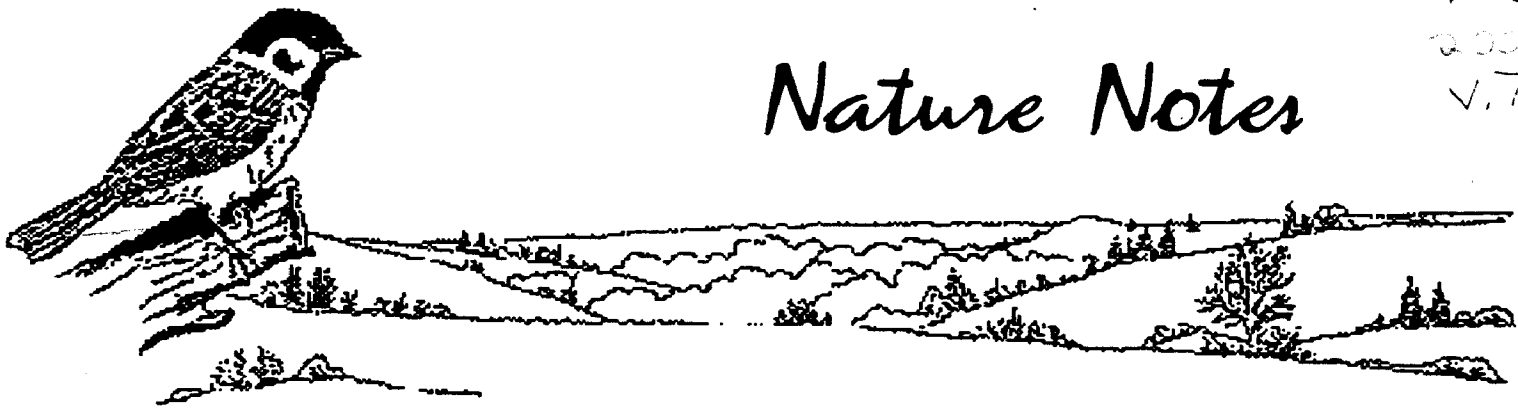


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Nature Notes



Call the Nature Line 314-935-8432 for meeting times & bird sightings www.wgnss.org
Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society January 2005 Vol. 77, No. 1

New Year's Greetings from the President

Yvonne Homeyer

WGNSS is getting a good start on the New Year with the addition of two members to our Board of Directors, Dr. Kimberlie McCue and Mike Brady. Mike, an experienced and enthusiastic birder, will serve as Co-Chair of Ornithology. His regular posts on MoBirds have kept birders informed about the birds seen at Castlewood State Park, Little Creve Coeur Lake and other favorite spots. As Co-Chair of Ornithology he will be in charge of scheduling the Sunday bird walks, which were started by Kent Lannert when he joined the Board two years ago. Dr. Kimberlie McCue is a conservation biologist with the Missouri Botanical Garden. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1997. Working closely with the Center for Plant Conservation, Kim oversees the Garden's program to conserve rare and endangered plants native to the Midwest. She also heads up a Garden project to conserve rare endemic plants in the Republic of Georgia. Kim is taking over a Member at Large position from Tom Parmeter. I would like to welcome Kim and Mike to the Board and to thank Kent and Tom for their contributions as Board members.

WGNSS and three other local groups have begun the process of selecting land
Continued on page 3

Historian's Corner

Jim Adams

Here is the second part of an article that originally appeared in *Nature Notes*, December, 1978. This portion will deal with St. Charles County.

Christmas Bird Counts in the "Good Old Days" Part II

Claudia Spener

The first record of a count in St. Charles County was on December 22, 1929, when two parties on foot, Richard H. Pough, Julian Steyermark, and five others, endured heavy fog, a six-inch snowfall, and temperatures below 20° to observe 27 species and 907 individuals, the most numerous being 247 juncos. No ducks, gulls, or eagles were seen.

The next record of a count in St. Charles Co. was December 26, 1938, when five observers including Wayne Short, Richard Grossenheider, and Lilly Ernst covered Creve Coeur Lake, Alton Dam, and Horseshoe Lake, Ill., in a drizzle to see 41 species, including ducks, gulls, 22 European Starlings, and 16 Eurasian Tree Sparrows. There is no official record of a

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Dates For '04-'05 Meetings

There is no general meeting in January.

Inclement weather? Call St. Louis County Library Headquarters 314-994-3300 to ask if the meeting has been cancelled. For board meetings on first Wed. at University Club Tower, call Yvonne Homeyer, 963-7750.

No meeting in January 2005.


February 11, Fri., joint meeting with St. L. Audubon at Creve Coeur Gvt. Center, 300 N. New Ballas, Greg Iffrig of Pioneer Forest. In case of inclement weather, call 569-8999.

Most of these are 1st Thursday:

March 3 John Karel at St. L. Co. Library HQ
7:00 PM

April 7 Dennis Bozzay, "Birds of Ecuador," St. L. Co. Library HQ 7:00 PM

May 10, Tues., Spring Banquet at Eden Seminary with MDC photographer Jim Rathert

Sept. 1, Oct. 6, Nov. 3, 2005 

Scholarship News

Mike Flieg

As many of you know there are two WGNSS scholarships available to college students, majoring in the biological sciences. The Scholarship Committee was initiated in 1985 under the auspices of Dr. Richard Coles. The original committee was made up of Dick Coles, Margie Richardson, Marshall Magner, Barbara Elftman, and Dotty Herwig. Dick Coles resigned in 2001 due to various commitments, and Mike Flieg assumed his duties; in 2003 Pat McCormick was added to the committee, and Dottie Herwig resigned in 2004. Robert Dwyer has agreed to take her place.


The Menke Scholarship for Wildlife Habitat was established in 2001, in memory of Don Menke, by his family. He was an avid outdoorsman, naturalist and conservationist. It is awarded annually to students who attend universities within the state of Missouri. The award is \$1000 or more, not exceeding the interest income on the initial endowment. Since its institution five grants have been awarded. (Check the website for names and subjects of the awardees, and the institutions which they represent)

The Scudder Scholarship in Field Biology was first awarded in 1985. This is a grant of \$1000, and is awarded annually to a student attending a college within the St. Louis metropolitan area. Mickey Scudder was a nature enthusiast who endowed this annual grant to be awarded by WGNSS. Twenty Scudder grants have been awarded thus far. (Check the website)

WGNSS wishes to extend its sincere appreciation for the time and effort that the committee has taken to locate appropriate candidates for each of the awards.


If any member of WGNSS would like to appropriate funds for a future endowment either presently or posthumously, this committee can guarantee that the disbursement will be fair and equitable (Check out the demographics on the website).

If anyone has any questions about the scholarships please refer to the website or contact Mike Flieg at 314-645-3356 or e-mail

<Gmflieg@sbcglobal.net>. 


The Party's Over...

Margy Terpstra

But, a *great* time was had by all! Sixty-five + people attended the Holiday Party on Dec. 5 at the Green Center in University City. As always, members of both Audubon and WGNSS were very generous with their time and energy to make it happen in a special way. The food was terrific, the camaraderie so pleasant. A very big thank you to Tina Weyman, Ann Early and Dency Kahn, my committee, for coming up with great ideas and making it happen! Special thanks to Dave Tylka and Dan Terpstra for helping to set up and clean up. Our special 'draw' to the event meant that many appreciative members went home with very nice items to enjoy or give as gifts. Thank you so much to those who donated beautiful things: Dave Pierce and Judy Rowe of the Wild Bird Center, artists Jim Ziebol, Dale E. Ponce, and Margie Richardson, photographers Rick Walters, Margy and Dan Terpstra, beekeeper Jim Jordan, book contributor Clarence Zacher, and Shaw Nature Reserve Staff Educators, Barb Troutman and Karen Bryan. 

Your Opinions Matter...

Margy Terpstra, Mike Thelen and David Mendelson

And, we'd like to know what they are! Coming soon to your mailbox, included with the new directory of members, will be a *membership survey*. WGNSS is a large group of multi-talented people with a variety of interests, and for long-range planning purposes the Board of Directors needs your input. Please take time to tell us what matters most to you about WGNSS! Your prompt response is highly valued and appreciated. 

New Year's Greetings

Continued from p. 1

acquisition projects to be funded out of the \$3 million dollar settlement with Holcim, the Swiss company that plans to build a cement plant in Ste. Genevieve County. After four years of fighting the project in administrative and court proceedings, WGNSS and the other three organizations entered into a settlement with Holcim. Of the \$3 million dollars, \$1.8 million is allocated for land projects in Missouri and Illinois. I will keep you updated as the selection process moves forward.

As we begin the New Year, your Board of Directors will be discussing strategic planning initiatives and establishing long-term and short-term goals. To assist the Board in this effort, Board members Margy Terpstra, Mike Thelen and Dr. David Mendelson have developed a Membership Survey, which will be sent to all members shortly (check this newsletter for a separate article containing details). Because WGNSS is a membership-based organization, the more we know about what you expect from WGNSS, the better we will be able to meet your expectations. Please take a few minutes to complete your survey when it arrives—your Board values your feedback.

Upcoming programs offer a wide variety of interesting speakers. On Friday, February 11, Greg Iffrig of Pioneer Forest will explain how timber cutting can be conducted as a sustainable and profitable business venture while at the same time ensuring the survival of the forest and preserving its habitat value for wildlife. Pioneer Forest, the largest tract of privately owned land in Missouri, is owned by Leo and

Kay Drey and is a model of sustainable logging methods. This February program is sponsored jointly by WGNSS and St. Louis Audubon. On March 3, our speaker will be John Karel, the director of Tower Grove Park, which is one of our most popular spring migration birding destinations. The Gaddy Bird Garden, named after Bob and Martha Gaddy, was established as a joint project of WGNSS and Tower Grove Park when Connie Alwood was president. On April 7, WGNSS member Dennis Bozzay will talk about his recent trip to Ecuador and show slides of tropical birds, butterflies and plants. Dennis's slide show presentation is jointly sponsored by WGNSS and the North American Butterfly Association, St. Louis Chapter (NABA-St. Louis). Dr. David Mendelson, our 1st VP, has arranged all these speakers.

This year's Annual Banquet will be held on Tuesday, May 10 at Eden Commons. Our speaker will be Jim Rathert, the Mo. Dept. of Conservation's wildlife photographer. His talk will build upon his new book, *In Focus*. We can look forward to exceptional photographs during his presentation. Margy Terpstra, our 2nd VP, is coordinating this year's Banquet.

Our Scholarship Committee is involved in its annual review of applications for WGNSS's two endowed scholarships. Applications for the Scudder and Menke Scholarships are due in February. Mike Flieg, our Environmental Education Chair on the Board, is head of the Scholarship Committee. Mike also represented WGNSS at Conservation Forum in October, an annual event sponsored by the International Center for Tropical Ecology at UMSL. WGNSS member Doug Ladd was one of the speakers at this year's forum.

Weekly birding and botany field trips continue to be offered, thanks to our dedicated leaders including David Becher, Jackie Chain, Bill Rowe, Kent Lannert, Mike Thelen, Mike Brady, Randy Korotev, Sherry McCowan, Anne McCormack, Father Sullivan, Jack Harris, Pat Harris, Jeannie Moe and others. Monthly entomology meetings are hosted by Marshall Magner. Randy Korotev recently updated our local Bird Checklist. The birds and plants seen every month are reported in our newsletter by Jim Ziebol (Bird Report) and Carl Darigo (Botany Report). Jim and Carl's reports not only provide us with timely information about recent observations but they also constitute an

important source of data from which we can discern, over time, how certain species of birds and plants are faring in our community—i.e., whether ranges are expanding or contracting, whether new species are appearing in our area, whether regularly occurring species are declining, etc. In addition, Sherry McCowan updates the Nature Line regularly with sightings of unusual birds (call 314-935-8432 for a recorded message). The Nature Line is especially helpful for members who do not have access to MoBirds on the Internet.

We hope to see you at our programs and field trips this year. Check the Calendar in each newsletter for dates, times and locations of all our events. Thanks to the many years of service by Anne McCormack as our *Nature Notes* editor, WGNSS members enjoy an outstanding newsletter ten times a year.

Best wishes for a New Year filled with happiness, friendship and enjoyment of nature.



Tropical Butterflies in the US

Yvonne Homeyer

The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, long a popular destination for birders, has now become a "hotspot" for butterflyers as well. October and November are the best months because many nectaring flowers are in bloom, many resident butterfly species are flying at that time and many Mexican species stray north across the border. These rarities (not necessarily rare in Mexico) can pop up anywhere at any time, making every day a new adventure. Many of the resident butterfly species are found only in the Valley, because their habitat does not extend any further north than the narrow corridor along the Rio Grande River. So even a brief trip to the Valley should produce dozens of "lifers," many of which are colorful tropical butterflies.

I recently returned from my sixth trip for butterflies since 1999. Most of the locations that gained their reputation for birds have now also planted butterfly gardens—Sabal Palm, Santa Ana NWR, Bentsen State Park, and Laguna Atascosa NWR are prime examples. Since my last trip in 2002, two new locations near Bentsen have been created: the 100+ acre Butterfly Park of the North American Butterfly Association and the World Birding Center (the new

entrance to Bentsen), which also contains extensive butterfly gardens near the Visitors' Center. Both the NABA Butterfly Park and the World Birding Center adjoin Bentsen State Park along the Rio Grande River and the cumulative habitat potential is enormous. In a single day, I was able to see 60 species of butterflies at the NABA Butterfly Park alone! But the restoration of native habitat along the Rio Grande River isn't limited to these public locations. It is being undertaken on an even larger scale by federal and Texas agencies. Margot Holsen's son Chris Best, based at Santa Ana NWR, is well known in the Valley for his native plant restoration activities.

The Valley covers a lot of territory, from South Padre Island and Brownsville on the east by the Gulf of Mexico, stretching west along the Mexican border to Laredo. On the Gulf side, butterflies can be found on South Padre Island, at Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary, Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge and Los Ebanos Preserve (a private venture). Weslaco spots include the Valley Nature Center, the Frontera Audubon Center (another location that wasn't open to the public on my last visit in 2002), and Frontera's neighbor, the Raintree citrus grove, private property open to birders and butterflyers. The World Birding Center opened a satellite location in Edinburg. Just south of Alamo is Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge along the Rio Grande River. Bentsen State Park, the main World Birding Center and NABA's Butterfly Park are concentrated along the river near Mission. Further west lie Salineno/Chapeno, Falcon Dam, Zapata and San Ygnacio.


Common butterflies include Queen, White Peacock, Common Mestra, Clouded Skipper, Large Orange Sulphur, Little Yellow, Southern Dogface, Red-bordered Metalmark, Ceraunus Blue, Phaon Crescent, Laviana White-Skipper, Common and Tropical Checkered-Skippers, Sagem, Fiery Skipper, and Sickle-winged Skipper. Queens are sometimes so numerous that dozens can be found on a single Eupatorium bush! Some of the more colorful Valley specialties are Malachite (green and black), Blue Metalmark (a shiny metallic blue), Great Purple Hairstreak, Pixie (black, red and yellow), Zebra Heliconian (black and yellow), Silver-banded Hairstreak (a tiny, lime-green butterfly), Bordered Patch, Crimson Patch, Red Rim, Mexican

Bluewing (blue or lavender stripes), Two-barred Flasher (iridescent turquoise patches), and Guava Skipper. Tiny hairstreaks with delicate patterns include Dusky-blue Groundstreak, Clytie Ministreak, Mallow Scrub-Hairstreak, Lantana Scrub-Hairstreak, Red-crescent Scrub-Hairstreak, and Lacey's Scrub-Hairstreak, all of which I saw this year (2 were lifers). The Blue-eyed Sailor—a lifer and a rare stray—that I admired near the NABA Butterfly Park was matched by another being seen simultaneously by other butterflyers in the Park itself, confirming that there were 2 of these incredibly marked butterflies within a mile of each other. Less colorful but still interesting are Gray Cracker (a perfection of camouflage which is nearly invisible when it rests open-winged on tree trunks), Carolina and Gemmed Satyrs, Giant and Great Southern White, Lyside Sulphur, Texan Crescent, Pale-banded Crescent, the Longtails, and the numerous skipper species that can be found in the Valley. To view these and other Valley butterflies, visit the photo gallery of the web site www.neotropicalbutterflies.com, hosted by Richard Lehman of Weslaco.

In November, several rare butterflies showed up in the Valley: Common Bluevent at World Birding Center, Orange Banner in Penitas, Common Melwhite at NABA, East-Mexican White-Skipper at Santa Ana and Frontera, Gold-bordered Hairstreak at World Birding Center. In the last several years, the list of Mexican strays making an appearance in the Valley has grown longer. This is probably a result of more people looking at butterflies. Butterfly and photography have really caught on in the Valley among nature enthusiasts and many birders have extended their avocation to include butterflies. Binoculars and cameras aren't just for birds any more!

While butterflying, it's easy to get distracted by the numerous bird species that are found in the Valley. Kiskadee, Altamira Oriole, Golden-fronted Woodpecker, and Green Jay are bright additions to the landscape. Road-runners stroll through the grass along country roadsides. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Kestrels, Mockingbirds, Harris's Hawks, and an occasional Loggerhead Shrike (a bird in serious decline) sit in the open on telephone wires. Crested Caracaras and White-tailed Kites are impressive raptors. Olive Sparrow is a shy

bird, while the Great-tailed Grackles are visible everywhere. This year, I observed a banded Aplomado Falcon at close range—a rare sighting indeed. Two Crimson-collared Grosbeaks, endemic to NE Mexico, inexplicably arrived at the Frontera Audubon Center in Weslaco, 7 miles from the border, for an extended stay; they were easily observed by the many birders who came looking for them. Frontera was also being visited by butterflyers who wanted to see the Gray Cracker that had been present for 24 days.

Visiting the Valley is easy. I usually fly into Harlingen on Southwest, but many people fly into McAllen. Rental cars are available at the airports. There is one main highway that traverses the Valley, U.S. 83, which is under construction to become Interstate 69. Driving is easy and it is possible to visit multiple locations in one day. The weather is generally sunny and temperatures in the fall range from the low 70s to the high 80s. *A Birder's Guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas*, published by the American Birding Association, is useful for butterflyers as well, because many of the locations overlap and the book contains area maps; however, it does not contain the newer gardens such as NABA Butterfly Park, Los Ebanos Preserve, Frontera Audubon Center, Edinburgh World Birding Center, and Valley Nature Center. For identification, Glassberg and Kaufman are the main butterfly guides. *Butterflies of North America* by Jim Brock and Kenn Kaufman includes all of the Valley specialties and many of the rarities. Most of these are also found in Jeffrey Glassberg's *Butterflies through Binoculars: the East* and *Butterflies through Binoculars: the West* (you'll need both books). In October, the city of Mission hosts its annual Butterfly Festival, a combination of field trips and indoor presentations. A listserv called TxButterflies provides information about recent sightings, rare strays, directions to various locations, etc. but it's not just for the Rio Grande Valley. One cautionary note: butterfly abundance varies from year to year, depending on rain/drought conditions, availability of nectaring sources, etc. so you might want to check with local butterflyers before committing to a trip. If anyone does plan to visit the Rio Grande Valley, whether for butterflies, birds, or both, feel free to contact me and I'll be happy to provide any help I can. 

Christmas Bird Counts in the "Good Old Days" Part II

Continued from p. 1
count in 1939, but in 1940, Alton Dam, Weber Lake, and Peruque Marsh were covered on December 22 by 14 observers who covered an area well beyond a 15-mile radius to see only 35 species and 605 individuals—even though the day was clear and windless with temperatures 38°–56°. Since 1940, with the exceptions of 1944 and 1952, St. Charles County has been officially counted every Christmas season, making it the oldest continuous count in the St. Louis area. This year will mark the sixty-fourth anniversary of this count—1940-2004.


The official name and center of the exact count area seems to have been left to the whimsy of the compiler. The count has been called Alton Dam, Portage des Sioux, Peruque, St. Charles County, Weber Lake, and Black Walnut. Not until 1960 was the current name, Orchard Farm, used. Perhaps Orchard Farm was adopted as the official center because it represents the widest point between the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Some statistics from records of the Orchard Farm count from 1960 to 1977: highest number of species seen, 69 in 1976; lowest, 36 in 1968. the highest number of individuals seen was 65,468 in 1966; species with most number of individuals seen, Starling 32,188 in 1966; total number of species seen from 1960–1977, 100; total number of species seen from 1940–1977, 111. Orchard Farm records include 16 species of ducks, 8 species of hawks and eagles, 5 species of owls—including Snowy Owls!—and four species of gulls including Glaucous and Iceland Gulls.

From 1940 to '60, rare and unseasonal records included: Barn Owl, Tree Swallows, Am. White Pelican, N. Goshawk, Double-crested Cormorants—200!—Evening Grosbeak, Vesper Sparrow, Oldsquaw (now Long-tailed Duck), and Common Loon.


While the numbers of species and individuals has steadily increased over the year, it would be wrong to infer that our bird life is thriving. Increases have little to do with population dynamics. They are the results of ever-increasing numbers of birders in the field, better knowledge of where to find birds in each

count area, better access to count areas, and increased sophistication in identification. The Good Old Days may not look so bright when reading old Christmas Count records, but in terms of what we know now about the effects of DDT and other pesticides on birds high in the food chain and the destruction of habitat, they were a lot better than they appear.

Although the Weldon Spring Missouri, census of Busch Wildlife Area, begun in 1950, it has never been referred to as "the" St. Charles count. Until 1976, when WGNSS took over compilation of the Orchard Farm Count, it was sponsored by the St. Louis Audubon Society and its predecessor, the St. Louis Bird Club.

Tune in next month for a 1974 article giving accounts of Christmas birding by WGNSS members elsewhere in the country and in other lands. 

New Improved Checklist

Randy Korotev
The new, improved WGNSS "Seasonal Checklist of Birds of the Saint Louis Area" is now available. This list differs from past lists in listing the relative abundance of each species for each of the four seasons. They cost \$0.50 each and two of the lists weigh an ounce, so if you want to obtain some by mail, send \$1.37 for two, \$2.60 for four, \$3.83 for six, etc. Contact Randy Korotev at <rlkorote@artsci.wustl.edu> or 993-0055. 

2005 Science Seminar Series

7:30–9 PM. Admission is free. All seminars will be held in the Living World, north entrance of the Zoo on Government Drive. Parking in the North Lot is free for these events.

January 19 The Human Genome: On Zoos and Curing Cancer, Richard K. Wilson, Ph.D., Director, Genome Sequencing Center, Washington U School of Medicine.

February 16 From Outerspace: What We've Learned from "Spirit" and "Opportunity" and the Mars Exploration Rover Mission. Raymond E. Arvidson, Ph. D., James S. McDonnell, Washington University.

November Bird Report

Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer

BCA = Busch Wildlife Area

CL = Carlyle Lake

CSP = Castlewood State Park

CC= Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Ref, Annada

FP = Forest Park

HL = Horseshoe Lake

LCCL= Little Creve Coeur Lake

LVT = Lost Valley Trail

MTC = Marais Temps Clair

REDA = Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area

SNR = Shaw Nature Reserve (Arboretum)

TGP = Tower Grove Park

Introduction: Surely one of the most interesting backyard birds that has ever been reported in the St. Louis area was the Dickcissel found at Sherry McCowan's Souldard feeder. Not only was the bird very late, it was also the first Dickcissel ever seen in someone's yard, as far as this reporter knows.

Sightings: About 10 Common Loons were seen at REDA on 11/3 (CM) and 40 were found at HL on 11/23 (FH). David Becher had a good "loon day" on 11/26 at CL, having seen Common, Red-throated and 2 Pacific Loons. Eight Horned Grebes were seen at HL on 11/23 (JZ) and 11 were seen at REDA on 11/27 (CA, T Bo). Three Great Egrets were found at HL on 11/12 (JC, RAB) and 1 was found there on 11/21 (FH). By 11/18, 28 Trumpeter Swans had arrived at REDA (CM). Frank Holmes found 8 Mute Swans on Hwy. 111 near HL on 11/22. The first White-fronted Goose was reported at CL on 11/7 (NB, m. ob.). Snow Geese were observed, along with a few Franklin's Gulls, at the Borrow Pit, HL, on 11/3 (FH). On 11/27, a Ross's Goose was seen in a flock of Canadas in FP (Tom Bailey). Canvasbacks and Buffleheads were reported at REDA on 11/3 (CM). Dave Rogles observed 2 White-winged Scoters at REDA on 11/1. Surf Scoter reports included 1 at Winfield Dam on 11/2 (CM), 1 at Rieder Road Sewage Lagoon on 11/4 (JC, Th. Group), and 1 at HL Borrow Pit on 11/13 (JC). On 11/11, Wally George found 2 Surf Scoters and 5 Black Scoters, all immatures or females, at REDA. Two Black and 2 Surf Scoters were seen at REDA on 11/27 (RAB). Hooded Mergansers were seen in good numbers, including 40 at REDA on 11/13 (J Moe), 45 at BCA on 11/20 (JZ), and 38 at HL on 11/23 (JZ). Jim Ziebol counted 16 Buffleheads at BCA on 11/20 and 24 at HL on 11/23. On 11/28 at CL, the

Barkers found Black Duck, Red-throated Loon, and Pacific Loon. Jackie Chain and the Thursday Group found 2 Lesser Yellowlegs and a Stilt Sandpiper at REDA on 11/4. A Woodcock was a good find in TGP on 11/11 (J Cook, Th. Group). On 11/9, 10 Least Sandpipers and 2 Dunlin were observed on the Levee Road (JZ). Another late sighting of 10 Least Sandpipers occurred on 11/23 at REDA (FH). On 11/18 at REDA, Jackie Chain found 100 Bonaparte's Gulls. A Lesser Black-backed Gull was found at REDA on 11/23 (FH). Also on 11/23, Josh Uffman relocated a Black-legged Kittiwake at CL. The bird of the month was an Ancient Murrelet found by Dan Kassebaum at CL on 11/6 (witnessed by CA, RK and T Bo). On 11/21, Frank Holmes found 2 Cooper's Hawks at HL and Jim Ziebol found 1 at BCA. A Merlin has returned to Lakewood Park Cemetery for the third winter in a row; it was found on 11/27 by Sherry McCowan.

On 11/28, Rose Ann Bodman first heard and then observed a Screech Owl in her neighbor's Brentwood yard. The first Short-eared Owl was reported at Confluence Road on 11/14 (CM). The latest Phoebe was reported at Tyson on 11/4 (JZ). The Thursday Group encountered a Red-headed Woodpecker in Lone Elk Park on 11/11. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet at HL on 11/23 was somewhat late (JZ). Mike Brady heard a singing Hermit Thrush at CSP on 11/23. A Harris's Sparrow returned to the Blue Grosbeak Trail on 11/6 (MB). Approximately 100 Lapland Longspurs were found on Confluence Road on 11/27 (JU, CA). A Snow Bunting was also seen there on 11/17 and 11/18 (T Be, m. ob.). By 11/10, Pine Siskins were being seen throughout the area. On 11/5 in north county, Mike Thelen "spotted a massive flock of blackbirds, actually a river of birds in the sky, flowing from one horizon to the next."

A typical day on 11/20 at BCA and the Weldon Spring access to the Katy Trail included 3 Pied-billed Grebes, 30 Snow Geese, 2 N. Harriers, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 1 Red-shouldered Hawk, 20 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Harlan's Hawk, 2 Kestrels, 1 Merlin, 200 M. Doves, 1 Kingfisher, 2 Sapsuckers, 6 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 2 Brown Creepers, 1 Hermit Thrush, 400 Cedar Waxwings, 20 Yellow-rumped Warblers, 1 Field Sparrow, 1 Savannah Sparrow, 15 Song Spar-

rows, 5 White-throated Sparrows, 25 Juncos, and 3 Purple Finches (MT).

Comments: At his Ferguson home, Connie Alwood found 2 Purple Finches on 11/3, Pine Siskins on 11/5 and a Bald Eagle soaring over his house on 11/28. On 11/19, Anne McCormack found the first Eurasian Tree Sparrows (2) ever seen at her Kirkwood home in the 20 years she has lived there. Sherry McCowan found a Tennessee Warbler on 11/21 and a Dickcissel on 11/22 at her Soulard home. Both were seen on late dates and are exceptional yard birds. During November, Jack Harris reported Hairy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch and 2 Pine Siskins in his yard. Margy Terpstra reported 2 Pine Siskins and Margie Richardson reported a Red-breasted Nuthatch in their yards. On 11/21, Jeannie Moe saw Carolina Wren, White-throated Sparrow, Junco, House Finch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2 Downy Woodpeckers, and 1 Yellow-shafted Flicker in her backyard.

Contributors: Connie Alwood, Nick Barber, George & Terry Barker, David Becher, Tom Bormann, Mike Brady, Jackie Chain, Jean Cook, Jack Harris, Frank Holmes, Jim & Charlene Malone, Anne McCormack, Sherry McCowan, Jeannie Moe, Margie Richardson, Margy Terpstra, Mike Thelen, Josh Uffman, Jim Ziebol. An asterisk means "documented." Please submit sightings by the last day of the month to Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372) or Yvonne Homeyer <homeyer@earthlink.net>.

Costa Rica Biodiversity Trip

Rachel Crandell

June 30-July 13, 2005 14 days/13 nights for \$2195 including airfare from Atlanta

On this trip sponsored by the Monteverde Conservation League US, you will learn about wildlife conservation, biodiversity of the Neotropics, sustainable development, cultural exchange, tropical agricultural practices, tropical ecosystem structure, and all from expert biologists who live and work in Costa Rica.

Practice your Spanish, eat yummy local food (vegetarian friendly if you prefer), visit a rural school, and meet women in their homes learning about their family issues. Mist net bats at night, raft a lowland river, mist net birds in the morning, learn about orchids, butterflies, frogs, and monkeys in the wild and visit a

wildcat refuge. Hike a lot, swim in the pool at the foot of a 200' high waterfall, and watch the most active volcano in our hemisphere from our porch at the field station within the largest private reserve in the nation, El Bosque Eterno de los Ninos. Spend time with a Cabecar Indian and help plant trees in his reforestation project Arbofilia, while scarlet macaws fly overhead. Fabulous photo opportunities!

For more info on deadlines and discounts email Rachel and Dwight Crandell at rwcran-dell@aol.com or check <www.mclus.org> or <www.rainforestrachel.com> or call Rachel at 011-506-645-7142 in Costa Rica.

Next deadline: Jan. 7

Nature Notes publishes 10 issues a year, each mailed on the third Mon. of the month—unless the Oak Bend Library is closed on Mon., then it's Tues. To allow time for layout, printing, etc., the deadline is always 10 days prior.

Submissions—handwritten or typed, email, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122-5722 <amccormack@stjosephacad.org>

Nature Notes Deadlines & Mailings

We meet at the Oak Bend Library, 842 S. Holmes, Kirkwood to attach mailing labels. We could use your help! Call Margie Richardson 314-965-8974.

mailing party	NN deadline
Tues. 1/18/05, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 1/7
Tues. 2/15/05, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 2/4
Tues. 3/22, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 3/11
Mon. 4/18, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 4/8
Tues. 5/17, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 5/6
Mon. 8/15, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 8/5
Mon. 9/19, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 9/9
Mon. 10/17, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 10/7
Mon. 11/21, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 11/11
Mon. 12/19/05, 10-1 Oak Bend	Fri. 12/9


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Contact the editor

Webster Groves Nature Study Society

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 

Call the Nature Line

Call 314-935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area and dates & times of WGNSS events. Please report any unusual birds to Sherry McCowan, 314-664-2381 and press "3" or wait for the prompt. You can also leave a message at the end of the Nature Line recording. 

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Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Call 314-935-8432 for the latest bird sightings in St. Louis.

Meetings

Wednesday January 5

7 PM Board meeting at University Club Tower, 1034 S. Brentwood. All members are welcome.

Friday February 11

Joint meeting with St. L. Audubon at Creve Coeur Community Center, 300 N. New Ballas, Greg Iffrig of Pioneer Forest. In case of inclement weather, call 569-8999.

Nature Notes deadline Fri. Jan. 7

Entomology

Sunday January 30

7 PM meeting at Magners', 516 Bacon Ave., Webster, 314-961-4588. Phillip Koenig will present a program on "Prairie Obligate Butterflies of Southwestern Missouri."

Botany

Thursday December-February

Field trips usually meet 9:30 AM. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch, weather gear. Trip is usually 3-5 hr. plus travel time. Call Fr. Sullivan 291-7885 after 1 PM Wed for location. E-mail is sent every Wed. with field trip destination. To receive, send your e-mail address to Jack Harris <jahar@mac.com>.

Birding

Wednesday December 29

Horseshoe Lake, Alexander Co. Advance registration required, Vernon Kleen 217-787-3515 <kleen@quixnet.net>. For assignments, meet evening of 12/28 at the Union County Refuge Office. Persons unable to meet the group the evening before the count should contact Vern Kleen.

Thursdays December-April

8:30 AM at Des Peres Park on Ballas, one block n. of Manchester. Call Jackie Chain, 314-644-5998.

Thursday December 30

Clarence Cannon NWR Xmas Count. Contact Scott <sschuette01@hotmail.com>; 636-795-9215 or Bruce Schuette at <baesch@nothnbut.net> 636-528-6544. \$5

Saturday January 1

Orchard Farm Christmas Bird count. Contact Randy Korotev, 314-993-0055 or <korotev@wustl.edu>. \$5 fee.

Sunday January 2

8 AM Busch Wildlife Area Christmas Count Meet at headquarters. Call Tom Parmeter, 314-921-6017 or <tksp@charter.net> \$5 fee

Saturday January 8

8 AM WGNSS "Where the Birds Are." Parking lot of HQ of Co. Library, Lindbergh, south of 40. Meet on north side. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday January 8

9:00 AM SLAS led by Paul Bauer and Mike Thelen to Riverlands. Meet at Teal Pond.

Sunday January 9

8 AM Busch CA, meet at HQ near the Falls Oak Nature Trail with Jackie Chain and Rose Ann Bodman.

Saturday January 22

8 AM Riverlands, meet at Teal Pond with David Becher, 576-1146.

Saturday January 22

8 AM SLAS at Forest 44. SLAS with Mike Thelen and Josh Uffman.

Saturday February 5

8 AM WGNSS "Where the Birds Are." Parking lot of HQ of Co. Library, Lindbergh, south of 40. Meet on north side. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday February 5

1 PM SLAS at Riverlands with Mike Grant and Josh Uffman.

Saturday February 19

8 AM Riverlands, meet at Teal Pond with David Becher, 576-1146.

Saturday February 19

9 AM SLAS at Baldwin Lk. & Peabody Coal with Torrey Berger and Dave Rogles. Meet at lake parking lot inside gate.

Saturday March 5, 19, & 26

8 AM WGNSS "Where the Birds Are." Parking lot of HQ of Co. Library, Lindbergh, south of 40. Meet on north side. Bring lunch. David Becher 576-1146.

Saturday March 12

8 AM Riverlands, meet at Teal Pond with David Becher, 576-1146.

Saturday May 14

Big Day.

Join WGNSS

Send \$20 to Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132

Webster Groves Nature

Study Society 

PO Box 190065
St. Louis MO 63119

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Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

e-mail _____

fax (____) _____

Call the Nature Line at **314-935-3432** for meetings and bird sightings.

www.wgnss.org

Membership categories (circle one):

- Individual or Household:.....\$20
- for 1st class mail..... add \$8
- Student.....\$10

Please mail this form with check to:
Treasurer: Randy Korotev, 800 Oak-
brook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132
Please make check payable to: Webster
Groves Nature Study Society