Garden Arboretum will present the program "Ants Of The Tall Grass Prairie."

Sunday, February 20

7-9 PM at Magner's. Rich Thoma will present a program on "Insect Adaptations to the Desert."

Nature Notes deadline

Feb. 5.

Wgnss website!

<http://levee.wustl.edu/~rlk/wgnss/>

Join wgnss!

Send \$15 yearly dues to Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132.

Botany

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

Thursdays in Jan. & Feb.

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.

Birding

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

Thursdays in Jan. & Feb.

8:30 AM West County shopping center, south lower lot behind Penney's, lamp post #1.

Saturday Jan. 30, Feb. 13 & 27

8:00 AM West County. See above.

Saturday Feb. 20


9:00 AM WGNSS/SLAS trip to Horseshoe Lake State Park; meet at headquarters. For more information Jim Malone, 314/536-1119.

Saturday March 6

8:00 AM WGNSS/SLAS Busch Conservation Area; meet at Hampton Lake parking lot, immediately left of the entrance. More info: J Malone, above.

Sunday March 21

8:00 AM WGNSS/SLAS Horseshoe Lk; 1st Annual Sparrow Roundup. Bring lunch. More info: J Malone, above.

 Webster Groves
Nature Study Society
PO Box 190065
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