



nature notes

Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society

April 1999 Vol. 71, No. 4

Friday, April 9 Meeting

Sue Gustafson

Doug Corbett will be our speaker at the next general meeting at 8 PM at the St. Louis County Library Headquarters on Lindbergh Boulevard. Doug has spent the first week of March birding in southwest Florida. He's had an amazing time and he'd like to share it with us. See you there! ∞

WGNSS Banquet: May 6

Vicki Flier

The WGNSS Annual Banquet will be held this year on May 6th at Eden Commons, in Webster Groves. This year's speaker will be Rachel Crandell of the Rainforest Alliance. Her topic is titled "The impact of Ecuadorian rain forest destruction at the headwaters of the Amazon River." Mrs. Crandell has lead many efforts to help save this valuable natural resource. Her talk promises to be enlightening and will cover the negative environmental impact that commercial development can have on rain forest sustainability.

Anyone interested in learning about protecting botanical and animal habitat needs to hear this informative presentation. Call Vicki Flier at 968-9166 for more information or to volunteer to help. ∞

April Officer Elections

Sue Gustafson

Based on our rotational system of electing our five officers, at the April 9th general meeting we will elect the Secretary and Treasurer to serve a two year term starting in May. This year's Nominating Committee was chaired by Dianne Benjamin. Dianne and committee members Dennis Bozzay and Cheryl Delashmit are pleased to present the following slate of officers:

Secretary: Dora Gianoulakis

Treasurer: Randy Korotev

We are pleased that these incumbents have agreed to serve another term. They both put in a *lot* of time for the organization and do an excellent job. Be sure to give them a big thanks the next time you see them! And special thanks to Dianne, Dennis and Cheryl for serving on the committee. ∞

in this issue:

Bird of the Year.....	2
California Gull.....	2
Winter Botany.....	5
Conservation Report.....	9
Feb. Bird Report.....	10
WGNSS/St. L. Audubon trips.....	14
WGNSS events.....	17

My Bird of the Year: Mississippi Kite

Lou Hanes

What bird made the biggest impression on you in 1998? I searched my memory for "The Best of Year." No I won't call the Lou-birds the Best of Year—and not because no one else saw my Yellow Rail or Whimbrel; neither will it be the Prairie Warbler singing from a utility wire in Calhoun County. (Thank you, Helen, for your ear.) All had the thrill of being life birds, and so far, one-of-a-kind for me, but none led to the opportunity for season-long observation.

It was at Red's Landing, in search of Cerulean Warblers, that I got out of my car to listen better. A largish bird flying at treetop level caught my eye. Expecting an accipiter, I was pleased to see a Mississippi Kite fly directly overhead at 20 or 30 feet. As it crossed the road and the water next to the road, I saw that it was carrying a stick. "On its way to Missouri," I thought. But no, it stopped in plain view and added that stick to a nest that was well under way. I was subsequently able to share this view with Helen Westenfeld's Saturday group.

High water interrupted our visits, and when we got back in there it was to observe the parents feeding a big youngster perched on the edge of the nest. We also got to hear the "usually silent" Mississippi Kite utter its two-note call "heard round the nesting site."

And that's why the Mississippi Kite is the Best-of-Year bird! ∞

My Bird of the Year: Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Barbara H. Johnson

My favorite bird of 1998 was the male Ruby-crowned Kinglet which visited my suet feeders in December and January. There are two suet feeders, one with the suet from the butcher shop and the other

with the cake suet. The Kinglet comes to both. He flutters and hovers until he gets a good spot on the side or top of the feeder. He eats quickly and is easily spooked when another bird comes up. He seems to like the cake suet with the insects the best but maybe that is because he can also pick up pieces that fall beneath it on the deck. He can also rest or take cover on the pan under the barbecue which is close by. He is a definitely an interesting and fun winter visitor. I still wonder how he was able to get any suet on those days when everything was frozen. ∞

Tale Of A "California Gull" or, "I wish they all could be California Gulls"

Bill Rowe

Last month I gave some details about the 1995 "Ruff" that wasn't. Now, close behind that one, comes the 1998 "California Gull" that wasn't either. This bird, which first appeared at the Borrow Pits near Horseshoe Lake in mid-October, was hotlined and documented as a first-fall California Gull; many St. Louis birders saw it and listed it. The Illinois Ornithological Records Committee has now completed its review of the record and has turned it down, believing that the bird was a Herring Gull—and rightly so, in my current opinion. But since I was one of those who originally asserted that it was a California and documented it as such, perhaps leading others astray in the process, it seems only fair that I should provide a post-mortem discussion.

For starters, let's go through a quick review of California Gull. It is a medium-large gull, averaging in between Ring-billed and Herring in size, and it takes four years to mature, just as Herring, Thayer's, and others do (and unlike Ring-billed, which takes three). Like Herrings, Californias in their first year of life are brownish birds that look quite different from the adults

with their white underparts and gray backs. They are western, and rare in this part of the country; the species is on the review list for both Missouri and Illinois, meaning that any record at any time of year is worthy of documentation and should be sent in to the appropriate records committee.

When I saw it, this bird was the only gull in the neighborhood that was larger than the Ring-bills and brown. It had one striking feature, shown in all the field guides as a mark for California Gull: a bill that was longer and thicker than a Ring-bill's, and bicolored, in this case with a dull flesh-colored base still invaded to some extent by dark horizontal streaks (as if it were just changing from juvenile to first-winter) and a somewhat contrasty black tip. The bird's plumage was a rather uniform warm brown. As it stood around on the mud, I could see that it had varying amounts of fine mottling on the back and most of the wing coverts (the "front and middle" of the wing). The scapulars ("top edge of wing") showed dark centers and pale edges, while the greater coverts formed a contrastingly darker panel along the lower rear part of the folded wing. I attached a lot of importance to this dark covert panel, and of course to the bill color; neither one looked like a feature of Herring Gull in October, although I knew that Herring bills could become bicolored later on. When the bird flew, it had the generally all-brown, dark-tailed look of both Herring and California. It had a bit of a pale window in the inner primaries and showed the dark secondary bar (trailing edge of inner wing) that is typical of both species, but it also showed (or so I believed, in a less-than-perfect look) another dark bar above that, which represents those same greater coverts—that is, the next row of feathers above the secondaries. This latter mark is a feature of California, a point that must be looked for to distinguish it from several other species.

I was pretty sure I had seen it, and other observers agreed. Knowing that California is intermediate in size, I tried to guess how much longer it might be than the Ring-bills and came up with "2-3 inches."

Unfortunately there were no other large gulls around to compare it with. Knowing also that young Californias usually look rather messy and mottled whitish about the head and breast, I was a little concerned about the fairly uniform brown color of this bird, but I did see some whitish neck streaking when it stretched, so I relaxed on that point.

When Jim Ziebol later sent me a couple of photographs taken by Frank Holmes, I felt a twinge of surprise at the large size and stockiness of the bird; it didn't look quite like my memory or my notes. But it had the bicolored bill (more obvious in photos than in life, actually) and it had the dark covert panel, so it was undoubtedly the same individual. I then forgot about it until I heard from Jim once again, in February, with a couple of additional pictures and a report that the IORC was dubious about the record. This made me look at it harder and more holistically, haul out more books, and begin suspecting that I had put too much faith in a couple of particulars while overlooking features that pointed the opposite direction.

As it turns out, the IORC sent the documentation, including the photos, to Jon Dunn. Jon was co-editor of the National Geographic guide and has recently co-authored the Peterson warbler guide and narrated the new large-gull video; he reviews a lot of rarity records from all over the country (in fact, he put his stamp of approval on our Glaucous-winged Gull). Here is what he said: "I am quite satisfied that this first-winter bird is a Herring Gull. There are subtle things such as shape (more filled-in body on Herring) and bill shape (a little thicker throughout on Herring) that

make me think right off the bird was a Herring...The bill base color (not pink enough) and contrast with the tip (not sharp enough) don't seem right for first-year California. Also the throat and breast look a little too dark and uniform. Finer points include the more filled-in scapulars (overall paler on California with fine dark center lines), again giving a more uniform appearance to the bird. It is absolutely routine for first-winter Herring Gulls to acquire pink at the bill base, sometimes in a pattern very similar to California. It is unusual for this much pink, though, by mid-October." David Johnson of the IORC added that the bird simply looked too big compared to the Ring-bills and wasn't sufficiently stretched-out and long-winged for a California (in which the wingtips typically extend far beyond the tail). He also noted that some Herrings show a dark greater covert panel at rest.

So there we are. I can think of at least four morals to this story: (1) Don't focus on just one or two field marks to the detriment of examining and considering the rest of the bird. In this case, the other documenters and I did examine the whole bird but were so convinced by a couple of specific features that we let other slightly "wrong" elements go unheeded. (2) Photographs are important. Here, although photos were taken to corroborate a California, they ended up providing the evidence that it was not—evidence that is much more believable now than simply someone else's word disputing our description. Photos can always be re-examined. (3) Bird record committees exist in order to provide a clean, reliable data base for anyone who wants solid facts about bird distribution. Part of their job is to keep the enthusiasm of birders from outrunning the facts. This record is a case in point. For the sake of reality, it's a good thing there was a committee to provide oversight—even if

some people have now lost a year bird or an area bird as a result. (4) If you make a mistake, learn something from it. If the mistake is in a rarity documentation and your sighting is rejected, try to figure out what happened, spruce up your knowledge of that species, and don't go away mad. Above all, don't stop documenting your good birds.

To recap some of the identification specifics from this lesson, a real first-winter California would be a brownish gull, most likely with messy whitish mottling about the head and foreparts; in fact, much of the head and breast could appear whitish. It would be a bit larger than a Ring-bill but smaller than a Herring, and thus about the size of many Lesser Black-backs. Its bill would be noticeably longer than a Ring-bill's and a little thicker, but not as hefty as a Herring Gull's; it would be sharply bicolored (pink base, black outer one-third), straight and parallel-sided and somewhat blunt-tipped. The bird would have long blackish primaries giving it an attenuated shape, and it wouldn't be too bulky or large-headed. It would show a dark greater covert bar at rest and in flight, possibly a bit lighter than the secondaries but darker than the other coverts on the upper part of the wing; this double dark bar should be observed very carefully, in flight. The feather patterns of the back and wings should be examined as closely as distance allows and sketched or photographed if possible, since they too can provide evidence. Anyone who wants to see a good example of a bird like this can check out the slides in the WGNSS collection; we have several nice pictures of a first-winter California at Carlyle Lake, taken by Al Seppi and reproduced by his kind permission along with many other good gull shots. To put another nasty twist on it, there is a remote possibility that a late-summer juvenile California might wander our way,

possessing the all-dark bill and boldly-checked upperparts of that plumage. Such a bird could present a real challenge; for one thing, it could look very much like the juvenile Lesser Black-backs that have already appeared here.

Oh, and one final thing to ponder: what about that double dark bar on this bird's wing, which several of us thought we observed and which helps separate California from Herring? All I can say is that I just don't know. I don't believe we all made it up. It may be that the covert bar was present but less prominent than we thought (and thus maybe within the range of variation of Herring), or maybe the bird really was a big fat California Gull...but I doubt it. ∞

Winter Botanizing

Carl Darigo

Except for two holiday-eves, Botany Group weekly trips continued during the winter season, with the following attending one or more weeks, Father James Sullivan, Dori Bishop, Marian Brickner, David Bruns, Lou Canas, Carl Darigo, Jane Deschu, Catherine Filla, Pat & Jack Harris, Sara Jane Hawkins, Barbara Lawton, Marilyn Meyer, Anne Mitchell, Joy & Rick Moll, Tom O'Gorman, Marge & Jim Ruschill, Suzy & Dick Russell, Albert Seppi, Phillip Stutz and Jan Surbey.

December 3, Rockwoods Reservation, St. Louis County—the unusual 70° weather continued as a crowd of 15, including Naturalist David Bruns, toured the Rock Quarry Trail. David filled the group in on interesting facts and history of Rockwoods at several sites, and near the trail's end, came up with a good collection of delectable oyster mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*), growing on a rotten log. Absorbing the sunny weather were two flowering plants, *Viola sororia* (common violet) and *Vaccinium pallidum* (lowbush

blueberry). Jan Surbey spotted numerous Ohio hairy cap moss (*Polytrichum ohioense*) plants appearing like miniature Christmas trees, while on a nearby tree, Jack Harris found patches of red lichen (*Phaeophyscia rubropulchra*). The fungal portion of this lichen is partially red, in contrast to the normal white. Two notable trees found were scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*) and black hickory (*Carya texana*), the latter's bud scales having gold flakes and nut husks with fine, sandpapery growths; while Father Sullivan wasn't looking, several observers committed the cardinal sin of identifying a persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) tree by bark character. While most of the group enjoyed a picnic lunch, several went to the Cafe Cuisine d' Art in Eureka, where after a fine lunch, Father Sullivan spotted bright yellow osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) fruits in a sidewalk Christmas tree display.

December 10, Marais Temps Clair Conservation Area, St. Charles County—on a 35°, cloudy day which seemed colder than would be indicated by the temperature, a large crowd of 13 circled Pools 7 & 10 via the gravel-surfaced levees; included were four new members, Dori Bishop, Lou Canas, Joy Moll and Phillip Stutz. The big *Euonymus* vine climbing on a river birch (*Betula nigra*) alongside the parking lot was still fruiting vigorously. This plant, along with numerous others, originally was thought to be *E. japonicus* (Japanese euonymus) until a 2-year research project with George Yatskievych, Missouri Flora Curator, determined the species only to be a giant, common *E. fortunei* (wintercreeper). Maintaining the weekly record for winter-time flowering, were single plants of daisy fleabane (*Erigeron annuus*) and white sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*). Some of the more interesting fruiting plants seen were *Senna marilandica* (wild senna) with long, drooping pods, *Hibiscus lasiocarpus* (rose mallow)

having large, round fruits, *Cardiospermum halicacabum* (common balloon vine) with round pods containing black and white seeds, and “tractor seats” of *Scutellaria latriflora* (mad dog skullcap). The star-shaped ends of *Abutilon theophrasti* (velvet leaf) fruits so resemble stamps used to mark butter, that an alternate common name is “butter print”. Father Sullivan had no winners on three tests, *Astragalus canadensis* (rattle weed), *Dalea leporina* (foxtail dalea) and *Carya illinoensis* (pecan).

December 17, Buder Park, St. Louis County—bright sunshine warmed an otherwise chilly day to 45°, as 13 enthusiasts botanized a wetland area at the south park border, then along a old road near the Meramec River. Dried plants of *Aster ontarionis* (Ontario aster) were abundant throughout the wetland; leaves of this species are football-shaped and hairy on lower surface. The consecutive weeks of flowering plants continued as Jan Surbey found a lone *Solidago altissima* (tall goldenrod). Jim Ruschill spotted a Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*) with the normal stubby pods, then called attention to a lightning strike, where a 50 foot long vertical section had been carved from a four foot diameter cottonwood tree (*Populus deltoides*). Father Sullivan pointed out some twig characteristics helpful with tree identification, cottonwood with three ridges lengthwise on bark below leaf scars, rimmed leaf scars of white mulberry (*Morus alba*), double thorns opposite leaf scars on black locust (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*), and Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) with rounded buds appearing like scattered pebbles on the twig. Once again, a “test” had no takers, this one featuring *Artemisia annua* (sweet wormwood); both green and dried plants were seen, with the dried having a more pleasant sage aroma than the green.

January 7, Missouri Botanical Garden— with a week-old 8 inch snow/ice cover still

on the ground, plus 15°, and a surprise 3 inch snow in progress, the Missouri Botanical Garden trip site was a wise choice for the five who turned out, taking the standard bad-weather tour of the Climatron, Brookings Interpretive Center, Schoenberg Temperate House and Linnaean House. Just outside the Ridgway Center, a snow-covered identification sign didn’t help solve Father Sullivan’s sawtooth oak (*Quercus acutissima*) test. This non-native tree, often planted instead of native species, is somewhat invasive, as seen recently in a Webster Groves park. Some interesting tropical plants seen, as an orange and black oriole-type bird followed the group around the Climatron, included *Setaria palmifolia* (palm grass) with much wider leaves than our species, *Stachytarpheta speciosa* (purple snakeweed) having purple flower spikes attractive to butterflies, huge leaves of *Corypha umbraculifera* (talipot palm), *Acalypha hispida* (chenille plant) with frilly, pink female flowers, *Artocarpus altilis* (breadfruit) of the Moraceae (mulberry) family and *Brighamia insignis* (alula). The latter plant is Federally Endangered, with only 200 plants remaining in the wild, on cliffs in Kauai and Molokai. After seeing four-eyed fish, colorful poison frogs and geckos in the Brookings Center, a well-known Biblical plant, mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*) in the Schoenberg House and more *Acalyphas* in the Linnaean House, the group enjoyed a nice lunch in the practically empty MBG restaurant.

January 14, Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House, St. Louis County—the Butterfly House provided a safe haven from the continuing ice-pack for seven persons, who turned to butterfly enthusiasts for the day. An interesting movie, showing the butterfly life cycle of egg, caterpillar, chrysalis and adult, complete with classical music, set the stage for touring the Conservatory, a warm

80° refuge from the wintry outdoors. Butterflies of all kinds and colors were present, one of the more spectacular being the "owl eyes," whose circular wing markings suggest the name. Many tropical plants were in place, but unfortunately minus identification tags. However, Father Sullivan drew on his Ecuador experiences to come up with several, including *Acalypha hispida* with the same long, frilly, sterile flowers as seen last week at the Missouri Botanical Garden, the one foot long drooping, yellow flowers of *Brugmansia sp.* closely allied to jimson weed (*Datura stramonium*), a tall sedge probably of the *Cyperus* (umbrella sedge) genus, and colorful members of the Rubiaceae and Verbenaceae families. Several interesting non-butterfly displays featured giant millipedes (*Acrispirostreptus gigantea*), giant bird-eating tarantula (*Thereophsa blondi*) and the black widow (*Latrodectus sp.*), Missouri's favorite spider.

January 21, Babler State Park, St. Louis County—the troops (five) finally got in a field trip, first since December 17, on a moderate 45° day, but with more slippery ice than exposed asphalt on the "paved bike path" to the campground. Many dwarf sumac (*Rhus copallina*) twigs had been nibbled, probably by hungry Wildwood deer. Father Sullivan called four tests, with only *Teucrium canadense* (wood sage) going unanswered. Dick Russell scored on *Rhamnus caroliniana* (Carolina buckthorn), Jack Harris on *Prunella vulgaris* (self heal) and Suzy Russell with *Lobelia inflata* (Indian tobacco). Dick also found several thornless locust trees (*Gleditsia triacanthos f. inermis*), adding a species to the park plant list; "inermis" is an appropriate name, meaning "unarmed". Father Sullivan pointed out the characteristic greenish twigs of post oak (*Quercus stellata*), while near the Boy Scout area, many American bitter-

sweet (*Celastrus scandens*) red/orange fruits had been scattered by birds, but no vine was found in the immediate vicinity. Along the trail, an unusual animal dropping was seen but identification was impossible as a "scat" book was unavailable and no one volunteered to collect a specimen.

January 28, City Museum, St. Louis City—due to forecast of possible freezing rain, a group of six decided instead on a non-botany oriented excursion to St. Louis' City Museum. Nevertheless, plants were not forgotten, as a large silver maple tree outside the entrance showed weird leaves, until investigation proved the leaves to be plastic. Father Sullivan tentatively identified several young trees with compound leaves alongside the parking lot as *Sophora japonica* (pagoda tree), of the legume family, then explained the difference between palm trees and cycads, by demonstrating the keeled leaf base of an indoors palm tree, as compared to cycad's flat leaves. Before she and Dick Russell tried the conveyor roller slide, Pat Harris found a redbud tree (*Cercis canadensis*) inside a darkened, electronic display room. The introductory video description of a "museum built from junk" seemed accurate, ranging from a walk-through, breathing whale to the world's largest windmill gear raising and lowering a giant, 12 ton granite block. Along with many artifacts from demolished, historic buildings, an interesting collection of items dug from old wells and outhouses drew attention. The displays are well done and a visit to the museum is recommended.

February 4, Weldon Spring-Darst Bottom, St. Charles County—a group of 12, including new member Sara Jane Hawkins, assembled on a windy and chilly 45° day to visit the Weldon Spring-Darst Bottom wetlands site, approximately a mile southeast of the Matson Katy Trail access station. This 1,000 acre flood-damaged property, which may eventually revert to

the Department of Conservation, was purchased by the Spirit of St. Louis Airport as mitigation wetlands. In some sections of the Darst Bottom site, flood waters pouring through the nearby broken levee, deposited large areas of sand up to 10 feet deep. Henry Eilers, nursery operator from Litchfield, Illinois, who has been doing contract plant surveys on the site, not only was a fine host, but also ferried the group in his pickup, thus avoiding a long walk to the property. Several plants with emerging green leaves were *Descurainia pinnata* (tansy mustard), *Corydalis flavula* (pale corydalis) and *Cardamine sp.* (bitter cress). Numerous dried plant remains, some with fruit, were *Cycloloma atriplicifolium* (winged pigweed), *Oenothera laciniata* (cut-leaved evening primrose), *Strophostyles helvula* (trailing wild bean), *Heterotheca latifolia* (camphor weed), *Echinodorus berteroi* (burhead) and *Astragalus canadensis* (rattle weed). A search for the Bootheel-inhabiting *Sesbania exaltata* (bequilla) found only several dried stems, undoubtedly the remains of last year's plants. In the bottom-land forest near the river, where unwanted garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) had taken a foothold, a leafless vine was identified as moonseed (*Menispermum canadense*) by the characteristic leaf scar.

February 11, Missouri Botanical Garden—with an ominous rainy and cold forecast, seven people took advantage of a perfect, spring-like 70° morning to see the orchid show, then check some of the outside plants, before early afternoon thunderstorms. The orchids had a variety of aromas and colors, with one of the more interesting being *Paphiopedilum sp.*, sporting a purple-brown lady slipper-type flower, with mottled, green basal leaves, somewhat like several of our native orchids. A life-like crocodile, bobbing below carpets of native *Lemna minor* (lesser duckweed) on the pond surface, at first startled some ob-

servers. Outside, the Ozark witch hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) was in full bloom, with the unique aroma wafting on the strong wind. Under a sweet gum tree (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Pat Harris reminded the group that the two species share the same family, by showing the fruits having similar "bird beak" features. Male and female corkwood (*Leitneria floridana*) shrubs were closely examined, but the catkins were not yet flowering. Shortly before spotting a garter snake sunning high on a leafless bush in the Chinese Garden, Jack Harris found *Stellaria media* (common chickweed) in the grass along a sidewalk, the year's 1st official flowering plant. In the Prairie Plot, Father Sullivan followed that discovery with the tiny, red female flower among yellow male catkins, of *Corylus americana* (hazelnut).

February 18, Robertsville State Park, Franklin County—nine of the faithful, while persisting through 35° sleet (luckily very slight), primarily searching for harbinger of spring along the boat ramp parking lot and east river trail, came up with a nice total of seven flowering plants. Father Sullivan found *Draba verna* (vernal whitlow grass), *Acer saccharinum* (silver maple), *Claytonia virginica* (Virginia spring beauty) and *Cardamine sp.* (bitter cress), as well as the *Erigenia bulbosa* (harbinger of spring). Marge Ruschill spotted numerous small bluets (*Hedyotis crassifolia*) and Dick Russell discovered a puny, but flowering, johnny jump-up (*Viola rafinesquii*). Jack Harris answered the call on a privet (*Ligustrum sp.*) test, while Jim Ruschill found a healthy shellbark hickory tree (*Carya laciniosa*). Above the river bank, Father Sullivan pointed out a stand of *Diarrhena americana* (American beakgrass), still with some fruit remaining; this plant is well-named, as the fruit shape resembles a bird head and beak.

February 25, Katy Trail State Park, St. Charles County—nine participants, including insect photographer Marian Brickner, walked northeast from the Weldon Spring trailhead under a 55° sunny sky, then returned via a levee and nearby dirt road. Only four new plants were added to the year's flowering total, with Father Sullivan spotting the ubiquitous *Taraxacum officinale* (dandelion), *Thlaspi perfoliatum* (perfoliate penny cress) and *Lamium purpureum* (dead nettle), before calling attention to a row of enormous turkey tail fungi (*Tremetes versicolor*) on a partially submerged dead log. Dick Russell came up with a flowering American elm (*Ulmus americana*), while several members found silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) twigs with striking formations of red female and yellow male flowers. *Physcomitrium pyriforme* (urn moss) with emerging sporophytes, was abundant along the trail edge; this moss, which likes disturbed habitat, has capsules which when mature and dried, resemble tiny urns. Two red-tailed hawks circled high overhead, while a male and female bluebird were busily nest-building in a dead tree cavity. ∞

Conservation Committee Report

Yvonne Homeyer

The Conservation Committee has several projects going on, and we are very excited about them. Any member who wishes to join is welcome.

On February 12 several of us met with Mike Schroer and Mike Arduser at Busch Wildlife. The meeting was very upbeat and productive. We covered many topics including the Shorebird Area, Comfort Pines area, identifying sensitive areas for birds and butterflies, Marais Temps Clair, Lost Valley Trail, and more. As a result of that meeting, we are actively working with Busch Wildlife staff on two projects. One is the planting of milo and millet seed at a

food plot near Lake 24 to encourage wintering sparrows, hopefully even Harris' Sparrow, which used to be seen in this area several years ago. The other is the planting of pine tree saplings in the Comfort Pines area, where WGNSS has a memorial to Jim Comfort. Busch staff will also do what it can to manage the Shorebird Area to provide mudflats, which hopefully will attract migrant shorebirds this spring. So birders, stop on by and let us know what you see there. We want to provide feedback to Busch officials. Sue Gustafson (968-8128) is coordinator of the food plot project and Dennis Bozzay (963-2714) is coordinator of the Comfort Pines project.

Meanwhile, the project headed up by Dianne Benjamin (997-2419) concerning the land known as Little Creve Coeur Lake is moving along. This project focuses on the mitigation land acquired by the St. Louis County Parks Dept. to make up for land lost to the Page Avenue Freeway. This wetlands is some of the best natural wetlands in the area and we want to have input in keeping it natural. On March 2, several Committee members (2 of whom overlap with St. Louis Audubon) met with County Parks Dept. officials to discuss ways that WGNSS can be involved. Our offer was well received and the meeting was very productive. We agreed to survey the LCCL area for birds, butterflies, and wildflowers and report our findings to the County Parks people. Jim Malone (536-1119) will be collecting the data. In addition, there seem to be opportunities for more projects with the County Parks Dept. We will keep you updated.

During the summer, we are going to identify and map areas of Busch where breeding birds of declining species and certain butterfly species are located. Some of our target bird species are: Bell's Vireo (not found in Busch last year), Dickcissel, Blue Grosbeak, Wood Thrush,

Black-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed Woodpecker, Cerulean, Worm-eating and Black & White Warblers, Redstarts, Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireo, American Bittern, Least Bittern, and Common Moorhen. We will communicate that information to Busch officials. So birders and butterfly enthusiasts, write down those sightings and turn them in to Yvonne Homeyer (963-7750).

We also decided to start a native wildflower plot in a yet-to-be chosen location, possibly a St. Louis County park. Our goal is to provide flowers that attract butterflies. Kraig Paradise (741-8940) will coordinate this project. This was another agenda item on the meeting with the County Parks Dept., and they were interested in our idea.

We would like to get WGNSS members on Advisory Boards of various state and local agencies that are involved with conservation/ecology/development issues. If you have any information about what Boards would fit this description, or if you have any contacts, please let Yvonne Homeyer know. Also, those who are interested in serving on a board should send a brief resume to Yvonne Homeyer.

As you can see, we will be doing projects that members can participate in, even if they don't want to come to meetings. We will keep you posted through the newsletter about our projects as they develop.

Our next meetings are: Sunday March 21 and Sunday April 18. Both meetings start at 4:00 and will be held at Yvonne Homeyer's (963-7750). New committee members are welcome. And many, many thanks to the WGNSS Board and all who have helped get this Committee off the ground. Special thanks to: Connie Alwood, Dianne Benjamin, Dennis Bozzay, Ken Cohen, Dick Coles, Cheryl & Don Delashmit, Vicki Flier, Sue Gustafson, Jack Harris, Jim Holsen, Randy Korotev, Jim Malone, Patricia McCormick (Secretary),

Jeannie Moe, Kraig Paradise, Mark Peters, Kevin Renick, Linda Virga, Rad Widmer, and Jim Ziebol. ∞

February Bird Report

Jim Ziebol and Yvonne Homeyer
The year's first Common Loon was behind headquarters at Riverlands on 2/25 (G&TB). Four Horned Grebes were seen in the rough water at Horseshoe Lake near the dredge on 2/7 (DBZ, DBj). A Double-crested Cormorant was observed at Horseshoe Lake on 2/20 (JS, PB). By 2/6, the first White Pelicans began to arrive at Riverlands (G&TB). Fifty more were seen at Mark Twain on 2/8 (DC) and by 2/25, 150 were seen at Riverlands (JMo). Two Black-crowned Night Herons were spotted along Bend Road the first week of the month and 4 were found on 2/8 (DB). Three Tundra Swans were seen on Pogue Road (Madison Co.) on 2/1 (FH), 2 were seen on 2/8 at North Road/Horseshoe Lake (P&FB), and another was seen on Pogue Road on 2/14 by Paul Johnson. White-fronted Geese continued to be numerous, with 5 seen on 2/2 at Riverlands (KL) and 30 on 2/11 (DC). Two Ross's Geese were observed on 2/8 at Riverlands (DC). According to Jim Rathert, about 5% of Snow Geese flocks now consist of Ross's Geese. Hundreds of Pintails, with some Gadwall, Shovelers, and Lesser Scaup, were found at Little Creve Coeur Lake on 2/14 (YH, DBj). Many Pintails were also being reported from Riverlands at that time. Gadwall were reported area-wide. Three Wood Ducks were seen at Lake 35/Busch on 2/12 (JMo.) Redheads appeared at Mark Twain on 2/20 (G&TB). A flock of 1000 Lesser Scaup was observed at Carlyle Lake on 2/11 (CA). Five Red-breasted Mergansers were found at Riverlands on 2/2 (KL) and 50 were counted on 2/25 (G&TB, JMo). A female White-winged Scoter was seen at Riverlands on 2/25

(JMo). A very cooperative Surf Scoter was seen by many at close range on 2/1 at Horseshoe Lake (KM), where it remained for a week. By 2/20, all 3 Mergansers had been reported at Horseshoe Lake (PB). Eleven species of ducks were reported from the Horseshoe Lake & Bischoff Road areas on 2/28, including 2 Wood Ducks, 10 Green-winged Teal, and 8 Wigeons (FH).

An early Turkey Vulture was observed over Hwy. 40 on 2/6 (YH) and one was seen at Busch on 2/12 (JMo, DC). A Bald Eagle was observed eating a Canada Goose at the Borrow Pit on 2/9, as several noisy crows watched hungrily (JZ). By the end of February, most Bald Eagles had disappeared from Riverlands. One Sharp-shinned Hawk was found at Busch on 2/6 and one was seen in Tower Grove Park 2/27 (JZ). A Cooper's Hawk was reported at the end of Bend Road on 2/8 (KL) and another was found between Lakes 34 & 35/Busch on 2/28 (JMo). Red-shouldered Hawks were actively displaying and calling throughout the area, with reports from Castlewood (CM, MB), the Arboretum on 2/9 (JC), and West Tyson Park on 2/20 (SG). An active Red-tailed Hawk's nest was found near Little Creve Coeur Lake on 2/14 (YH, DBj). A Harlan's Hawk was also seen perched in that area on 2/14 (YH, DBj). A well-described Red-tailed Hawk, an apparent Fuertes' race, was seen near Lake 7/Busch on 2/22 (JMo). An adult dark-phase Western Red-tailed Hawk was seen near Bunker 70/Busch on 2/28 (JMo). A partial albino (90%) Red-tailed Hawk was seen near Lake 8/Busch on 2/20 by Jerry Ondr; it was mostly white with some red in the tail and dark wingtips. On 2/26, a Krider's Red-tailed Hawk was observed at Busch (CM). A Rough-legged Hawk was seen at Green Bottom Road (St. Charles Co.) on 2/3 and another was seen at Hwy. 370 & Elm on 2/25 (JMo). Two local Peregrine Falcons were closely observed at

Riverlands on 2/7 (DBz, DBj). Killdeer were seen at Lakes 35 and 15/Busch on 2/12 (JMo, JZ). A Lesser Yellowlegs was observed off Powers Road near MTC on 2/27 (J&CM). This is an exceptionally early bird and may be a state record. Woodcocks were observed at several locations in Busch on 2/4 (CM).

There were 11 Bonaparte's Gulls at the Borrow Pit on 2/15 (JZ) and others were seen at the Sewage Lagoon/Carlyle on 2/11 (CA). A first-winter Great Black-backed Gull was found on 2/1 at Riverlands (JS). A large number of gulls had migrated north by mid-February. Mike Phelan flushed a Short-eared Owl near Heron Pond/Riverlands on 2/8. Great Homed Owls were seen at both Riverlands and Tower Grove Park on 2/4 (CA). A Barred Owl was closely observed at Busch on 2/20 (DB et al.). A Screech Owl was found in a nest box in Rock Hill (MW). A red-phase Screech Owl was seen in the usual hole in Tower Grove Park (JC, G&TB). Five species of Woodpeckers visited a Rock Hill back yard this month (L&MW). A Hairy Woodpecker was seen at the Arboretum on 2/9 (JC) and one was found in Elsay, Ill. on 2/20 (G&TB). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported throughout the area: Tower Grove Park 2/1 and 2/13 (JS) and Busch on 2/22 (JMo). Six Pileated Woodpeckers were found near the Brussels Ferry on 2/20 (TBr). The first Fish Crows were reported at Castlewood (MB), and 6 were at the Borrow Pit on 2/10 (KM).

The year's first Red-breasted Nuthatch was found behind Busch headquarters on 2/14 (RB). Both Kinglets were seen in Tower Grove Park on 2/4 (G&TB). The Brown Creeper that was reported earlier in the Wells' back yard remained throughout the month.

As many as 6 Brown Creepers were found along the Fallen Oak Trail/Busch on 2/21 (JMo). Yellow-rumped Warblers were

reported from Busch on 2/12 (JMo) and Lost Valley Trail on 2/14 (RB). An immaculate male Oregon Junco was closely observed in Tower Grove Park on 2/28 (JZ). A male Indigo Bunting, described in "pre-alternate molt," visited the feeder of Dottie Herwig on 2/22. A Spotted Towhee was reported on Lost Valley Trail on 2/28 (KL). A most unusual species for a city park, an American Tree Sparrow, was seen in Tower Grove Park on 2/28 (JZ). Four Fox Sparrows were seen at Bunker 70/ Busch on 2/6 (YH). Several more Fox Sparrows were observed at Busch on 2/20 (DB et al.) and 9 were seen at Tower Grove Park on 2/27 (JZ). A female Purple Finch was seen in Eureka on 2/9 (DC) and 2 males, 1 female were found in Elsay, Ill. on 2/20 (TBr). The winter finches did not make an appearance this year, with the exception of a handful of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. A female Rusty Blackbird was observed at Horseshoe Lake on 2/7 (DBz, DBj) and 1 was also seen near Riverlands on 2/9 (G&TB). A small flock of Brewer's Blackbirds was seen in Clinton Co., Ill. on 2/11 (KL). Large flocks of Eurasian Tree Sparrows are still being seen at Riverlands and the Borrow Pit, and 60+ were found at MTC along Island Road (PB et al.).

Comments: As spring birding approaches, please make special note for this report of American Bittern, Red-headed Woodpecker, Henslow's Sparrow, Dickcissel. These 4 species are classified as "species of special management concern" by the USFWS. The following Neotropical migrants made a poor showing in Spring 1998 and we would like to hear of any reports for: Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Blackpoll, and Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, and Cerulean Warblers. In addition, there were almost no reports of Least Bittern and Common Moorhen last year. Please report any sightings. Some are noting an absence

of the usually common Carolina Wren—many probably died during the harsh winter storms in January. We would like to hear of all sightings of this bird. Finally, as spring migration approaches, please report unusually early migrants. A male Ruffed Grouse (complete tail band visible when flushed) was seen by Paul & Fran Bauer feeding along the edge of a primitive camping area in Daniel Boone CA on 2/21.

California Gull: On 10/11/98, a possible California Gull was hotlined from the Borrow Pit. Two knowledgeable local birders responded and one of them confirmed it as a California Gull. Fifteen to 20 people saw this bird and it was a lifer for some. Two birders documented the bird and two others photographed it. The Illinois Records Committee rejected the identification and all now agree that it was not a California Gull. It was a small pale Herring Gull with an atypical bill. Only one area birder did not originally agree with the identification; he thought it was a Thayer's.

Contributors: Connie Alwood, George & Terry Barker, Paul & Fran Bauer, Dave Becher, Dianne Benjamin, Rose Ann Bodman, Tom Borman, Dennis Bozzay, Mike Brady, Jackie Chain, Dick Coles, Sue Gustafson, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, Kent Lannert, Jim & Charlene Malone, Keith McMullen, Jeannie Moe, John Solodar, Larry & Michelle Wells, Jim Ziebol. ∞

Birders to Remember Jack Van

Each of us has memories of meeting Jack Van Benthuyzen in Tower Grove Park, especially during warbler time. He would quietly tell us where he had seen the Golden-winged Warbler, the Prairie Warbler, the Pine Warbler, the Cape May Warbler, or Black-throated Blue Warbler and more. We would feel fortunate to find half the birds he had found. Then he would be gone to find the goodies on the east side,

at Busch, at Forest Park or other locations. It seems appropriate to plant a tree in Tower Grove Park in memory of Jack, a tree that will welcome the birds he loved. That has been arranged. If you can, come on March 25, at 10:00 AM. The planting will be next to the bird garden. Rain date will be April 1. ∞

**Donations to WGNSS
In memory of Jack Van
Benthuisen**

Diane Benjamin
Alberta Bolinger
Jacquelyn Chain
Phoebe Snetsinger
John Loomis

In memory of Janet Neilson
Dorothy Sloan

In memory of David Jones

Florence Comfort
Margaret and Martin Hasse
Sally Landwehr
Marshall and Ernestine Magner
Kitty Pearl
Phoebe Snetsinger
Juanita and Harvey Steiger
Susan Stuber

**Exceptional Wildlife Adventures:
Galapagos & South Africa**

Everyone should see wildlife as it was meant to live—free and in great numbers. It is essential to feel that we are part of nature, to witness timeless events, in timeless places such as the enchanted islands of the Galapagos or the endless savannas of Africa.

Galapagos Cruise & Ecuador Extension:
Sept. '99

Explore 11 Galapagos Islands aboard deluxe MV Corinthian; all cabins w/ full facilities. Visit 8 central islands plus Fernandina, Isabela and Tower. Finding *all* endemic birds is possible. Join us Sept.. 15-24, 1999. Optional 8-day extension to Western Andes; Banos, Cotopaxi, Pasochoa, and Mindo region; exceptional birding and scenery. Experienced local birding guides used.

Bird South Africa with Ken Newman: Nov. '99

Ken Newman is the best known South African birding expert, field guide author & artist. Join us on this unique opportunity at the ideal season: Oct. 29-Nov. 11, '99. Visit stunning Cape Town and Durban; Hluhluwe, Ndumo and Mala Mala game reserves; Kruger NP and Bongani private reserve.

Don't put it off another day. Discover some of the most extraordinary wildlife in the world. Journey to the Galapagos and South Africa with the St. Louis Audubon Society in 1999. For reservations, more information or a detailed itinerary, please phone or fax Paul Bauer at 314/921-3972; write to P0 Box 2085; Florissant, MO 63032. ∞

WGNSS/St. Louis Audubon Trips

Jim Malone

The enthusiastic response to the Missouri Prairie Chicken trip Bill Rowe will be leading in April has reserved all available spaces. This trip was so popular we plan to offer a similar one next spring for those of you who weren't able to go this year.

Although this week-end adventure is all filled up, we have planned a visit to Quivira National Wildlife Refuge and Cheyenne Bottoms Conservation area in Kansas for late May. This trip will begin on Thursday May 20th lasting through Sunday, May 23rd, with Thursday and Sunday mostly dedicated to travel, leaving Friday and Saturday to Bird Quivira, Cheyenne Bottoms, and the areas around Great Bend Kansas.

Late May is a very special time for central Kansas wetland birding. Resident breeding species like Wilson's Phalaropes, Great-Tailed Grackles, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Black Rails, Virginia Rails, Grebes, Ibis, Mississippi Kites, Snowy Plovers, Least Terns, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds have established nesting sites, and the late shorebird migrants are still hanging around. Quivira National Wildlife Refuge contains two large salt marshes, numerous smaller fresh-water lakes, woods, prairies, and just about everything in between. Cheyenne Bottoms in May is a haven for Ibis, Grebes (often including Western and Clark's Grebes), shorebirds, icterids, Barn Owls, and Franklin's Gulls (to name but a few). A late May trip to this area last year, yielded nearly all of the above mentioned birds as well as Whimbrels, lingering ducks, and a good variety of shorebirds and raptors.

Some of the areas we will be visiting at Quivira do not readily allow parking of numerous vehicles, so we will limit the number of participants to 20-25. Since this trip is being offered to Audubon and

WGNSS members alike, we want to give everyone an equal opportunity to reserve a spot. If this sounds like a trip you don't want to miss, send \$5 per person (to cover handling and mailing expenses) to Jim Malone at 15424 Elk Ridge Lane, Chesterfield, MO 63017 *no earlier than April 12th*. We will send you an information package about the trip. If you decide to join us we will reserve a room for you and see you in Kansas. Call Jim Malone at 536-1119 if you have questions about this trip. Hope to see you there! ☺

St. Louis Audubon /WGNSS combined Bird Walks in April

Jim Malone

Aside from the Prairie Chicken trip we are offering this month, and the regular WGNSS Saturday group outings led by David Becher, we will be offering two additional walks this month. On Saturday, April 17th, our annual Woodcock Walk/Owl Prowl will start at 7 PM at Busch Conservation Area. We will meet in the parking lot at Aden Knight Hampton Lake just to the left of the entrance road, and visit several good areas at Busch looking for owls near dusk. Then the highlight of the evening will be experiencing the "peenting" and display flights of American Woodcocks in one of the best locations Busch has to offer. If you have never experienced this unusual annual event, I highly recommend it!

The second April Bird Walk we will be offering is to Castlewood State Park on Sunday, April 25th. This walk will start at 8 AM in the first parking area near Kiefer Creek at Castlewood. We will explore the woods for early spring migrants, look for resident Red-Shouldered Hawks and other raptors, and search the river for Fish Crows, Kingfishers, and other water-loving species. This is a great place for early mi-

grants, and past trips at this time have been very interesting. Hope you will join us.

If you have questions about either of these walks, contact Jim Malone at 536-1119 or Paul Bauer at 921-3972. ~

Ornithology Meeting: Video On Warblers

Paul Bauer

A special meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 29, 1999 at Powder Valley Nature Center Auditorium; 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. The main feature of this program should appeal to all birders. To be shown is *Watching Warblers: A Video Guide to the Warblers of Eastern North America*

This program is jointly promoted by the St. Louis Audubon Society and WGNSS in cooperation with Powder Valley. In addition to the 60-minute video, there will also a 15-minute slide presentation for new birders to show a few "book" maps, and bird photos to illustrate a several of the best nearby locations to find these migrants.

The auditorium is limited to 200 persons, and this program will be announced in the MDC April newsletter: *Making Tracks*. It is free and open to the public. However **reservations are required**; call 314/301-1500 on or after April 15, 1999. Make a note on you calendar now. ~

Revised St. Louis Area Bird Book Now Available

Paul Bauer

Birds of the St. Louis Area: Where and When to Find Them, has been revised and reprinted. Copies are now available in the St. Louis area from all local Wild Bird Centers, Wild Bird Unlimited, Wildbird Marketplace (and other similar stores), the Missouri Botanical Garden Bookstore, and Shaw Arboretum Shop. By mail the book is available as catalog #308 from the American Birding Association (ABA); call

1-800/634-7736. You may charge it to a credit card.

This new edition has about 80 revisions made to the text and maps. Also we added four new birding locations and revised directions and instructions for several others, so the total birding locations described now exceed 125 places. Numerous revisions were necessary to the 17 colored maps to fit the revised directions.

If possible revisions were made in the existing text space, but when necessary the longer changes were added to an appendix, which has 10 additional pages. The book now totals 202 pages.

The appendix includes the above mentioned corrections and additions to birding locations, changes in AOU species names, significant new bird records, general lodging information for visitors, and a checklist of 357 species of birds seen the St. Louis area since 1940.

The individual species reviews now total 380 species that have ever been reported in our area. Nine new species were added in this revision. See the new book to find out which ones! The colored seasonal occurrence bar graphs provide detailed visual information on what birds should be expected, and how common they are for each 10 day period during the year. Best of all the book has a spiral binding so it can lay open on the front seat of your car, or on a window sill at home.

So if you have *any* interest in birds, where to find birds, when specific birds should be expected in this area, and the historic records of rare bird sightings around St. Louis, make it a point to buy this beautiful book *soon*. If you have questions, call Paul Bauer at 314/921-3972. ~

 **our website**

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

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: April 9

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

1998-9 WGNSS Board

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

1st Vice Pres: Doug Corbett, 702 C Overlook Cir.
Dr., Manchester MO 63021, 861-2829.

2nd Vice Pres: Vicki Flier, 18 Algonquin Wood,
St. Louis MO 63122, 968-9166

Treasurer: Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln.,
St. Louis MO 63132, 993-0055.

Secretary: Dora Gianoulakis, 44 Clearview Park,
St. Louis MO 63138, 741-8425.

Editor: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews,
St. Louis MO 63122-5722, 965-8091.

Membership: Linda Virga, 9734 Antonia Dr.,
St. Louis MO 63123, 544-3313.

Ornithology: David Becher, 12829 Mariners Pt Ct.,
St. Louis MO 63141, 576-1146.

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.

Environmental Education: Dick Coles, 11 Hickory
Ln., Eureka MO 63025, 938-5271.

Conservation: Yvonne Homeyer, 1508 Oriole Ln.,
St. Louis MO 63144 963-7750. ∞

Member at Large: John Molyneaux, 7822 Garden
Ave., St. Louis MO 63119, 961-5181.

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

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

internet address

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

Copyright Statement

All articles in *Nature Notes* are printed with the author's permission. Persons or organizations wishing to reprint articles should obtain the author's permission and list credit to *Nature Notes*, Webster Groves Nature Study Society. Contact the editor. ∞

Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Meetings

Wednesday, April 7

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

Friday, April 9

WGNSS general membership meeting, 8 PM at the St. Louis Co. Library HQ on Lindbergh. Doug Corbett will discuss birding in Florida.

Entomology

Sunday, March 21

7-9 PM at Magner's. Ted Macrae will present a program on "Rain Forest Natural History." No doubt there will be some reference to insects. Please note change of date to the third Sunday.

Sunday, April 25

7-9 PM at Magner's, 516 Bacon Ave. Webster Groves MO (961-4588). Marshall will present a program: "Let's Look at some INsects of the World that Appear Disgusting, Grotesque or even Ugly—and we wonder why?"

Conservation

Sundays, March 21 & April 18

4:00 PM at Yvonne Homeyer's, 1508 Oriole Lane in Brentwood (963-7750). Any interested member is welcome.

Botany

Beginners welcome. Bring lunch, weather gear.

Thursdays in March & April

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. Call David Becher 576-1146.

Thursdays in March & April

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

Sat. March 20, 27, April 3

8:00 AM West County. See above.

Birding cont.

Sunday March 21

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

Sunday, March 28

4:00 PM Get-together at the Flier's, 18 Algonquin Woods in Glendale, off Berry Rd., south of Manchester. Kevin Renick will review spring bird song—thrushes, vireos and, yes, warblers. Call Kevin for more info: 918-1085.

Saturday April 10

8:00 AM Busch Wildlife Area. Meet at Hampton Lake. Bring lunch.

Saturday April 17

8:00 AM Tower Grove Park. Meet at first picnic area past stables on right. Bring lunch.

Saturday April 24

8:00 AM Gray Summit Arboretum. Meet at entrance to Brush Creek Trail. Day spent walking. Bring a lunch you can carry.

Thursday April 29

7-8:30 PM Powder Valley Auditorium. Presenting *A Video Guide to the Warblers of Eastern North America*. Reservations are required: call 314-301-1500 on or after April 15.

Saturday May 1

7:30 AM Meet at West County. See above.

Saturday May 8

Big Day!

Saturday May 15

7:30 AM Castlewood State Park. Meet near boat launch. Bring lunch.

Saturday May 22

7:30 AM Meet at West County. See above.


NatureNotes deadline April 9

join wgnss!

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

WGNSS website!

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

 Webster Groves
Nature Study Society
PO Box 190065
St. Louis MO 63119

Non-profit Org.
US Postage Paid
St. Louis MO
Permit #690

address correction requested

MARJORIE RICHARDSON
1024 NANA LN
ST LOUIS MO 63131



WGNSS: PO Box 190065, St. Louis MO 63119
<http://levee.wustl.edu/~rlk/wgnss/>
President: Sue Gustafson, 9007 N. Swan Circle, St. Louis MO 63144
1st Vice Pres: Doug Corbett, 702 C Overlook Dr., Manchester MO 63021
2nd Vice Pres: Vicki Flier, 18 Algonquin Wood, St. Louis MO 63122
Treasurer: Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132
Secretary: Dora Gianoulakis, 44 Clearview Park, St. Louis MO 63138
Editor: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122
Membership: Linda Virga, 9734 Antonia Dr., St. Louis MO 63123

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