

nature notes

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Common Ground-Dove:

A New Species for the St. Louis Area Bird Checklist

What! You missed the hot line and didn't hear about the Ground-Doves? Don't fret. They appeared on May 23, 1970, near Harrisonville, which is about 26 miles south southwest of the Gateway Arch in Monroe Co., Illinois, near Valmeyer.

The September, 1970, edition of *The Audubon Bulletin* (Illinois Audubon Society) contains the following short note in the Field Notes section on page 28:

"Two Ground Doves were seen on May 23 on the Mississippi River levee in the vicinity of Harrisonville (Monroe County). The birds were watched at close range for several minutes and seen walking on the levee and in flight. They had rufous wings, short black tails, pink legs, and the heads bobbed as they walked. I am very familiar with this species from observations in Texas. —Walter Kraus and son Mark"

The record was accepted by the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee and is listed in Bohlen and Zimmerman's *The Birds of Illinois* (1989). The species has not been listed on any St. Louis area bird checklist of which I'm aware nor is it mentioned in

Randy Korotev

Birds of the St. Louis Area—Where and When to Find Them because the late Dick Anderson, the long time keeper of the list, and other old-timers who prepared and edited the book apparently didn't know about the record. I sure didn't. Thanks to Dan Kassebaum for calling it to my attention. ~

Global Warming at 10/12 Meeting

Doug Corbett

El Niño, La Niña, hurricanes, tomato farms within the Arctic Circle—what do scientists say about global warming? Dr. Carl Bender of Washington University will be our guest at the October 12 general meeting. We will begin at a **new time, 7:30 PM**, in the auditorium of St. Louis County Library on Lindbergh Blvd. in Frontenac. ~

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Dues

Randy Korotev

If the address label on this *Nature Notes* says “exp: 31-08-2001,” this is your last issue of *Nature Notes* unless you pay your dues soon. Please send \$15 to Randy Korotev, WGNSS Treasurer, 800 Oakbrook Ln, Saint Louis, MO 63132-4807. ∞

The Eternal Frontier

David Rabenau

Obviously, I am not a paleontologist —nor have I ever had a class in paleontology (much less played a paleontologist on TV). Therefore, you won't be able to count on this article as an expert—or even very knowledgeable—critique of Tim Flannery's book *The Eternal Frontier: An Ecological History of North America and Its Peoples* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2001). What you will find here is an unabashed enthusiasm for the breadth and depth of his knowledge of both North America's extreme past and recent history. Additionally, this is the first book that I've read where *Homo sapiens* are portrayed as part and parcel of the ecology, and not just a participant observer within a particular ecology.

I do believe (but, as stated above, don't really know) that his arguments are presented fairly. For example, Mr. Flannery usually outlines the various theories about any given issue or problem, with reasoned arguments on both sides, and then proceeds to explain where he comes down on that issue, and why. This pedagogical approach is interspersed within a broader narrative of the history of North America from the time of the Chicxulub impact approximately 65 million years ago right up to the year 2000. (I suppose it's hard for a paleontologist to get any more current than that—short of a weekly news magazine that could be called *Paleontology Today*.) These lessons form engaging interludes where this Professor of

Paleontology at the University of Adelaide brings a bit of drama and excitement to what many might have considered a bone-dry, dusty discipline. Not that his historical narrative is not engaging enough. It is. Mr. Flannery has so many interesting facts and posits so many fascinating ideas about our ecological history, that I found this one of the best books I've ever read—hence, this article.

Some of what Professor Flannery discusses is most likely known to anyone with even a casual familiarity with ecological history. Species from large continents tend to overwhelm the species on smaller continents whenever those continents in some way are bridged. Thus, the fate of North America has been one of continual invasion, it being only about 16% of the land mass and the 3rd largest continent in the world, after Eurasia and Africa. However, there have been a few notable species that originated in N. America that have gone on to fame and fortune. Flannery speculates why the dog, the horse, and the camel hold that unique designation, why they may be the most important species in the history of humankind, and why, indeed, humans have a special, almost organic bond with those species. We are, all four, marginal species—species that exist in the ecological margins where no others dare or can.

The overriding theme throughout his book is that N. America has been, perhaps, the most important continent in the world's history, not only in modern times with the rise of the United States to the rank of world power, but throughout history. In fact, Flannery sees the United States current status as only a by-product or natural result of the continent's ecological importance and uniqueness.

But I even like the little tidbits he drops on the pages here and there. That ravens, jays and crows all come from Australia. That our only *truly* native bird species are

bobwhites and condors. The condors, by the way, were scavengers of megafauna; for example, mastodons, mammoths, and giant sloths. (Hence, they've been struggling for survival for quite some time now, and it seems sad to think they now scavenge bits of hamburger off the sunny decks of S. California hillside homes.) The reason condors remain in S. California in modern times is that the coast provided access to the only large mammals left in N. America to scavenge: beached whales.

Even the turkey—a bird known around the world as all-American—has a common lineage with Europe's pheasants.

Okay, and that's just the birds. And maybe you're not a birder, per se. Botanists, geologists, herpetologists, and mammalogists will find a lot here, too. I've found myself continually amazed at his familiarity with all things ecological, which, when you think of it, is pretty much all things.

I thought perhaps the book would begin to fizzle when we get to more modern times—say, since Columbus. Not at all. It only became the more interesting when the themes played out throughout earlier times came clearly into focus in our more recent history; namely, that those species on larger continents tend to overwhelm those on smaller. Hence, the 1492 arrival of Eurasian *Homo sapiens* might have predictable, if regrettable, consequences. And this is only one of the many themes throughout our ecological history that is presented with clarity and intelligence. With the French, Spanish, and English all vying for the N. American continent (he doesn't mention the Russian invasion on the west coast), why is it that only the English came to dominate the land (the book's title is a hint), and is this same domination also our eventual undoing? This, and many other issues and ideas, are raised and addressed in about a readable format as I could imagine.

The book generated many tangential thoughts for me. For example, when we talk about restoration of habitat—let's say, a prairie habitat—let's remember that, according to Flannery, there isn't really anything particularly natural about prairies in Missouri. Sure, much of Missouri was prairie in pre-settlement times. But Flannery makes it clear the only reason this was so, the only reason why the Great Plains exist in N. America, was because of *Homo sapiens*. The Native Americans (they are all almost certainly "native" Asians) used fire as part of their ecology. Otherwise, the plains would be covered in trees as they are wont to do now even at Busch CA in St. Charles County. We, of course, are part of our ecology, but isn't it all somewhat arbitrary when it comes down to picking the ecology we want?

In any case, I've done poor justice to Flannery's 357 pages. It is full of so much more than this. Other readers, I'm sure, would draw conflicting conclusions to my own above (please see note below). In any case, if you're looking for a good natural history read, put forth in terms a layperson can understand, check out *The Eternal Frontier*.

Note: I'm interested in what others might have to say about this book. Along those lines, I'm would like to start a **WGNSS book review club** open to any interested. Our first one-hour meeting will discuss this book at our home on **Sunday, November 4, at 3:30 PM**. Please let me know if you would like to attend: 314-968-8128. If this book review proves to be a worthwhile endeavor to Society members, we can continue them occasionally throughout the year. ∞

Nature Nut: Jim Jackson

This is the second in a series of articles profiling our members. The questions were devised by Linda Virga, the answers are written by this month's Nature Nut—Jim! James P. Jackson is a Life Member of WGNSS.

Who or what prompted your initial interest in nature?

Summer experiences as a camper, then later as a junior counselor at St. Louis YMCA summer camp, which was, during my boyhood, on the Meramec River at what is now the Hilda Young Conservation Area.

What persons, books, etc. have been highlights in your development as a naturalist?

Going on birding trips, curing high school days, with J. Earl Comfort of WGNSS and also with fellow teenagers Ken Niewoehner and Jack Van Benthuyzen; going botanizing with Art Christ of WGNSS. Securing a degree at University of Missouri, Columbia, in wildlife management plus forestry.

Books? Too many to mention, from Muir to Leopold to Sigurd Olson to Carson to E. O. Wilson, etc..

Are you active in any other environmental groups?

I was on the board of Conservation Federation of Missouri for about 22 years, till 1998. I was employed by Missouri Conservation Department for 10 years in an educational/informational capacity during the 1950's.

I've had three books published: *The Biography of a Tree*, 1979, *Pulse of the Forest*, 1980, and *Passages of a Stream*, 1984. I've also had many articles published (75+) in national magazines on natural history. *Which accomplishments, activities, and endeavors do you value most highly?*

Leading field trips in natural history, especially birding, and of course, writing. Camping canoeing and outdoors adventur-

ing, especially backpacking the Rockies which haven't done in several years.

I also enjoy gardening, both flowers and vegetables. I compete in swimming with St. Louis area Senior Olympics, an activity of the past 5 years or so.

What are your hopes for the future?

More outdoors adventuring, as age and good physical condition will permit. More natural history writing. And continuing my birding whenever other activities don't interfere.

Other hobbies, occupation?

I am currently teaching field classes in birding, and also volunteering at Shaw Nature Reserve. For several years I have instructed at YMCA of the Ozarks in Potosi, MO, for Elderhostel. I have classes in the following topics: "Spring Birds of the Ozarks," "Trees and Forestry," "Our Public Lands." ∞

Free Kennedy Woods Nov. 4

Randy Korotev

The 3rd annual "Free the Kennedy Woods" will be held on Sunday, Nov. 4. The goal of the effort is to cut and kill the bush honeysuckles that have invaded the understory of the J. F. Kennedy Memorial Forest in Forest Park. The honeysuckle is not native. It's a security hazard to park users and a detriment to the long-term survival of the forest. The honeysuckle, which spreads rapidly and forms impenetrable thickets, has thick foliage by the end of March. In May and June when seedlings of native trees and shrubs sprout, there is no light reaching the forest floor under the honeysuckles, so the natives do not thrive.

Like previous years, we will assemble in many small teams of two or three people. One or two people will cut the honeysuckle, the other will follow behind and paint the herbicide Roundup on the exposed stump. This procedure is very effective in the late fall because the Roundup is taken into the

roots—try it in your yard!. Of the plants cut last fall, very few came back this past spring. Also, by early November the honeysuckle is easy to identify because it's practically the only deciduous shrub that still has leaves.

The last two years we have had over 100 participants, and the impact in the areas we have focused is noticeable. Native plants are taking over where the honeysuckle was removed and birders and other persons who enjoy the woods can actually see what's around the next curve in the trail. If we can continue the same level of effort, all the large berry-producing plants in the woods will be gone in about 3 years. This year we will concentrate on the area along Valley Drive. We will put our headquarters on Valley Drive south of the stone bridge in woods, *not* at the picnic shelter as in previous years. (See map at web site, below.)

Date: Sunday, Nov. 4—rain date: Nov. 11

- ✓ Time: Two shifts—10:00 AM to noon and noon to 2:00 PM
- ✓ Place: Take Valley Drive west from the Zoo, past the Art Museum, and park.
- ✓ What to bring: Cutting tools (loppers, small saw, or hand pruner), long sleeved shirt, gloves, drinking water

To volunteer, or for more information, contact members of the Kennedy Woods Advisory group: Ben Senturia (726-2060), Ken Cohen (725-1147), Jim Holsen (822-0410), Randy Korotev rik@levee.wustl.edu, or Mr. Honeysuckle honey-suckle@treeswallow.com. We would particularly like to hear soon from veterans who would be willing to be team captains. We will keep up-to-date information on our web page:

<http://treeswallow.com/honeysuckle>

have you visited? 

www.wgnss.org

Outside My Study

David Rabenau

Outside my study, my neighbor's young, tall elm holds an old wren house. Earlier in the spring we had put up on our own new wren house in a small, old redbud tree further back on the lot. We watched as some wrens took to this new house and raised two broods, although we never saw much of the fledglings and wondered why they never seemed to be around.

We joked back and forth across the fence with our neighbors, until I found out that they were attached to their wren house and to the wrens that did not inhabit it this year. One of the first things they had done upon first moving in to their home was to put up the small wood house for the wrens. I felt bad as I found out they cherished having wrens each year. So much so, they noted their arrival each spring on a calendar and had done so for all of the years they had lived in there. We had, in effect, stolen the wrens away from them.

This morning I noticed movement outside my study window. At first—it was just a quick glance—I thought it might have been some small flycatcher or a titmouse. It wasn't. It was a wren and I saw that it was bringing insects into my neighbor's wren house. It would fly in with a dark object in its beak, and fly out with a white bundle—poop—keeping the little house clean. The wrens were raising another brood! After a time I finally heard the wren's distinctive call notes and the small chirps, like faint thin whistles, of the little wrens inside. I can't wait to tell my neighbors that they do have wrens this year, after all, although they would probably already know (they did). I'm happy for them and don't plan to put our box back up next year.

A short time later a hummingbird flew up to a bare twig hanging about a yard in front of the house's opening. I hadn't seen a hummer in our yard for over a year. When

one parent wren came out, the hummingbird started away, chasing it. There was something going on between the wren and the hummingbird, but I have no idea what it might be. All I know was that it interested me. I just like watching birds.

I've been watching but they haven't been back now for several minutes. It certainly makes writing hard because I'd rather be distracted by the birds, I suppose, and I keep looking out my window to see if I am missing something.

There is something special about every single moment like this. Looking out my window through its small frame, I see my neighbor's blue-gray house siding, not more than 20 feet away, the intervening elm tree, not more than 6 feet away, and some of its branches and twigs hanging down—some with leaves, some bare. The morning sun is backlighting many of the leaves. A cricket chirps slowly—a cold front came through last night and certainly slowed him down. A moth or some other little something is fluttering around and its transparent wings look white when they catch the backlighting. It's living dangerously, flitting about so near the wren house.

Thus, even though it may sound simple and not very special, the view and the moment are perfect.

Since I saw a hummingbird, I ran downstairs and mixed up a batch of nectar for the hummingbird feeder. Maybe I will be successful this time at feeding one. It sits on the kitchen counter, diluting, waiting for me to carry it out for yet another try.

Anyway, it is all beautiful to me. Not much happened, of course—not a lot of drama or suspense—and I don't have any profound insights into bird behavior, science or in how to live my life, as a result. Only, perhaps, to realize how much I enjoy beauty. Maybe that's how to live—for me—if someone asked. What do I do? I enjoy beauty. That means, specifically, I

enjoy nature. It contains by far the most beauty I have ever seen. I appreciate artists trying to compete. I do. But there's no competition.

I would think everyone could enjoy the natural world, if only they would. (I've never understood the attraction of professional sports, for example.) There seems to me to be something for everyone. If you like complexity, if you like systems and interactions, if you like surprises and new things, if you like detail and minutia, if you like scale and grandeur, if you like moments in time that cannot be replicated or replaced or lived again, if you like learning, if you like friendships and the familiar (and are a sentimentalist like I can be, making a Place outdoors a close friend), if you like pattern and the play of light, if you like competition and drama, if you like not knowing what might happen next or not knowing how something works (but want a chance to find out), or if you like just lolling around and want to keep things simple... if you like Life itself, you haven't very far to travel. You may not have to get out of your chair.

Of course, there are the smells—no, not all of them pleasant—which draw me to touch the earth and when I do I carry millions of organisms away in the smudges on my palm. I can't be alone, if I tried. I'm not so much me, as I am a whole collection of me's, inside and out, on which I—well, *we*, really—depend.

I do *this* for a living. No, I don't make money at it, if that is what you mean by making a living. That's a job and that's another matter altogether. No, I don't make any money at it, but I do make a living. For this, to me, is living. ∞

Annual Botany Trip

Carl Darigo

Sunday, May 20—Eleven Botany Group members (Father James Sullivan, Jeanne Clauson, Carl Darigo, Pat & Jack Harris, Nels Holmberg, Marge & Jim Ruschill, Suzy & Dick Russell and Al Seppi) met at Lakeside Resort on Bull Shoals Lake in southwest Missouri, for the annual botany trip. The resort, on Hwy 125 south of Taney County's Protom, is actually just over the state line in Arkansas. The group welcomed Dick's brother, John & wife Ann, as well as old friend and retired DNR guru, Paul Nelson, who in his new Forest Service capacity had planned activities for the next two days. Spurred by the lack of suitable restaurants in the immediate vicinity, Suzy & Dick treated the early arrivals to a nice hamburger barbeque dinner on the outdoor patio. Botanical prospects for the week looked good as the showy purple *Penstemon cobaea* (cobaea beard tongue), white *P. tubiflorus* (funnel form beard tongue) and *Echinacea pallida* (pale purple coneflower) had been seen along highway shoulders, however weather prospects for the week were poor with chilly 60° temperatures and intermittent rain in the forecast.

Monday, May 21—after meeting the group at Hercules Glades Wilderness Area in Taney County, Paul Nelson, regional biologist Dwayne Rambo, along with four other USFS personnel described the history and management of the site. The last prescribed burn was 12 years ago and has not been repeated due to wilderness regulations. Therefore, the glades are being covered over by cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) trees, eliminating many desirable native plants. Using Internet aerial photos researched by Jack Harris, the least disturbed glade to the north of the fire tower trailhead was visited. Enroute to the glade, abundant along the forest trail were *Danthonia spicata* (poverty

grass) and *Carex hirsutella* (hirsute sedge), with other interesting plants including *Cotinus obovatus* (smoke tree), *Matelea baldwyniana* (Baldwyn's climbing milkweed) and *Scutellaria bushii* (Bush's skullcap). The glade produced *Penstemon cobaea* (cobaea beard tongue), numerous *Oenothera macrocarpa* (Missouri primrose), *Carex crawei* (Crawe's sedge), *Scleria triglomerata* (tall nut grass), *Andrachne phyllanthoides* (buck brush), *Asclepias stenophylla* (narrow leaf milkweed) and the aromatic *Calamintha arkansana* (calamint). A tentative identification of rare poison oak (*Toxicodendron toxicarium*) was demoted by Father Sullivan to the common fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*). After a fine dinner at Cookie's restaurant in Theodosia (Ozark County), Nels Holmberg found an unusual plant in the parking lot, originally thought to have state record potential as *Galium parisiense*. However, later research showed the new name to be *Galium divaricatum*, previously found in Missouri; nevertheless, in honor of the close call, the plant was dubbed "Cookie's bedstraw."

Tuesday, May 22—Pat Harris came up with the week's motel plant, *Oenothera triloba* (stemless primrose) growing in the lawn; this species is listed as S2 (imperiled) in Missouri, less than 1/4 mile away. Before leaving on the day's trip, Father Sullivan pointed out a grove of Ashe's juniper (*Juniperus ashei*) trees growing along the highway near the motel. Leaf margins show tiny teeth under the microscope, while leaves of the common cedar (*J. virginiana*) have smooth margins. Paul and Dwayne then led the group to more Taney County glades, this time in Big Creek Basin, along the Glade Top Trail. The Forest Service had burned the 6,000 acre area earlier this year, using helicopter-dropped "ping pong" balls filled with incendiary fluid which blazed on impact. The prescribed burn did seem to encourage plants, as not only were most of

yesterday's species seen, but also many new additions. Shortly after pointing out a nice stand of 200-300 year old post oak (*Quercus stellata*) trees where fire had cleared out thick underbrush, Paul Nelson took honors by successfully answering a *Desmodium sessilifolium* (sessile leaf tick trefoil) test. Interesting forest plants included *Schrankia nuttallii* (sensitive brier), *Parthenium hispidum* (hairy feverfew), *Tephrosia virginiana* (goat's rue) and *Heuchera richardsonii* (prairie alum root). Notable glade plants found were *Sedum pulchellum* (widow's cross), *Leavenworthia uniflora* (Michaux's leavenworth), *Pediomelum esculentum* (prairie turnip), *Chaerophyllum tainturieri* (wild chervil) and leaves of *Liatris mucronata* (globe root blazing star).

Wednesday, May 23—Jack Harris supplied maps obtained from Bill Summers which showed glade possibilities on the McAdoo Creek Tract, north and east of Hercules Glades, still in Taney County. The first stop was a roadside glade which sported the best population seen on the trip of *Penstemon cobaea* (cobaea beard tongue). Other interesting plants seen here included *Coreopsis grandiflora* (bigflower coreopsis), *C. lanceolata* (tickseed coreopsis), *Delphinium carolinianum* (Carolina larkspur) and *Evolvulus nuttallianus* (Nuttall's evolvulus). Forest setting preceding the next glade provided *Apocynum androsaemifolium* (spreading dogbane), *Heuchera americana* (hairy alum root) and *Ceanothus americanus* (New Jersey tea). On one of the latter plants, Father Sullivan found *Babia quadriguttata*, a beetle which Jack Harris promptly christened "tail light bug," due to the two rear red spots. The second glade showed *Echinacea paradoxa* (yellow coneflower), *Hedeoma hispidum* (mock pennyroyal), *Polytaemia nuttallii* (prairie parsley) and an unknown *Allium*-like (onion) species, a bulb of which Marge and Jim Ruschill promised to plant for possible fu-

ture identification. After another good Cookie's dinner, during a short ride through Ozark Co. looking for army worm-infested fields, at a roadside marsh Nels Holmberg spotted *Justicia americana* (water willow) and *Schoenoplectus pungens* (chairmaker's rush).

Thursday, May 24—only five of the original group were left, for a trip to Henning Conservation Area, just west of Branson, still in Taney County. Passengers in Father Sullivan's car were amazed at his ability to determine pedicel length and identify *Delphinium treleasei* (Trelease's larkspur) along curvy roads at 55 mph. In the Henning parking lot, Nels Holmberg found *Mentzelia oligosperma*, aptly named stickleaf, then saw the trip's only orchid, *Corallorhiza wisteriana* (late coral) on the Dewey Bald Trail. Prominent along the White River Bald Trail were *Delphinium treleasei*, *Callirhoe digitata* (fringed poppy mallow), *Spermolepis inermis* (scale seed), *Echinacea paradoxa* (yellow cone flower) and leaves of *Helianthus salicifolius* (willow leaf sunflower). On the return trip, a brief stop was made at the west access to Hercules Glades Wilderness, where *Thaspium barbinode* (hairy jointed meadow parsnip) was spotted along the roadside and a healthy population of *Carex cherokeensis* (Cherokee sedge) was seen along Coy Bald Trail; the latter plant is listed as S2 (imperiled) in the state. Capping another successful annual botany trip, Father Sullivan found Cookie's bedstraw (*Galium divaricatum*) near the motel's picnic area, thereby proving that this tiny non-native has reached both Missouri and Arkansas. ∞

Six-Legged Thermometers

From "Living on Earth," broadcast locally on KWMU radio, 90.7, on Sun., 6-7 AM, repeated 7-9 PM
Summer temperatures are rising and you want to know exactly how much but don't have a thermometer handy. Don't worry.

You can get a lot of information from some very little creatures. For instance, if you're seeing ants, it's at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit. And if a honeybee stings you without provocation, chances are it's below 70. If that's not accurate enough, look for grasshoppers. If they're hopping it's at least 37 degrees, and if they're chirping it's above 62. Then there's the katydid, which gets the award for most indecisive insect when it comes to temperature reporting. When the mercury tops 80 degrees it's call sounds like "Katy did it." But as the temperature drops, so apparently does the katydid's certainty. At 4 degree intervals, the call changes first to "Katy didn't," then to "Katy did," and from there to "she didn't," and "she did." Below 60 degrees the call is just, "Kate." The most accurate forecaster of all is the white tree cricket. It chirps exactly 4 times a minute for every degree the thermometer reads above 40 degrees. Visit "Living on Earth" at www.loe.org

Volunteers Needed at Riverlands September 29

Dianne Benjamin

WGNSS needs volunteers of all ages and abilities at a Riverlands family event on National Public Lands Day, Saturday, September 29. WGNSS is leading bird walks every 2 hours from 9 AM—2 PM and is hosting a display table. Come celebrate in the fun: bluebird house construction workshop, shoreline cleanup, youth fishing clinic, nature photography workshop, outdoor adventure seminars, and hands-on activities for children of all ages. Please help WGNSS make this event a success by contacting: Dianne Benjamin, WGNSS Membership Chair, 314-997-2419. ∞

Volunteers Needed at Conservation Forum Oct. 4

Dianne Benjamin

WGNSS needs a few good members at our display for "Conservation Forum 2001" between 5 PM and 10 PM Thursday, October 4th at The Living World, Saint Louis Zoo. WGNSS's display will illustrate "Songbirds in Decline." Come to learn from keynote speakers Dr. Barry Chernoff, Conservation International and Chicago's Field Museum Curator, and Dr. Jan Alick, Missouri Botanical Garden Curator. Enjoy a light supper and mingle with other conservation organizations. Come to support speaker Yvonne Homeyer, WGNSS Conservation Chair, explaining why we are losing and how we can save our songbirds. To volunteer, please contact: Dianne Benjamin, WGNSS Membership Chair, 314-997-2419. ∞

Ornithology Group

WGNSS's Ornithology group will continue to meet on the second-to-last Sunday of each month at 4:00 PM. The topic on Sunday, September 23, will be "Raptor Migration—Kettles & Kites."

The Sunday, October 21 ornithology meeting has a subject change. Our own Walter Liddell will be presenting one of his professional slide presentations. The slides are his own, taken over years of birding in the St. Louis area and the rest of the USA. His work has been published nationally, won contests and sold as art work. Bring a dish and enjoy a meal while listening and seeing some really great slides. Please call for more directions or information: Vicki Flier, 18 Algonquin Wood, 314-968-9166.

Sunday, November 18th. "Earthwatch in Churchill, Manitoba—Gulls, Polar Bears, and the Politics of Peat" will be presented by Vicki Flier.

August 2001 Bird Report

Jim Ziebol & Yvonne Homeyer

Abbreviations:

BCA = Busch Wildlife Area

CL = Carlyle Lake

FP = Forest Park

HL = Horseshoe Lake

LVT = Lost Valley Trail

2 Rivers = Two Rivers; formerly Mark Twain Nat. Wildlife Refuge

MTC = Marais Temps Clair

REDA = Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area

TGP = Tower Grove Park

Sightings: A large flock of 72 Black-crowned Night Herons was observed at REDA (Woodstock Pond) on 8/31 (T Be). Two Avocets, 1 Ruddy Turnstone and 2 Caspian Terns were present at HL on 8/2 (FH). Ruddy Turnstone was found again at HL on 8/4 (G&TB). On 8/17, 8 Black-bellied Plovers were seen at REDA and 4 Golden Plovers were found on Cora Island Road (PB, JS). Five Semipalmated Plovers were observed at HL/111 side on 8/2 (T Be). Mike Brady found a Hudsonian Godwit on Hayford Road on 8/24; it was seen again the following day by the Barkers. Torrey Berger found a Willet on Cora Island Road on 8/8. A Wilson's Phalarope was sighted at HL/111 side on 8/2 (DK). At 2 Rivers NWR/Volcano Point on 8/19, Paul Bauer had a female Long-billed Dowitcher. At Honker's Point/CL on 8/18, Dan Kassebaum found 15 shorebird species, including 3 Red Phalaropes, 2 Sanderlings, and 1 Black-bellied Plover. An immature Red Phalarope was sighted a week later, on 8/26, at CL (DK, PB). On 8/25, a juvenile Red Knot, Baird's and Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and 1000 Pectorals were present at 2 Rivers NWR (CA, T Bo, KL). A Dunlin was observed at HL/111 side on 8/12 (G&TB). Charlene Malone found a Ruff on Hayford Road on 8/23. Buff-breasted Sandpipers were seen at several locations: 8/4 at

HL/111 side (J&CM), 8/5 at Creve Coeur Lake (IH), 8/5 at HL (G&TB), 8/7 at HL/111 side (K McM), 8/8 at HL (T Be), and 8/25 at 2 Rivers NWR (PB, JS). Three Stilt Sandpipers were found at HL on 8/10 (T Be) and one was found at 2 Rivers NWR/Volcano Point on 8/19 (G&TB).

A Laughing Gull was reported at HL from 7/31 to 8/16 (DK, FH, Thursday Group). On 8/16, the Thursday Group also found a Forster's Tern at HL. Ten Black Terns were seen at REDA on 8/25 (PB, JS). Frank Holmes found 27 Black Terns, 7 Forster's Terns at HL on 8/27. Torrey Berger observed Caspian Terns at HL on 8/10 and at REDA on 8/17 and 8/23. There was a Least Tern (interior race) at CL on 8/25 (DK); this species is federally endangered. Ospreys were found on 8/18 at CL (DK) and on 8/21 at REDA (CA). Four Mississippi Kites flew over Dennis Bozzay's house in Crestwood on 8/12; 5 Mississippi Kites were found at each of 2 locations on 8/19: at the Holsen's (MH) and at Oak Knoll Park (RW). A N. Harrier was present on Hayford Road on 8/17 (T Be). Cooper's Hawks were seen on 8/12 at HL (FH) and on 8/27 at TGP (D Bz, JZ); on 8/30, Jim Ziebol observed one capturing a squirrel. Connie Alwood saw a Red-shouldered Hawk at his home in north county on 8/11 and Dennis Bozzay saw a Broad-winged Hawk at Hilda Young C.A. on 8/7. There were several sightings of Peregrine Falcon. The first was at REDA on 8/3 (T Be). The Malones spotted an immature Peregrine Falcon at HL/111 side on 8/4. And a rare *tundrius* Peregrine Falcon was seen perched at Kenrick Plaza on 8/30 (JZ). On 8/7, the Barkers found a Merlin at REDA.

A Eurasian Collared Dove was seen on 8/19 (J Ch). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was reported at CL on 8/12 (DK); it was seen again on 8/14 (T Be). A mixed flock of 2000+ swallows (6 species) was seen on Hayford Road on 8/25 (PB, JS). Philadel-

phia Vireo was seen at TGP on 8/26 (m. ob.) and on 8/30 (G&TB). Other species seen in TGP on 8/26 were Red-eyed Vireo, Black-and-White Warbler, Redstart, and Canada Warbler (m. ob.). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was found at Creve Coeur Park on 8/5 (IH) and a Blackburnian appeared in TGP from 8/26 through 8/31 (J Cook et al.). A male Blue Grosbeak was still being seen at HL/Borrow Pit, with sightings on 8/18 (YH), on 8/27 (FH), and on 8/31 (T Be).

Comments: Helen Wuestenfeld has submitted good documentation on the Rose-throated Becard that she and Irene Mondhink found last month at Gilbert Lake. This is as unusual a find as Dan Kassebaum's Gray Kingbird and Tropical/Couch's sightings last year. Paul Bauer submitted a photo of the Sandhill Crane seen at REDA on 4/27.

Birds and birders alike are enjoying the Jack Van Benthuisen Memorial Pond in Tower Grove Park just west of the Cypress Circle. Benches have recently been added and the park staff has planted several native species on the edge of the pond. Stop by and visit!

Contributors: Connie Alwood, George & Terry Barker, Paul Bauer, Torrey Berger, Tom Bormann, Dennis Bozzay, Jackie Chain, Jean Cook, Ron Goetz, Frank Holmes, Margot Holsen, Yvonne Homeyer, Ian Hunt, Dan Kassebaum, Kent Lannert, Jim & Charlene Malone, Keith McMullen, Irene Mondhink, John Solodar, Kathy Thiele, Rad Widmer, Helen Wuestenfeld, Jim Ziebol, many observers. An asterisk means "documented." To submit a report, call Jim Ziebol (314-781-7372) or email Yvonne at homeyer@earthlink.net 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. ∞

Conservation Report October

Yvonne Homeyer

Holnam Update: Indiana Bats Found.

An article in the *Post-Dispatch* on 9/3/01 reported that the Corps of Engineers would not complete its Environmental Assessment report by September, as previously anticipated. Yvonne Homeyer called the Corps and learned that the reason for the delay is that Holnam has not completed the biological assessment of its property. Holnam's bat consultant has found **Indiana Bats**, a federally endangered species, on its property, a 4000 acre site along the Mississippi River in Jefferson & Ste. Genevieve Counties where it proposes to build the largest cement plant in the world and a 2000 acre quarry. Meanwhile, no permits have been issued by the Corps giving Holnam the go-ahead to construct the plant. A water certification has been issued to Holnam by the Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources and WGNSS is appealing that certification (along with Missouri Coalition for the Environment, American Bottom Conservancy, and Sierra Club) to the Clean Water Commission.

This is an opportune time to again ask Sen. Jean Carnahan (D-Mo.) to request the Corps to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed project. In last month's report, I listed all the elected officials, government agencies (federal, state and local), and environmental organizations that have pressed the Corps to do an EIS. Absent from that list, which includes Mo. Gov. Bob Holden, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), and Congressman Lacy Clay (D-Mo.), is Sen. Jean Carnahan. A sample letter is attached at the end of this newsletter. Please write your own letter if possible. If you wish to use the sample letter, please take a few moments to write your own comments at the bottom. It would be helpful if I could track how many letters are being sent to her, so if you could send me a

copy of your letter, I would appreciate that. All addresses are on the sample letter. Thank you for helping in this important effort. Send the copy to: Yvonne Homeyer, 1508 Oriole Ln., St. Louis MO 63144 or e-mail yhomeyer@earthlink.net

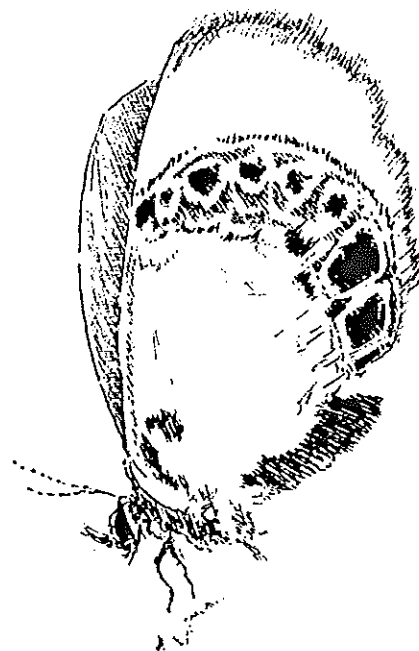
Equilon Pipeline/Carlyle Lake: On Sept. 6, WGNSS met with representatives of the Equilon Co., based in Houston, to discuss the company's plans to construct an underground 58-mile petroleum products pipeline running east from Wood River through the Upper Wildlife Management Area of Carlyle Lake (near Parking Lot 3 and levee). In late August, the Corps of Engineers issued a Public Notice about the proposed project. Yvonne Homeyer called the company to get more information and Equilon offered to meet with us in person. On Sept. 6, five company officials from Houston and a community relations consultant from Chicago flew in to St. Louis for the meeting. Also present were Yvonne Homeyer for WGNSS, Sue Gustafson for St. Louis Audubon Society, Jim Ziebol for North American Butterfly Association & WGNSS, Kathy Andria for American Bottom Conservancy, Ted Heisel for Missouri Coalition for the Environment, and Jack Norman for Sierra Club and American Bottom Conservancy. The discussion centered on our concerns about impacts to wetlands and trees, the importance of Carlyle Lake to migrating shorebirds, and the best time of year from the standpoint of birds, Indiana Bat, and other wildlife for tree removal and laying the pipeline. Mitigation alternatives were also discussed. The meeting was cordial, informative, and productive. We will continue our dialogue with Equilon and we want to thank them for their prompt and courteous response to our concerns.

Dogwood Alliance: In June, Dogwood Alliance invited WGNSS to become a member of this umbrella organization

fighting chip mills and promoting legislation to protect forests and restrict clearcutting. At the Board meeting on 9/5/01, the Board unanimously approved WGNSS's membership in the Dogwood Alliance. Other organizations in Missouri that belong to Dogwood Alliance are Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Missouri Heartwood, and Ozark River Keeper Network. We are pleased to be a member of Dogwood Alliance. For more information, check out their web site at: www.dogwoodalliance.com

Tiger Beetle Article by WGNSS Member

The Missouri Conservationist recently published an article entitled, "Missouri Tigers," June 2001. The article, written by WGNSS member Ted C. MacRae, discusses the ecology and behavior of tiger beetles in Missouri and is loaded with beautiful color photographs. Ted is an entomologist with Monsanto Company and has studied Missouri beetles for almost 20 years. He hopes the article will inspire nature lovers to look for these beetles in their natural habitats. ☺



Birding Festival at Powder Valley

A program for all ages will be presented by St. Louis Audubon Society and Powder Valley Nature Center, on November 17 and 18. On Sat., 2–3 PM: Classroom session for children 6 and up, with parents—limit 50. From 3–4 PM, an auditorium program on best fall and winter birding locations around St. Louis; limit 200. Sunday, 8–11 AM, a field trip will be offered. Reservations begin Oct. 31. Call 314-301-1500. ∞

Venezuela With Dale & Nancy

Dale & Nancy (Delaney EcoTours, Ltd.) will be leading a 10-day nature tour to Venezuela, 22-31 January 2002—a great time to escape the winter weather. The first part of the tour visits the State of Amazonas lowlands where we'll explore the mighty Orinoco River, wooded tributaries, grassy savannas, granite-like outcroppings, remnant patches of "rainforest," Moriche palm swamps and more. A tantalizing "mini" sample of sightings from previous tours include White Hawk, Black Caracara, Pied Lapwing, Black-headed & Orange-cheeked Parrots, Paradise Jacamar, Ivory-billed & Green Araçaris, Cuvier's Toucan, Cream-colored & Yellow-tufted Woodpeckers, the unique Point-tailed Palmcreeper, White-plumed Antbird, the dazzling Pompadour & Spangled Cotingas, Bare-necked Fruitcrow, Striped Manakin, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Swallow-Tanager, the flashy Paradise Tanager, Magpie Tanager, Oriole Blackbird and a host of others!

The second part of the tour visits the low llanos with their panoramic "big sky" vistas, sweeping great plains, vast marshlands and meandering shallow rivers that attract phenomenal assemblages of wildlife. The llanos could add Jabirú, Maguari Stork, Buff-necked & Scarlet Ibis, Orinoco Goose, Sun-bittern, Double-striped Thick-knee, Scarlet

Macaw, the bizarre and prehistoric-like Hoatzin, Troupial (a beautiful oriole that is the national bird) and a veritable spectacle of herons, egrets, shorebirds & other water-related species, plus lesser anteater, red howler monkey, capybara (the world's largest rodent), the alligator-like spectacled caiman, the legendary anaconda and other fascinating reptiles, amphibians and mammals.

The fee is \$2995 per person based upon double occupancy (the single supplement is an additional \$410). This fee covers all customary expenses, excluding your international airfare. As of early September 2001, we could obtain a superb roundtrip fare of \$545 between St. Louis and Venezuela.

For more detailed information, please call Dale and Nancy at 636-230-9675 or send us an e-mail message at delaneyd@brick.net

Bird with the Africa Experts

St. Louis Audubon and Paul Bauer offer 3 trips to Africa in 2002

Tanzania Feb. 28–March 10

Experience the miracle of migration in the Serengeti at its peak. Escorted by expert birder and perennial favorite Francis Kitayi. We expect hundreds of bird species still wintering in east Africa.

Kenya June 13–23

Budget, classic birding safari. Francis Kitayi will guide to Samburu, Lake Nakuru and Maasai Mara.

South Africa Oct. 11–21, 2002

Ken Newman, ornithologist and author. Hluhluwe, Ndumo and Mala Mala private game reserves.

All air fare from the US is included at group rates. For more information, contact Paul Bauer at 314-921-3972. See the website: www.stlouisaudubon.org

2001-02 Science Seminar Series

Co-sponsored by the Saint Louis Zoo and the Academy Of Science Of St. Louis. All seminars will be held in the Living World, north side of Saint Louis Zoo, free parking in north lot, Wed. evenings, 7:30-9 PM. Adults, teachers, secondary students and the public invited. For further information, call 314-768-5466 or 533-8083. The Saint Louis Zoo's programs and facilities are available for people of all abilities. 314-781-0900, TDD 314-768-5421.

October 24: "Research Involving Human Embryonic Stem Cells: Ethical and Policy Issues," by Rebecca Dresser and Kyunghee Choi. Scientists hope that stem cells derived from human embryos will produce cells and tissues to treat patients with Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, heart disease, and other serious illnesses. Obtaining such stem cells raises ethical questions related to the moral status of human embryos, decisions about reproduction, and informed consent to embryo donation. This presentation will address these questions and will explore the political debate over whether the federal government should fund research using embryonic stem cells.

Deadlines for *Nature Notes* '01

Marjorie Richardson

Mailing parties to send out mail *Nature Notes* start at 10 AM Oak Bend County Library and are usually over by noon. Any member who wishes to help is welcome.

Dates for *NN* in 2001

10 AM Oak Bend Library, 842 S. Holmes Kirkwood

mailing party	deadline
Oct. 15	Oct. 5
Nov. 19	Nov. 9
Dec. 17	Dec. 7

Next Deadline: Oct. 5

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

tyson nature line

Call 314-935-8432 for a summary of the latest bird sightings in the St. Louis area. Please report any unusual birds to Connie Alwood, 314-524-8111. ~

NEED DIRECTIONS?

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 Hwy 111 exit.
- Turn left onto Hwy 111 and follow road to the entrance of the park on the left.

Riverlands Evironmental 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.
- Usual meeting place is Teal Pond parking lot.

St. Louis Co. Library Headquarters

- The membership meets on the second Friday of the month, at 7:30 PM (new time).
- Take 40 to Lindbergh south, left at the second light into library.
- 1640 South Lindbergh in Frontenac. We usually meet in the auditorium.
- Birding trip, park on north side.
- All are welcome. Bring a friend!

Tower Grove Park

- Take 44 to Kingshighway south, east (left) on Magnolia, 1st right into park.
- In park, 1st right (west), past tennis courts & stable to 1st picnic area on right (Gus Fogt Site).

Two Rivers (Mark Twain) NWR

- Take IL-100 west from Grafton to Brussels Ferry.
- 3.6 miles on Ill. River Rd., follow signs.

KEY TO WGSSS CALENDAR

birding field trip

each Thurs..... call Dottie Herweg 314-966-2274
most Sat (not June or July)
..... call David Becher 314-576-1146

summary of the latest bird sightings

Call Tyson Nature Line: 314-935-8432

board meeting

1st Wed 7 PM Sept.–May.....
..... call David Rabenau 314-968-8128

botany field trip

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

conservation meeting

3rd Wed..... call Yvonne Homeyer 314-963-7750

entomology meeting

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

ornithology meeting

2nd to last Sun... call Vicki Flier at 314-968-9166
or e-mail RRVVCC@AOL.com

general meeting

2nd Fri. 7:30 PM call Doug Corbett 636-861-2829

mailing party for *Nature Notes*

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

Nature Notes deadlines

10 days prior to 3rd Mon.
..... call Anne McCormack 314-965-8091

membership expires/renewal due

Aug. 31

Spring banquet

Early May ... call Pat McCormick 636-825-2842

Big Day birding competition

Usually 2nd Sat. May

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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gmflieg@aol.com

Senator Jean Carnahan
United States Senate
480 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Environmental Impact Statement/ Holnam's Proposed Cement Plant

Dear Senator Carnahan:

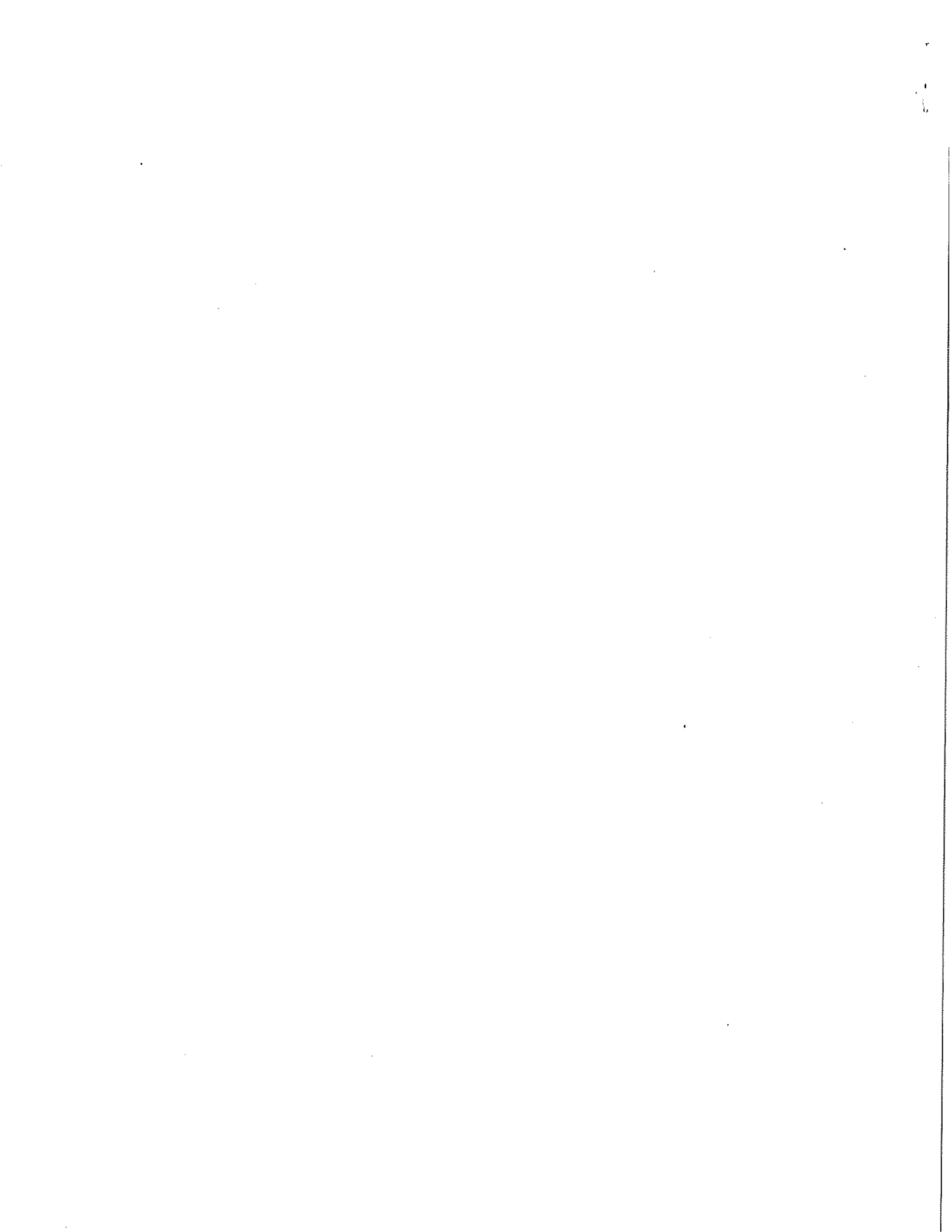
I am a member of the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, which is opposed to Holnam's proposed cement plant and 1800-acre quarry. I have serious concerns about the impacts of this proposed project on wildlife, habitat, air quality and public health.

Indiana Bat, an endangered species, has been found on Holnam's property. The presence of Indiana Bat confirms that this 4,000 acre tract of undeveloped, wooded land along the Mississippi River is sensitive habitat. Bald Eagle, a threatened species, roosts along the Mississippi River in the winter and has nested nearby. Pallid Sturgeon, another endangered species, has been found in some parts of the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River has been designated by Missouri Department of Natural Resources as "impaired" because of habitat loss. The proposed cement plant, quarry and harbor would have devastating impacts not only on the land but on the Mississippi River as well. An Environmental Impact Statement is needed to assess the impact of the proposed project on Indiana Bat, Bald Eagle, Pallid Sturgeon, the Mississippi River, and other wildlife breeding on or migrating through the site.

I also have concerns about the air pollution that would be emitted from the proposed cement plant. According to Holnam's own numbers, the cement plant would emit 7,242 tons a year of nitrogen oxide (a precursor of ozone), 1,151 tons a year of particulate matter, 3,041 tons a year of sulfur dioxide, and 14,484 tons a year of carbon monoxide, a greenhouse gas. Public health is affected by air pollution and the air quality in the St. Louis region does not meet current EPA standards for ozone.

I urge you to write to Colonel Morrow at the St. Louis District of the U.S. Corps of Engineers and request that the Corps prepare an **Environmental Impact Statement**. This 4,000 acre tract of wooded land just south of St. Louis along the Mississippi River is an ecological treasure and should be preserved. Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely,



Webster Groves Nature Study Society

MEETINGS

Wednesday Oct. 3

7 PM Board meeting at Vicki Flier's, 18 Algonquin Wood. All members are welcome.

Friday Oct. 12

7:30 PM program in the auditorium of St. Louis Co. Library on Lindbergh in Frontenac: Dr. Carl Bender on global warming. *Note time change.*

BOTANY

Thursdays Sept.-Nov.

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

ENTOMOLOGY

Sunday September 23

7 PM at Magners', 516 Bacon Ave., 314-961-4588. Show and Tell. Bring comments, specimens, slides, photos, etc. from summer.

Sunday October 28

7 PM at Magners', above. Mike Arduser, MDC, will present: "Insects as Indicators of Natural Communities."

BIRDING

Thursdays Sept.-Oct.

8:30 AM at Des Peres Park on Ballas, one block n. of Manchester. *Note time change.* Questions: call Dottie Herweg, 314-966-2274.

Saturdays Sept. 22 & Oct. 13

8 AM *Note change of starting time.* WGNSS Birding: Riverlands—Teal Pond parking lot. Bring lunch. For more info, call David Becher, 314-576-1146.

Saturday September 22

7:00 AM. WGNSS/Aud. 4th annual Carlyle Lake bird walk/pelagic trip. Fee \$15-\$20/person. Call Jim Malone to register: 636-536-1119.

Sunday Sept. 23

4:00 PM Ornithology group meeting. Topic: "Raptor Migration—Kettles & Kites." Pot luck supper. Everyone is invited. Meet at Vicki Flier's, 18 Algonquin Wood. For more info, call: 314-968-9166 or e-mail RRVVCC@AOL.com

Saturdays Sept. 29 & Oct. 20

8 AM Tower Grove Park. Past tennis courts and stable to first picnic area on right. Bring lunch. For more info, call David Becher, above.

Saturdays October 6 & 27

8 AM WGNSS "Where the Birds Are." Parking lot of Headquarters of Co. Library, Lindbergh, south of 40. Meet on N side (Highway 40 side). New meeting place because of planned construction at Olive and I-270. Bring lunch. D. Becher.

Saturday October 6

8 AM-noon WGNSS/Audubon. 2 Rivers NWR (formerly Mark Twain) Meet across from Brussels Ferry. Half day walk. Call Jim Malone, above, for more info or stlaud@surfbest.net

Sunday October 21

8 AM to-noon WGNSS/Aud. Horseshoe Lake. Meet on the Hwy 111 side at shelter #1 & 2 lot. Call Jim Malone for more info, above.

Sunday Oct. 21

4:00 PM Ornithology group. Topic: "Earth-watch in Churchill, Manitoba—Gulls, Polar Bears, and the Politics of Peat." For more information call Vicki Flier, above.

BOOKS

Sunday Nov. 4

3:30 PM at David Rabenau's, 429 Belleview Avenue, Webster Groves, 314-968-8128. We will discuss Tim Flannery's *The Eternal Frontier*. All members are welcome.

JOIN WGNSS

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

Nature Notes deadline Oct. 5

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

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Webster Groves Nature Study Society

membership application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ e-mail _____ fax (_____) _____

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 yr.)

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

Please make check payable to: Webster
Groves Nature Study Society