



# nature notes

Journal of Webster Groves Nature Study Society

February 2001 Vol. 73, No. 2

## February 9 Joint Meeting with St. Louis Audubon

Doug Corbett 1st VP

On February 9th, WGNSS and the St. Louis Audubon Society will hold our joint meeting at the St. Louis County Library on Lindbergh in Frontenac. Speaking that night will be Cheryl Riley and Judy Allmon. They are from the Grow Native Society. This group is new to Missouri and has sponsorship from the Conservation Department. Please join us for an insightful presentation. We begin at 8 PM in the auditorium and all are welcome. ∞

## Board Elections

David Rabenau

Yes, it's already that time again. Based on WGNSS' staggered rotational system of electing Board officers, we will be electing the Secretary and Treasurer at the April general meeting. If you are interested in either one of these positions, or are interested in a possible future appointment as a Member-at-Large on the Board, please contact me by phone at 314-968-8128 or by email at [drabenau@primary.net](mailto:drabenau@primary.net). I can provide you with more information on the positions and pass your name on to our Nominating Committee, as well as other volunteer opportunities through WGNSS. Get involved—we are a fun group with which to work! ∞

## Holnam Update

Yvonne Homeyer

We need you in Ste. Genevieve on January 24! Now that your public comment letters are in, what can YOU do next? Plenty! The Corps of Engineers is sponsoring a Public Workshop on Wednesday, January 24 from 4 to 8 PM. We want to make a strong showing by getting a lot of people to the workshop, which is like an open house, so you can arrive any time from 4:00 on. It is being held at the Elks Lodge in Ste. Genevieve. We will be carpooling from the Coalition between 2:00 and 2:30 PM or you can arrange your own transportation. (Directions are at the end of this article.)

January 25: The day after the workshop, Holnam will be on the agenda of the Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources (Land Reclamation/mining) at 10:00 in Jefferson City. We plan to be there to speak. Again, there will be carpools. (Call Yvonne at 314-963-7750).

*continued on page 10*

## in this issue:

Bird of the Year.....	2-3
Member profile.....	3
Bird Reports.....	4
Fall Botany.....	6
Events.....	15

## Y2K Birds that Deserve Special Mention

- Connie Alwood
- 1<sup>st</sup> Place.....Painted Bunting  
This was the first time this species was seen in the St. Louis area. Plus it nested—albeit the nestlings did not survive.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place.....Snowy Plover  
Birders who went out to Little Creve Coeur on April 22 to see a Marbled Godwit were also rewarded with this first-time-to-be-seen-in-the-St.-Louis-area species.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place.....Little Gull  
A life bird for me! This bird stayed at Riverlands for two weeks, delighting us with its agile flight and swift dives.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place.....Ruff  
Another lifer! Charlene Malone hotlined this rare shorebird from the defunct golf course in Collinsville Rd. in Fairmont City, Ill.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place.....Northern Shrike  
One of the top birds for 1999 lingered into the new year. ∞

## The Bird of 2000

Torrey Berger

Many years ago, as a “young” student in Bill Rowe’s birding class, I could never locate, much less identify, a flying gull (on the *far* side of the river at the end of Pump House Road) which Bill identified as a Little. Through the years I have carried the weight of this near miss, but no more. I am free! The Little Gull at Riverlands is my choice, hands down. I went back to see it four times. I saw it flying, I saw it sitting with its Sabine buddies, I even confirmed its identity with no less authorities than C. Alwood, C. Malone and E. Wade. I saw it in Missouri and I saw it on the Illinois side. ∞

## Bird of the Year: Rock Fowl

Pete Winter

For several years my world quest to see all 204 families of birds in the wild had stalled. I needed to see only the Rock Fowl of the family *Picathartidae*, which was native to the countries of the Ivory Coast, Gabon, and the Cameroons in western Africa. I had failed to see this rare and elusive bird on previous expeditions to Gabon and the Ivory Coast in July 1985, and again on an expedition to the Cameroons in March 1997. I learned of a British ornithologist who had reported seeing the bird on each of his last two expeditions to Mount Nienokove in the Ivory Coast. We corresponded and arrangements were made for him to guide me in January, 2000, to the endangered birds’ habitat on Mount Nienokove. He advised me that the closest we could penetrate into the mountain via vehicle would require a trek by foot of at least ten hours through difficult swampy wilderness to our campsite at the foot of the mountain. I was within just months of my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and he asked if I considered myself up to the task. I assured him that I felt confident I would be able to keep up with him on the tiring trek.

We arrived at our campsite at the foot of Mount Nienokove after darkness had fallen and ten hours trekking through difficult terrain. We ate our evening meal at the foot of the mountain in great anticipation of the next day’s climb to the boulder fields and caves high up Mount Nienokove, the habitat of one of the world’s rarest, most endangered, and most elusive birds. As we sat around our campfire, the native guide who was to lead us up the mountain in the morning advised that he had been studying the *Picathartidae* on Mount Nienokove for several years. He was convinced that less than ten pairs of Rock Fowl still survived on the mountain.

We arose early the next morning and eagerly climbed high up the mountain to the boulder field and caves where the rare bird survives.

The Rock Fowl is a brilliantly colored bird with a bald head; a smaller bird than a tur-

key, that seldom flies and spends its life foraging on the forest floor. They hop along the forest floor like a kangaroo. They prefer for their habitat secluded boulder fields with numerous small caves in which they build a mud nest on the cavern walls.

The Rock Fowl has been a puzzle to ornithologists for years. For decades it was considered to be Babbler. For a period of time it was called the Bald Crow. Only in recent years have ornithologists decided the bird was so mysterious it deserves to be a family of its own, *Picathartidae*.

Few birdwatchers have ever seen this rare and elusive bird.

We positioned ourselves within the boulder fields. Within a few minutes we were able to see four of the Rock Fowl, eyeball to eyeball, within fifty feet of where we sat.

It is difficult to express the excitement I felt at that moment. I had seen all of the world's 204 families of birds in the wild! Only very few birdwatchers have ever had the privilege of accomplishing that objective. To do so required me to take 168 expeditions to all the continents of the world and to all the world's great mountains, deserts, rivers, and seas.

Birdwatching has made my life a symphony! ~

*Next month, Nature Notes will carry a summary of Pete Winter's world birding.*

### **Bird of the Year**

What bird made the biggest impression on you in 2000? Send your nomination to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122, or [mccormacka@earthlink.net](mailto:mccormacka@earthlink.net) If you would like your nomination to be included in the next issue, the deadline is Jan. 12. If you prefer, your "Bird of the Year" can be published in the March issue—deadline Feb. 9. Please, no phone nominations. ~

### **Year List Totals for 2000**

Connie Alwood.....	287*
Jackie Chain.....	273
George Barker.....	268
Terry Barker.....	265
Rose Anne Bodman.....	261*
Torrey Berger.....	259
Barbara Johnson.....	255
Paul Johnson.....	255
John Solodar.....	250*
Dick Coles.....	232
Dottie Herweg.....	231
Loy Barber.....	231

*\*This member reported that 2000 was his or her highest total ever!*

### **Your Year List**

If you wish to be included in the list of birders who saw 200 species in the St. Louis area in 2000, please Send your total to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122, or e-mail [mccormacka@earthlink.net](mailto:mccormacka@earthlink.net) by Feb. 9, 2000. Please, no phone lists. ~

### **Profile of a New Life Member:**

#### **David Rabenau**

Nature Notes: When did you first join WGNSS?

*David: 1997*

How did you learn about WGNSS?

*Through an Audubon/WGNSS bird walk. I joined because of my fiancée, Sue Gustafson.*

What prompted you to become a lifetime member?

*I wanted to express my support of WGNSS in a meaningful way.*

Who or what caused you to develop an interest in natural history?

*Backpacking in California.*

Are you active in other conservation or natural history groups?

*I am active in the Meramec Greenway project of the Meramec River Recreation Association, and the Glade Restoration project through the Sierra Club.*

What is your special focus in WGNSS?

*Being president!*

Which of your WGNSS activities do you value most highly?

*Spring warbler migration, and helping the county parks/ rec. do bird surveys.*

Any dreams for the future?

*More membership, more scholarships, and other kinds of field support.*

Best kept secret:

*I am the author of the uncredited article about bird feeding in the Webster-Kirkwood Times, Dec. 22, 2000.*

How about some personal background?

*I lived in California for twenty years where I was a Methodist minister. I am now a website developer for Ferguson Consulting.*

What do you answer to that uniquely St. Louis question?

*Lindbergh High, 1971. ∞*

## **Orchard Farm Christmas Bird Count Report**

Randy Korotev

Seventeen enthusiastic volunteers participated in the 59th Orchard Farm Christmas Bird Count on January 1. Despite following the coldest December in more than 100 years, the count was a success, with a total of 67 species found, 3 more than average. Because there was almost no open water on the Mississippi River, some usually common species were not found at all (Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls). For the first time in the 26 years for which I have records, no Swamp Sparrows were seen. Other regularly-seen species found in particularly low numbers were Great Blue Heron, Killdeer, Brown Creeper, and Cedar Waxwing.

These deficiencies were countered by the occurrence of two species that had never been seen on the count before, Great-tailed Grackle and Harris's Sparrow. Both were found by Bill Rowe and Tom Parmeter in St. Louis Co.

Other rare finds were a Red-shouldered Hawk (the first since 1989; Rowe and Parmeter), 7 Northern Bobwhite in two coveys

(the first since the flood of 1993; Dency Kahn, Gerri Hirst, Charlene and Jim Malone), 1 Barn Owl at Marais Temps Clair (the first since 1980; Mike Grant and Aaron Jungbluth), 1 Snow Bunting (the first since 1983; Malones), and 3 Western Meadowlarks (the first since 1982, Malones, Parmeter, Rowe).

Other highlights were the highest-ever numbers of Gadwall (12), Red-tailed Hawks (65), Great Horned Owls (12), and good numbers of Bald Eagles (76), Barred Owl (4), Pileated Woodpecker (15), Horned Lark (711), White-crowned Sparrow (92), and Lapland Longspur (864). Finally, keen-eyed observers found 487 Eurasian Tree Sparrows, which is exceeded only by last year's 727. ∞

### **Welcome to new members...**

Karen Hencel ..... Webster Groves  
Gary Klearman ..... Denver, CO  
Robert Nowland ..... St. Louis  
Marvin Staloch ..... Webster Groves  
Bob Steinberg ..... Brentwood

### **Next Deadline: Feb. 9**

Anne McCormack

Submissions—handwritten, typed, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122-5722 or [mccormacka@earthlink.net](mailto:mccormacka@earthlink.net)



*tyson nature line*

Call 935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area. Please report any unusual birds to Connie Alwood, 524-8111. ∞



**LUVVIE, did you  
KNOW that NATURE  
NOTES IS PRINTED ON  
RECYCLED PAPER?**

## December 2000 Bird Report

Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer

### Abbreviations:

BCA = Busch

CL = Carlyle Lake

CP = Carondelet Park

CSP = Castlewood State Park

FP = Forest Park

HL = Horseshoe Lake

LVT = Lost Valley Trail

MTC = Marais Temps Clair

MTNWR = Mark Twain Nat. Wildlife Refuge

REDA = Riverlands

RKWD = Rockwoods Reservation

TGP = Tower Grove Park

The weather in December was atypical, with two powerful cold fronts on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, bringing deep snow cover and bitter cold temperatures for the last half of the month.

The Barkers reported a Western Grebe at REDA on 12/3. Three Eared Grebes were sited at CL on 12/10 (DK). A Great Egret was seen near Sand Prairie Lane on 12/20 (T Be). Scoters were reported from REDA on 12/2, including 8 Black Scoters (DB) and 3 Surf Scoters (PB). A male Oldsquaw was still being seen there early in the month. Duck counts included 1500 Gadwalls, 1000 Mallards, 150 Lesser Scaup, 100 Hooded Mergansers, 100 Goldeneyes, 12 Ruddy Ducks, and 3 Pied-billed Grebes at Layton Road on 12/5 (T Be). Bill Rowe estimated 2000 Canvasbacks and 1000 Goldeneyes, with a few Ruddies and Greater Scaup, at REDA on 12/17. Two Cooper's Hawks were seen flying at eye level near his home on 12/25 (MT) and one was seen on 12/1 off of Clayton Road (YH). An adult Red-shouldered Hawk was observed near Granite City on 12/7 (JZ). An adult Krider's Red-tailed was beautifully described by Wilma Kennell and others at REDA on 12/11. A Rough-legged Hawk was seen on 12/23 at REDA (Bill Ford, MT, J Mo). A dark-phase Rough-legged was also there from 12/17-12/23 (BR, MT). Jim Jackson reported many Killdeer still in the area in early December.

Thirteen Bobwhite were spotted on Layton Road on 12/5 (T Be) and 32 were reported near REDA on 12/23 (J Mo). Many Herring Gulls were present at REDA by 12/7

(T Be) and one of the first Lesser Black-backed sightings was there that day (CM, m. ob.). A Black-legged Kittiwake was seen at REDA on 12/8 (KL, m. ob.). December 12 was a good day for gulls at REDA: 2 Lesser Black-backeds, 3 Glaucous, 1 Thayer's (T Be). An adult Glaucous Gull was seen at the Chain during Christmas week (BR). Three Short-eared Owls were observed at CL on 12/10 (DK). Great Horned Owl sightings included one at REDA on 12/7 (T Be), 1 at REDA on 12/14 with a Short-eared Owl (CM), 1 present at his home (JH), and 2 in Webster Groves (SG, DR). A Barred Owls was found on the Katy Trail on 12/7 (J Mo and Botany Group). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet seen on Layton Road on 12/16 was really wishing it was in the Rio Grande Valley (JZ). Tom Borman reported 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches and a Purple Finch at the Fallen Oak Trail feeders, BCA, on 12/2. Multiple sightings of Hermit Thrush included 1 at Tyson on 12/10 (A Mc), 4 at his home on 12/12 (Mark Peters), 1 at St. Louis Univ. on 12/16 (Nick Barber), 1 at HL on 12/20 (T Be), 1 at Hilda Young CA on 12/26 (SG, DR) and many on area Christmas Counts. Also on 12/10, Torrey Berger reported 1000 Robins at BCA near the Headquarters. A Brown Thrasher was found along Bend Road, HL, on 12/16 (JZ).

Yellow-rumpeds were observed on 12/6 at Little Creve Coeur Marsh (WK) and several at BCA on 12/10 (T Be). Several Le-Conte's Sparrows were still present, along with Savannahs, at HL on 12/10 (FH). Western Meadowlark was sighted on Dwiggin Road on 12/16 (T Bo, KL). Lapland Longspurs were first sighted in the area on 12/15 at Bischoff Road (FH), at the REDA feeders on 12/16 (with Horned Larks) (DB), and by 12/18, over 100 at the Cahokia Mounds (T Be). The highest count of Lapland Longspurs was over 1000 in St. Charles Co. on 12/16 (T Bo, KL). On 12/13, Chris Woods heard 2 Snow Buntings at REDA and by 12/23, Snow Buntings had been observed at the REDA feeders (G&TB, m. ob.). Richard Wagner reported a male Yellow-

headed Blackbird visiting his feeder in Millstadt, Ill. around 12/16.

#### *Christmas Count Highlights:*

Carlyle Lake, 12/23: Snow Bunting, thousands of Lapland Longspurs, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Thayer's Gull, Phoebe, LeConte's Sparrow, Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl, Hermit Thrush and Brown Thrasher.

Collinsville Circle, 12/23: Snow Bunting, Harris's Sparrow, 2 Hermit Thrush, Harlan's Hawk, Krider's Hawk, 10 Pied-billed Grebes, 40 Great Blue Herons.

Busch CA, 12/30: Harris's Sparrow, 8 Hermit Thrush, many Red-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Thrasher, female Spotted Towhee, E. Towhee, 2 Winter Wrens, hundreds of Fox Sparrows, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks.

*Comments:* In late November, Charlene Malone had 4 young Pheasants at REDA. On 11/20, Jim Jackson found 2 Killdeer and a Black-bellied Plover in Washington, Mo. Dennis Bozzay had a Hairy Woodpecker and 4 Eurasian Tree Sparrows visiting his yard; the sparrows spend the night together in a bird house. Wilma Kennell observed a partial albino Grackle and a Field Sparrow on 12/18 at her home. Of the 3 Rufous Hummingbirds wintering in the St. Louis area, the one at Anne McCormack's home was last seen on 12/16. Also on 12/16, Lanny Chambers banded another immature male Rufous in Glencoe, Mo. On 12/14, Anne McCormack added another yard bird to her list: a Bald Eagle flying overhead.

*Contributors:* Connie Alwood, George & Terry Barker, Paul Bauer, David Becher, Torrey Berger, Tom Bormann, Sue Gustafson, Jack Harris, Frank Holmes, Yvonne Homeyer, Jim Jackson, Dan Kassebaum, Wilma Kennell, Kent Lannert, Jim & Charlene Malone, Anne McCormack, Jeannie Moe, David Rabenau, Bill Rowe, Mike Thelen, Jim Ziebol, many observers. An asterisk means "documented."

To submit a report, call Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372) or email Yvonne at [homeyer@postnet.com](mailto:homeyer@postnet.com) by the last day of the

month. If you want to send photos or videos of birds reported, please mail them to Jim Ziebol, 3900 Berger, St. Louis, Mo. 63109. We will keep them on hand for future reference. ∞

## **Fall Botanizing**

Carl Darigo

The Botany Group's Thursday outings continued during the fall season, with the following attending one or more times, Father James Sullivan, Sandy & Dave Alspaugh, Dana Barhard, Leonard Blake, Marvin Boisseau, Cindy & David Bruns, Jeanne Clauson, Carl Darigo, Pat & Jack Harris, Dan Lehocky, Jeannie Moe, Betty & Bob Nellums, Tom O' Gorman, David Rabenau, Marge & Jim Ruschill, Suzy & Dick Russell, Al Seppi, Betty Tanner, Kathy Thiele, Jane Walker and Janet Williamson.

September 7, Flamm City Access, Jefferson County—the group welcomed Dan Lehocky, as 12 turned out on a welcome 80° day to check mudflats and bottomland forest along the Meramec River. In great abundance were *Polygonum pensylvanicum* (pinkweed), *Ipomoea lacunosa* (small white morning glory) and *Sida spinosa* (prickly sida). Father Sullivan pointed out numerous and large *Forestiera acuminata* (swamp privet) shrubs, as well as *Iva annua* (marsh elder); the latter resembles giant ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida*), but has unlobed instead of lobed leaves. Pat Harris found *Leersia lenticularis* (catchfly grass), with "spangle grass-type" inflorescences. Other bottomland grasses of interest were *Panicum dichotomiflorum* (fall panic grass) and *Lep-tochloa panicea* (Mississippi sprangletop). Jack Harris spotted his favorite plant, *Cuscuta gronovii* (Gronovius' dodder), plus *Spermacoce glabra* (smooth buttonweed) and *Commelina diffusa* (small dayflower); Jack also demonstrated the high-tech GPS unit used to determine exact latitude and longitude from satellite readings. Jeannie Moe identified an unconcerned pipevine swallowtail butterfly (*Battus philenor*), which put on a good show for the onlookers.

September 14, Hunter's Ford County Park, St. Louis County—12 persons, including WGNSS president David Rabenau, enjoyed fine 75° weather while touring an old road paralleling the Meramec River, in this proposed county park. Somewhat abundant were *Helianthus tuberosus* (Jerusalem artichoke), *Clematis terniflora* (Japanese virgin's bower), *Heterotheca camporum* (golden aster) and *Lespedeza bicolor* (bicolor lespedeza), the latter appropriately named due to pink and purple petals in the flower. Other interesting plants seen included *Vernonia arkansana* (great ironweed), *Phlox paniculata* (perennial phlox), *Lobelia siphilitica* (blue cardinal flower), *Strophostyles helvula* (trailing wild bean), *Cyperus squarrosus* (awned cyperus) and *Physostegia virginiana* (obedient plant), with both blue and white flowers. Parts of the old road were covered with algae (*Nostoc sp.*), having a black, tarry appearance when dry, but becoming brown and gummy when wet. An expanse of promising grass, on further keying, turned out to be only Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), escaped from one of the defunct cabins. Marvin Boisseau correctly answered Father Sullivan's river birch (*Betula nigra*) test, while David kept the group entertained with bird finds, the more unusual being two female Blue Grosbeaks.

September 21, Victoria Glade, Jefferson County—nine persons gathered on a very nice, 65°, early fall day to circle the glades on The Nature Conservancy site. Great Plains ladies' tresses orchids (*Spiranthes magnicamporum*) were underfoot everywhere; sepal characteristics separating the species from *S. cernua* are somewhat complex, so the group relied on the plant's significant fragrance instead. Father Sullivan pointed out that *Agalinis skinneriana* (pale gerardia) flowers always face upwards to the sky, while Jack Harris found a large patch of blue hearts (*Buchnera americana*). In abundance were *Silphium terebinthinaceum* (prairie dock), just beginning to bloom, *Allium cernuum* (nodding wild onion) and *Liatris cylindracea* (cylindric blazing star). Among

other interesting plants seen were *Solidago rigida* (stiff goldenrod), *Aster sericeus* (silky aster) and *Croton capitatus* (woolly croton).

September 28, St. Francois State Park, St. Francois County—a perfect 70° fall day was on tap, as 12 people, including new member Jane Walker, were guided by Naturalist Ron Mulliken to explore the fen on the park's far north side. Father Sullivan found the round lemon-like fruit of maypops (*Pasiflora incarnata*) along the roadside, then pointed out that the flowers of slender gerardia (*Agalinis tenuifolia*), point sideways, rather than skyward, as seen in last week's species. Besides copious growths of little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) along the trail, seven asters including *Aster oolentangiensis* (azure aster) and *A. novae-angliae* (New England aster) were spotted. Also seen in the forest were *Panicum anceps* (beaked panic grass), *Helenium autumnale* (sneezeweed) and *Pycnanthemum pilosum* (hairy mountain mint). In the fen, standouts were Virginia mountain mint (*P. virginianum*), blue cardinal flower (*Lobelia siphilitica*), cowbane (*Oxypolis rigidior*) and umbrella grass (*Fuirena simplex*), the latter especially abundant in flowing water. Also in the wet areas, Jane Walker spotted swarms of green darner dragonflies (*Anax junius*).

October 5, Shaw Arboretum, Franklin County—even though an all-night rain luckily stopped in time, attendance was reduced to only five, who on an otherwise cloudy and 60° day, walked the Labadie Trace and part of the River Trail. The Trail House was surrounded by deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*) red berries. The aster total of seven, including *Aster anomalus* (many rayed aster) and *A. lateriflorus* (white woodland aster), matched last week's count. Betty Tanner spotted a lone ladies' tresses orchid (*Spiranthes sp.*), but the flowers were too far gone to allow for species identification. Pat Harris commented on an unusually large, five foot tall, fruiting *Ruellia strepens* (smooth ruellia), while Jack Harris found orange fruit of common horse gentian (*Triosteum perfoliatum*), the characteristic beaked fruit of

American beakgrass (*Diarrhena obovata*) and the gummy, purple flowers of clammy cuphea (*Cuphea viscosissima*). The clear liquid oozing from the cuphea's gland-tipped hairs apparently accounts for the plant's stickiness. Several plump pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) fruits were too high to reach, but a loaded persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) tree provided many accessible fruits.

October 12, Cuivre River State Park, Lincoln County—an initially chilly morning rapidly warmed to sunny 75°, as Park Naturalist Bruce Schuette led 12 persons over the newly-opened Blazing Star Prairie Trail. Bruce also briefly described the park's history and the geology of Lincoln Hills. Father Sullivan's two tests were successfully answered by Pat Harris on *Coreopsis tripteris* (tall tickseed), and Betty Nellums who recognized the bare, but winged leaf stalk (rachis) of *Rhus copallina* (dwarf sumac). Some interesting prairie plants seen included *Aster praealtus* (willow-leaved aster), black fruits of *Lespedeza capitata* (round-headed bush clover), *Euthamia gymnospermoides* (grass-leaved solidago) with needle-like leaves and the showy, cone-headed *Solidago speciosa* (prairie goldenrod).

October 19, Castlewood State Park, St. Louis County—seven persons toured the bluff trail under sunny and pleasant skies, concentrating on asters and goldenrods. Among the seven asters found were *Aster lanceolatus* (tall white aster), *A. ontarionis* (Ontario aster) and *A. turbinellus* (prairie aster). Four goldenrods seen included fruiting *Solidago juncea* (early goldenrod) and *S. petiolaris* (downy ragged goldenrod). Best plant of the day was tassel flower (*Brickellia grandiflora*).

October 26, Katy Trail State Park, St. Charles County—a perfect 70° fall day greeted 11 people who walked southwest from the Weldon Spring access, past the nuclear facility and turned around at the old railway bridge over Femme Osage Creek. Father Sullivan satisfied the trip's goal by finding the spotted winter leaves of *Phacelia bipinnatifida*, aptly named "leopard leaf," at

base of a hillside just before the bridge. Near here was also found the big leaves of bearsfoot (*Smallanthus uvedalius*), whose numerous plants furnished seeds for several backyard collectors. Jack Harris wisely refrained from climbing a 40 foot tall *Ampelopsis cordata* (raccoon grape) vine for a photo of cliff-hanging *Solidago drummondii* (Drummond's goldenrod), in favor of waiting for a later ground-level shot. Jeanne Moe pointed out a little glassy wing skipper (*Pompeius verna*), while Marge Ruschill spotted several lush mats of *Polygonum arenastrum* (dooryard knotweed) growing in the trail's gravel edge. Other plants seen included a late-blooming *Tradescantia virginiana* (Virginia spiderwort), *Stachys tenuifolia* (thinleaf betony), *Lactuca saligna* (willow leaf lettuce), frilly *Panicum capillare* (common witchgrass) and *Chenopodium standleyanum* (woodland goosefoot), with reddish fruiting clusters.

November 2, Missouri Botanical Garden—a rainy weather forecast led seven persons to the Garden, where the overnight rain stopped, resulting in an enjoyable autumn day. A display in the Ridgway Building included sugar cane (*Saccharum officinarum*), whose saw-like leaf edges are probably not much appreciated by sugar-cane workers. Father Sullivan described acorn cap differences, with pin oak (*Quercus palustris*) having a small, soft, "French beret" shape and red oak (*Q. rubra*) with large, flat, firm caps; later, below several swamp chestnut oaks (*Q. michauxii*) were found the characteristic very large acorns. Numerous *Ilex verticillata* (winterberry) trees sported bright red berries while one *I. opaca* (American holly) cultivar had yellow berries. Some interesting still-flowering plants seen were fan flower (*Scaevola* sp.) with "one-sided" flowers, *Cuphea rosea* with non-sticky purple flowers, *Ageratum houstonianum* (floss flower) also purple, star-like lavender petals of *Laurentia axillaris* (blue stars) and blue *Aster tataricus* (tartarian aster). Jim Ruschill and Father Sullivan thought that a *Virburnum prunifolium* (black haw) was perhaps



improperly labeled, more nearly resembling *V. rufidulum* (southern black haw). Pat Harris spotted tiny yellow flowers of eastern witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), unusually blooming before the leaves drop, while Tom O'Gorman added a bit of history, pointing out a row of old Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*) trees which bordered the former road to Henry Shaw's mansion.

November 9, Queeny Park, St. Louis County—weeks of good weather ended, as four persons braved a miserable, cold and rainy 40° day to tour part of the Owl Creek Trail behind the Visitor Center. Janet Williamson, a gardener from Town & Country concerned about that community's deer invasion, joined the group for the first time. Janet pointed out a black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) tree with red leaves and butterfly bushes (*Buddleja davidii*) with long lavender flower spikes, the latter planted near the Visitor Center entrance. Jack Harris correctly answered a black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) test and Father Sullivan compared chinquapin oak's (*Quercus muehlenbergii*) pointed-tooth leaf to the very similar, but blunt toothed leaves of swamp chestnut oak (*Q. michauxii*), seen last week at Missouri Botanical Garden. Only four other flowering plants were seen, *Lonicera maackii* (bush honeysuckle), *Polygonum cespitosum* (creeping smartweed), *Campanula americana* (tall bellflower) and *Aster pilosus* (white heath aster).

November 16, Rockwoods Reservation, St. Louis County—an early threatening weather forecast moderated, as a group of nine walked the Rock Quarry Trail on a sunny, but windy, 45° day. This week was the first of the season with no flowering plants, but Father Sullivan compensated by finding numerous scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*) trees; well developed buds of this species have white apices, fresh acorn caps are glossy with a "varnished" look and leaves are retained into the fall longer than other oaks. The mystery of what at first appeared to be one tree with different size blue berries, was unraveled by Betty Nellums who explained that the large berries belonged to

*Rhamnus caroliniana* (Carolina buckthorn), while the smaller fruit was a neighboring *Celtis tenuifolia* (dwarf hackberry). Jack Harris pointed out several dried dittany (*Cunila origanoides*) which could support "frost flowers" in colder weather. A roadside bush with red berries, initially appearing to be honeysuckle, was instead autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*); a related species, Russian olive (*E. angustifolia*), has yellow berries.

November 30, Pickle Springs Natural Area, Ste. Genevieve County—a group of eight met on a very nice 45° and sunny day, to tour the "Trail Through Time." David Bruns returned after a long absence, and brought along his wife, Cindy. Father Sullivan continued his scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*) search, this time finding a tree off the parking lot, complete with acorns showing the characteristic concentric rings at top of the acorn. On the glade, Jack Harris spotted the feather-like inflorescence of *Aristida purpurascens* (arrowfeather). Normally this genus is called three-awn grass, but the common name accurately describes the appearance of this species. Pat Harris on *Trichostema dichotomum* (blue curls) and David on *Saxifraga virginensis* (early saxifrage), successfully answered Father Sullivan's tests. Numerous rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*) leaves were seen, as well as slight frost flower remains on dittany (*Cunila origanoides*). Some time was spent determining resurrection fern (*Polypodium polypodioides*) on a large boulder and checking out last season's fruiting cones and this year's male catkins on common alder (*Alnus serrulata*) trees.

Thanks to Pat & Jack Harris for contributing to this article. ~

WWW.WGNSS.ORG

## Holnam Update

*continued from page one*

Right before Christmas, Holnam published a notice in the Ste. Genevieve Herald asking DNR for permission to mine 35 acres of untouched land. WGNSS found out and you submitted letters in opposition—all on very short notice during the holidays. Thanks to YOUR letters, DNR took notice that Holnam's effort to start mining is a controversial issue. Holnam is trying to "piecemeal" the project and should be stopped. We will try to convince DNR not to let Holnam jump the gun.

The opposition to the proposed cement plant, 2000-acre quarry and harbor on 4000 acres of pristine wooded land in northern Ste. Genevieve County is gaining steam. The Corps of Engineers has received letters opposing the project from U.S. EPA Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Missouri Department of Conservation. Organizations that submitted public comment opposing the project in addition to WGNSS include: Coalition for the Environment, Environmental Clinic of Washington Univ. School of Law (on behalf of WGNSS and the Coalition), American Bottom Conservancy, Sierra Club, St. Louis Audubon Society, Audubon Missouri, National Audubon Society/Upper Mississippi River Campaign, NABA-St. Louis, Endangered Species Coalition/Heartwood, St. Louis Herpetological Society, Open Space Council, and French Valley Conservancy. And of course, the Corps received many, many letters submitted by YOU.

WGNSS would like to recognize the Environmental Clinic of Washington Univ. Law School, Maxine Lipeles, and her students for their invaluable assistance to WGNSS on this matter. They have committed their time, energy and expertise to this project. Thank you!

Background of this project: The 4,000 acre tract that Holnam wants to convert from pristine contiguous forest to heavy industry lies along the Mississippi River and contains wetlands, glades, Isle du Bois Creek,

streams, springs, seeps, ravines, hollows, and caves. The property provides an important stop-over point for migratory birds in the spring and fall, plus breeding habitat for all songbirds found in the St. Louis regions. An estimated 40,000 individual birds could live on the site (5 pairs per acre). The property provides perfect habitat for Cerulean Warbler, a Neotropical migrant that National Audubon Society and 27 other groups just petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list as threatened. Wildlife of all kinds—birds, butterflies, frogs, snakes, salamanders, and mammals—abounds. Several endangered and threatened species might be found there: Bald Eagle, Indiana bat, Gray bat, Peregrine Falcon, Least Tern, Pallid Sturgeon, Hine's Emerald (a dragonfly) and Mead's Milkweed.

Environmental and conservation groups are not the only ones concerned. Business interests may also be adversely affected by this proposed project, because the St. Louis region (including Illinois) is nonattainment for ozone under EPA guidelines and another major source of air pollutants could hinder economic development on both sides of the river.

Holnam is a privately-held U.S. subsidiary of Holderbank Financiere Glaris, a multinational corporation based in Switzerland with cement plants in 70 countries, including 12 in the US. The one at Clarksville, Mo., burns hazardous waste.

### **Directions to the Elks Lodge, Ste.**

**Genevieve:** Go south on I-55 and get off at Exit 154 (Ste. Genevieve-Rocky Ridge Road). Turn left onto Route O and then turn right onto Hwy. 61. Travel approximately 5 miles on Hwy. 61 and turn right onto Molasses Hollow Road. Address is 19603 Molasses Hollow Road. Please make the effort to be there.

The Conservation Committee will not hold a separate meeting in February. Please call Yvonne Homeyer (314-963-7750) for the date of the next joint meeting of environmental groups. ~

## The Ornifolks Lek-A-Day II Colorado Grouse Trip 2001

April 22-29, 2001 Itinerary

Sunday April 22 PM: Leave from St. Louis or Kansas City. Overnight in Manhattan KS or Wray CO.

Monday April 23: Observe lek of Greater Prairie Chicken in AM. Drive to Pawnee National Grassland, Greeley CO. Targets are Mountain Plover Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs. Night in Greeley or Walden.

Tuesday April 24: Observe lek of Greater Sage Grouse in AM. Go to Cameron Pass in PM for possible Rosy finches, Cassin's Finch, Pine Grosbeak and others. Night in Hayden.

Wednesday April 25: Observe lek of Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse. Other targets include Dusky Blue Grouse, Rosy finches. PM drive to Guanella Pass for White-tailed Ptarmigan. Other possibilities: Dipper, Gray and Steller's Jays, Clarke's Nutcracker. Later a long drive to Gunnison for the night.

Thursday April 26: Observe lek of Gunnison Sage Grouse (New species). Drive via Pueblo to Springfield CO for the night. Targets enroute include Western and Mt. Bluebirds, Lewis's Woodpecker, Pinyon Jay.

Friday April 27: Observe lek of Lesser Prairie Chicken near Campo in Comanche National Grassland. Other target is Cassin's Sparrow. Drive to Great Bend KS for the night.

Saturday April 28: We will make a very serious attempt to hear and see the elusive Black Rail at Quivera National Wildlife Refuge. This will be During the peak of the shorebird migration. We may also visit Cheyenne Bottoms NWR as well before we return To Kansas City and St. Louis.

Cost of \$ 700.00 includes all ground travel, lodging, and my services. The trip will begin when I pick you up in St. Louis, and will terminate when I drop you off. Meals, snacks and drinks are on your own. Call for further information Mike Flieg 314-645-3356 FAX 314-645-3366 e-mail Gmflieg@aol.com 6803 Nashville St. Louis MO 63139 ~

## Deadlines for *Nature Notes* '01

Marjorie Richardson

Please note that on April 23—the fourth Monday, not the third—we will meet at Oak Bend to mail *Nature Notes*. All mailing parties start at 10:00 AM and are usually over by 12:00. Any member who wishes to help is welcome to join the fun.

### Dates for *NN* in 2001

10 AM Oak Bend Library, 842 S. Holmes, Kirkwood

mailing party	deadline
Feb. 19	Feb. 9
March 19	March 9
April 23	April 13
May 21	May 11
Aug. 20	Aug. 10
Sept. 17	Sept. 7
Oct. 15	Oct. 5
Nov. 19	Nov. 9
Dec. 17	Dec. 7



*tyson nature line*

Call 935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area. Please report any unusual birds to Connie Alwood, 524-8111. ~

## Science Seminar Series

Jim Jordan

Free programs at the Zoo—Wednesday,

**Wed., Feb. 21, 7:30–9 PM**

“Who Will Develop Alzheimer's Disease?”  
by John C. Morris, M.D.; Harvey and Dorismae Hacker Friedman Professor of Neurology, Washington University School of Medicine.

For more information, contact Jim Jordan, Associate Curator of Education, Saint Louis Zoo., 314-781-0900, ext. 340 ~

## Next Deadline: Feb. 9

Submissions—handwritten, typed, IBM or Mac to: Anne McCormack, 587 Andrews, St. Louis MO 63122-5722 or [mccormacka@earthlink.net](mailto:mccormacka@earthlink.net)

## Field Ornithology "Better Known as Birdwatching!"

Bill Miles, Co-Executive Director & Founder  
of Earth's Classroom

Come experience the rich sounds and amazing color of the bird world, while enjoying the wonderful outdoor habitats of our local region. This class is designed for anyone, from the beginner to the expert, who would like to enrich their lives with bird watching.

We will meet once a week for eight weeks and focus our learning on identifying birds by sight and sound. With the skills of identification you will gain the tools to identify birds anywhere. Join thousands of people that have already enriched their lives with bird watching. Gain just one more piece of the complex puzzle I call "Mother Earth"!!!

The course is a continuing education class and is provided through East Central College in Union, Mo. They will meet eight Wednesdays from March 7 to May 2, 2001 from 8 AM-11. For more information call 636-583-5193 ext. 2221. ~

## Valentine's Dance

Mark your calendar! Saturday, February 10th, 2001, 7 PM to midnight, Earth's Classroom is having another Valentine's Fund-raiser Dance this year. Last year was incredibly successful and exciting! Bring your Valentine or all your little Valentines (family) and dance the night away.

Silver Dollar will perform wonderful dance music—bluegrass to modern rock. Their gorgeous harmonies and humor can easily liven any atmosphere. It is being held at the Knight of Columbus Hall in Gerald, Mo. There is a \$5 cover charge per person (6 and under free). Set ups and snacks will be available. Come find out who we are! We would love to have a wonderful crowd like last year!! For more information contact Bill or Jody at 573-437-7628! ~

## Errata

The date for the January general meeting was incorrect in our last issue. The editor regrets the error and apologizes for any inconvenience. ~

## Key to WGNSS Calendar

### birding

each Thurs ....call Dottie Herweg 314-699-2274  
most Sat..... call David Becher 314-576-1146

### board meeting

1<sup>st</sup> Wed 7 PM .....  
.....call David Rabenau 314-968-8128

### botany

each Thurs. .... call Fr. Sullivan 314-291-7885

### conservation

3<sup>rd</sup> Wed.... call Yvonne Homeyer 314-963-7750

### entomology

last Sun.... call Marshall Magner 314-961-4588

### general meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> Fri. 8 PM .call Doug Corbett 636-861-2829

### mailing party for *Nature Notes*

3<sup>rd</sup> Mon. (not June/July) 10 AM.....  
..... call Margie Richardson 314-965-8974

### *Nature Notes* deadlines

10 days prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon.....  
.....call Anne McCormack 314-965-8091  
no issue in June or July

### membership expires/renewal due

Aug. 31

### Spring banquet

Thursday, May 3, 2001 call Pat McCormick  
636-825-2842

### Big Day birding competition

Sat. May 12, 2001



*need directions?*

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### **Des Peres Park**

- on Ballas Road, one block north of Manchester Rd. in Des Peres.
- Turn right (east) at the Des Peres Park sign—park in the first lot on the right.

### **Horseshoe Lk State Park**

- Take I-55/70 east to Ill. Hwy 111 exit.
- Turn left onto Hwy 111 and follow road to the entrance of the park on the left.
- Meet at the first parking lot to the right, just past the entrance.

### **Kohl's**

- Take 270 to Olive Blvd. west.
- Kohl's is the NW corner of this intersection.
- Meet at SE corner of parking lot; near highway.

### **Riverlands Environmental Dem. Area**

- From I-270 in north St. Louis County, take Hwy. 367 north to Alton.
- Turn right into Riverlands at the Fisca service station, just before the approach to the Clark Bridge over the Mississippi River. Teal Pond.

### **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.

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### **2000-2001 WGNSS Board**

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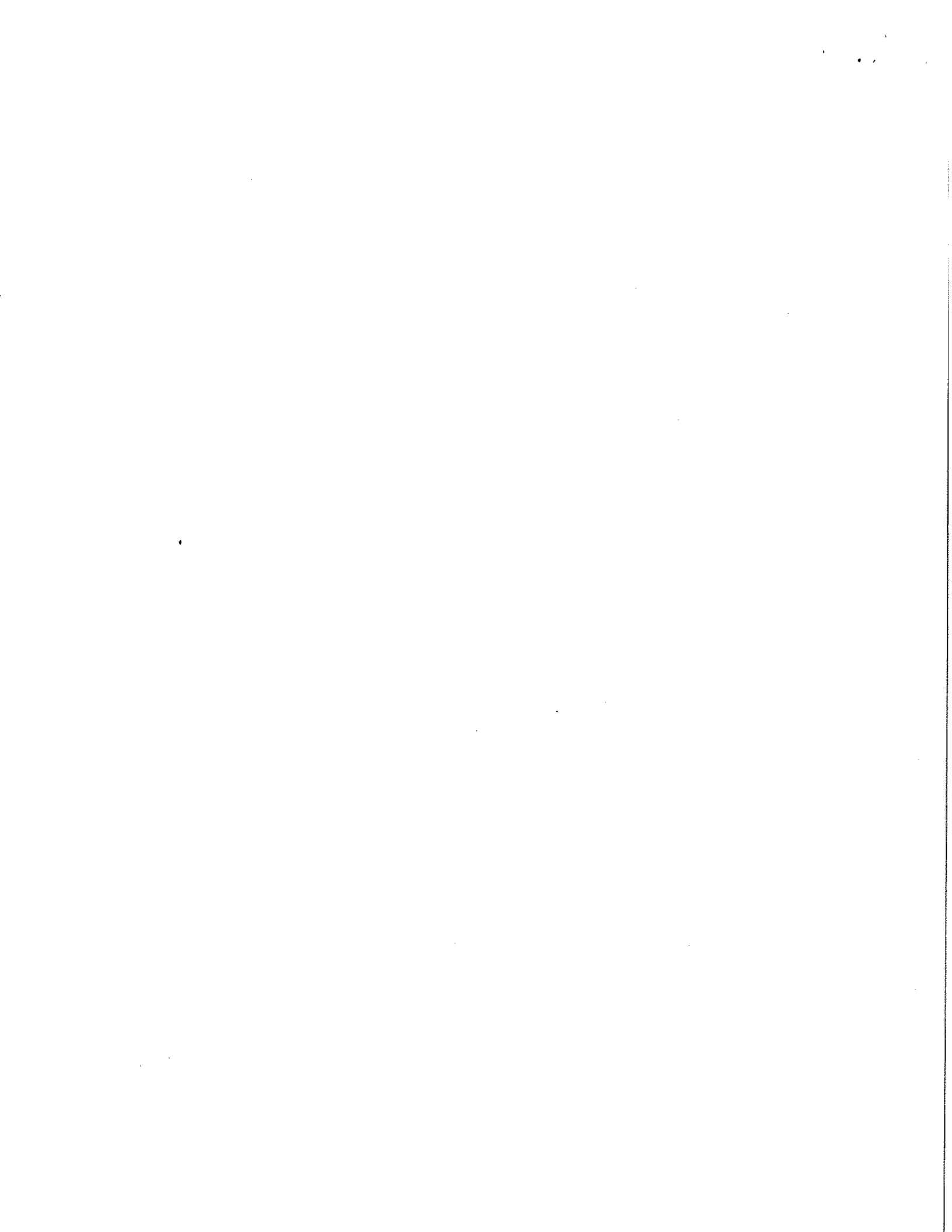
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gmflieg@aol.com

Member at Large: Vicki Flier  
18 Algonquin Wood  
St. Louis MO 63122  
314-968-9166



# Webster Groves Nature Study Society

## Meetings

Wednesday Feb. 7

7 PM Board meeting at Vicki Flier's: 18 Algonquin Wood, Glendale, 968-9166. All members welcome.

Friday Feb. 9

8 PM Joint meeting with St. Louis Audubon at St. Louis County Library on Lindbergh in Frontenac. Cheryl Riley and Judy Allmon from the Grow Native Society will present. We meet in the Auditorium at County Library on Lindbergh.

## Botany

Thursdays Jan.-March

Beginners welcome. Bring lunch, weather gear. Field trips usually meet 9:30 AM. Trip is usually 3-5 hr. plus travel time. Call Fr. Sullivan: 291-7885 after 1 PM Wed for location. An e-mail message is sent every Wed. advising when and where the field trip is scheduled. If you would like to receive it, send your e-mail address to Jack Harris at jahar@stlnet.com

## Conservation

Contact Yvonne Homeyer (314-963-7750; homeyer@postnet.com) for date of next meeting.

## Entomology

Sunday January 28

7 PM at Magner's, 516 Bacon Ave., 961-4588. MO Dept. of Conservation biologist, Janet Sternburg, will ask for our ideas in developing methods for a survey in Missouri to determine the status of rare, endangered and threatened species of *Lepidoptera*; butterflies and moths.

Sunday February 25

7 PM at Magner's, 516 Bacon Ave., 961-4588. Jim Ziebol will present the program, "Some Local Butterflies and Skippers through the Eye of a Camcorder."

## Birding

Thursdays Jan.-March

8:30 AM at Des Peres Park on Ballas Road, one block north of Manchester Rd. Any questions, call Dottie Herweg: 314-699-2274.

Saturdays Jan. 27, Feb. 24, March 17

8 AM Riverlands. Meet at Teal Pond. Bring lunch. Leader: David Becher, 314-576-1146.

Sunday Jan. 28

9:00 AM St. L. Audubon/WGNSS at Horseshoe Lk., Hwy. 111. Meet at shelter parking lot. Call Jim Malone at 636-536-1119 for more info.

Saturdays Feb. 10, March 10 & 24

8 AM "Where the Birds Are." Meet at SE corner of Kohl's parking lot, Olive & 270. Bring lunch. Leader: David Becher, 314-576-1146.

Saturday Feb. 10

9:00 AM St. L. Audubon/WGNSS at Baldwin Lake. Call Jim Malone above for more info.

Saturday March 10

8:00 AM St. L. Audubon/WGNSS Mark Twain NWR

Sunday, March 25

8:00 AM St. L. Audubon/WGNSS Busch Conservation Area

Nature Notes deadline Feb. 9

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

visit: [WWW.WGNSS.ORG](http://WWW.WGNSS.ORG)



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# Webster Groves Nature Study Society

## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Membership categories (circle one):

Individual or Family: .....\$15  
*for 1st class mail..... add \$5*

Student .....\$5

Life .....\$300  
*(lump sum or equal payments over 5 yrs.)*

Please make check payable to: Webster Groves Nature Study Society

Please mail this form with check to: Treasurer: Randy Korotev, 800 Oakbrook Ln., St. Louis MO 63132