

Wing Beat

VOLUME 56 FALL 2004

FALL SEED SALE!

Burroughs Audubon members are mobilizing for our major fundraising event, the annual November Seed Sale. This year, seed will be sold from the Burroughs Library and Nature Center at Lake Jacomo, providing us with a great reason to get out to the library for a little birding.

This sale provides much of the funding for putting Audubon Adventures in classrooms, Library maintenance and expenses, maintaining our sanctuaries, and conservation programs. Copy a form from the website at www.burroughs.org. Pass along a few to friends and neighbors. Let's make this the biggest fundraiser in Burroughs' history! For additional details, contact Mike Stoakes, mstoakes@juno.com (913) 341-8147.

Friends of Linda Hall Library hosts ornithologist Paul Johnsgard Bison, bears and the boondocks: Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains

By the time they had traveled from the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers to Three Forks, Montana, in the autumn of 1805, Lewis and Clark had discovered at least four Great Plains birds, including the common poor-will, least tern, greater sage-grouse and Lewis' namesake species, the Lewis woodpecker. At least four other then-undescribed bird species had also been seen and briefly mentioned. They also discovered at least seven Great Plains species of mammals, including the pronghorn, grizzly bear, swift fox, black-tailed prairie dog, white-tailed jackrabbit, bushy-tailed woodrat and mule deer. Dr. Johnsgard's talk will discuss these discoveries and their biological significance.

This lecture will be presented on **Thursday, November 18, 2004**, at 5:30 p.m., in the Library's Main Reading Room of The Linda Hall Library of Science and Technology, 51st and Cherry, Kansas City, Missouri.

University of Nebraska ornithologist Paul Johnsgard is author of over 40 books, including *Hummingbirds of North America* and *Prairie Birds*, a compelling portrait of native grasslands of the Great Plains, which constitute nearly a fifth of the North American continent and are the most imperiled of its terrestrial ecosystems.

The day following the lecture, Friday, November 19, science historian Bruce Bradley will lead Burroughs members and friends on a **special tour of the library's rare books collection**, which includes original John James Audubon and Caitlin editions. We plan to meet at the reference desk at 10:30 a.m. More information about the library and its collections can be found at LindaHall.org.

General Meetings are held the **FIRST THURSDAY** of each month, September through June, at the Missouri Department of Conservation's **Discovery Center**, 4750 Troost. Come for coffee and cookies around 6:30 p.m. Bring a newspaper clipping and join the Conservation Committee for a discussion of conservation issues prior to the meeting from 6:30-7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2004: *Birding Brazil with Paulo Boute*, by Priscilla Wilson. A dynamite presentation by one of Burroughs Audubon's finest photographers. A treat to see and fun to watch both Paulo and Priscilla work their magic!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7: *Alaskan Adventures* with Ellie and Dick Dawson. Hear the adventures of these steadfast Auduboners!

NOVEMBER 4: *Endemics of Ecuador* with Greg Griffith. Professional photography and expert birding will be features of this presentation.

DECEMBER 2: *Birding ID Workshop*: Join us for this popular program, led by international birding tour leader and Burroughs restoration leader Roger McNeill.

--Marilyn Koshland

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S NEST:

Greetings,

As a sage individual once noted, the only constant in life is change. Like migrating birds, organizations are dynamic, subject to twists and turns of direction and intensity. As the new President of Burroughs Audubon, I would like to share my excitement and optimism about the direction in which Burroughs is headed. Jill DeWitt, our new Vice-President, shares my passion for conservation activities. Jill is also serving as interim chair of our Conservation Committee, and together with Roger McNeill, has been instrumental in habitat restoration with our partner organization, KCWildlands. It is my hope that all birders realize the importance of habitat conservation and restoration if we are to have any beauty to pursue in the future. We must also realize that we can't save the natural beauty of wild birds by, and for, ourselves. The public (beginning with friends, neighbors and family members) needs education regarding the value of conserving habitat as much as we need them to join us in that vital mission.

The current Board of Directors is an extremely capable and enthusiastic group, which includes two past presidents (Don Arney and Joe Alburty), as well as two new members (Jennifer Hammett and Lisa Weeks), who have a fresh perspective on how Burroughs can be a more energetic and effective organization. The remaining officers and board members, Phil and Nancy Reicher, Elizabeth Kohler and Gary Johnson, are all rock solid in their dedication to Burroughs, and for that, I am incredibly blessed. The new leadership is committed to seeking member input and to mailing a hard copy of the *WingBeat* to every Burroughs member four times a year—the goal being to greatly increase participation in, and enjoyment of, all BAS activities! In addition, for those with computer access, you can subscribe to a group mailing list that offers up-to-date information on Burroughs field trips and events between quarterly newsletters. The same mailing list will send you a link to the electronic version of the newsletter when a new issue becomes available. Anyone may subscribe to this list at BurroughsAnnounce-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Your email address will remain safe and will not be shared with any other organization, including National Audubon. I'm looking forward to the journey ahead, and I encourage you to contact me, or any of the board members, to help you become a participant in the many projects that Burroughs has to offer. I hope to hear from you!

--Mike Stoakes,

President, Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City

Complimentary Newsletter: Care to send the newsletter to a friend? If you'd like to share our activities with someone who may be interested in joining the group, send this coupon to Heidi McCullough, 5915 NW Caney Creek Drive, KCMO 64151 (or email information to heidi@mculloughweb.com). Include your name and: "Complimentary Newsletter" at the top of the form.

If you are renewing—please use the form from National Audubon

APPLICATION FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP

Please check the annual membership category you desire

<input type="checkbox"/> New Membership / \$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen / \$15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual / \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen Family / \$23.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Donor/\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family / \$38	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining / \$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Life / \$1500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student / \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting / \$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/> CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Make checks payable to Burroughs Audubon Society and mail to: Heidi McCullough, 5915 NW Caney Creek Dr., Kansas City, MO 64151. Questions: Call (816) 505-2840. Moving? Fill out this form with new change of address, check 'CHANGE OF ADDRESS', above, and mail to Heidi McCullough.

National Audubon/Burroughs Audubon Application for Joint Membership N-027XCH

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Committees and Chairs

Adopt-A-Refuge: George and Alice Scheil

Audubon Adventures: Kelly R. Gillespie
Media, Programs: Marilyn Koshland
BAS Library/Center: Anne Duffer
Field Trips: Matt Gearheart
Newsletter: Jill DeWitt, Lisa Weeks

Your participation makes Burroughs Audubon an effective, dynamic voice and center for birding and conservation in the Kansas City region. Contact us to join in activities!

WingBeat is the quarterly publication of the Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City. BAS is a non-profit membership organization in the Kansas City area whose members share an interest in birding and our natural heritage and wish to preserve and enhance it for future generations. Our members share and promote this interest through a variety of activities that are open to the public.

Neal Smith Volunteers to Visit Squaw Creek

On Saturday, September 18th, 2004, the Friends group from Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge will visit Squaw Creek NWR. At present, they plan to arrive at about 11 a.m. and have a picnic lunch with volunteers from

the Squaw Creek Friends group. They will furnish the lunch. After lunch, they will take a tour of Squaw Creek NWR from about 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. They must leave at 2:30 p.m. Contact George Scheil, (816)

353-9054 or glsc@comcast.net as soon as possible if you can attend.

Visit www.SquawCreek.org or <http://groups.msn.com/WildlifePhotographs/shoebox.msnw>

FALL WORKDAY SEPT 11

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK OCTOBER 10-17

Support your local National Wildlife Refuge (Squaw Creek NWR!)

Birders—Let Your Presence Be Known!

I write this article to reiterate a plea I have made to birders for years. It is one that is even more important today.

Here it is: If you bird public lands, let your presence and your activities be known to the managers of the area. Contact them before, during or after a visit to their areas. Ask them questions about things you encounter on their areas. Tell them about significant bird sightings. Send them a list of what you found. But most important, make sure they know two things—1) that you are a birder and, 2) you use their area.

Why is this so important? Birders, though numerous, are often an invisible constituency to many land managers. When that is the case, your interests will simply not be represented well. It is not a conscious prejudice against the birding public, just human nature.

Consider many MDC-managed wetland areas. Area managers and their staffs are up in the wee hours of the morning every day during waterfowl season holding drawings for hunters. They see and interact with this user group every day for up to two months. They know many of them by name. They hear their concerns, praises and criticisms firsthand. By comparison, birders drive through the same area, stopping occasionally to raise a pair of binoculars, then leave without ever

making contact with anyone who works there. Whose concerns and interests is that area manager more likely to consider??

If you are leading a Burroughs-sponsored field trip, be sure to contact the area manager in advance, let them know when you will be there and *invite them or their staff to come along*. If you are birding on your own, please make a point to contact the area manager after visiting. Do this whether the land is owned by local, state or federal entities. You will be doing yourself and birding a favor. For MDC-owned lands, contact area offices like the Discovery Center (816/759-7300) or KC Regional Office (816/655-6250) and they can tell you how to contact the manager of an area. Or call me directly and I will gladly provide that information.

Larry Rizzo, Natural History Biologist,
MO Department of Conservation
816/ 655-6254 x246
larry.rizzo@mdc.mo.gov

SEED SALE SEED SALE!

Burroughs' main fundraiser takes off in November. Information on orders will be posted on the website at www.Burroughs.org. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Board members or the Burroughs Library and Nature Center at (816) 795-8177.

Audubon Society of Missouri, Kansas Audubon: Like to find out what's up at the state level? Join us! Contact a BAS Board member for details.

Order fall asters!
Native plant catalogue \$2
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9814 Pleasant Hill Road
Jefferson City, MO 65109
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7301 Mission Road Suite 200
Prairie Village, Kansas 66208
(913) 722-6611

Conservation Update

Burroughs Conservationists had a full plate this year. We happen to be a particularly fortunate group--demands on our time for conservation often turn out to be chock full of fine pleasures--bird sightings, the satisfaction of knowing we're helping to preserve areas unique to the planet for future generations. There's something about a persimmon and paw-paw-laden Midwestern forest, bird calls during migration, mornings on the prairie, enduring birding friendships...the list goes on and on.

One of my favorite memories this year was drifting off to sleep after midnight bird & bug surveys at Bio-Blitz--only to be jolted awake at 2 am by unexpected, tent-shaking thundershowers. Thank the stars for rain guards on tents! And then there were the faces of young children at meetings to halt additional power plants north of the river--and those of their parents, doctors, farmers, students--who took the time to speak out forcefully for clean air. I'm still having a little trouble understanding why anyone on earth would want to add hundreds of tons of additional pollutants to our water, air and soil, when there are cleaner alternatives--and energy efficiency--available, at a fraction of the health costs of dirty coal, if polluters were held liable.

This year we got wind of plans by our local power plant neighbors that up to five additional coal-burning power plants might be in store for us north of the river. That and 60-acre landfills, 7,000 gallons of water per minute from the aquifers, and hundreds of tons of airborne pollutants! A few of you helped write letters, attended workshops, and spoke up. The number of plants has decreased to maybe one, for now. That's about one too many, if you ask me. We both know there's a whole lot more the utilities could be doing with efficiency and renewable technologies.

In late July Burroughs Audubon, along with the Sierra Club, steelworkers and building trades unions, UAW 249, the Apollo Alliance and The Ecology Center, got together at the Autoworker's beautiful new union building north of the river to commend Ford on its release of the first American-made hybrid vehicle. Appears we also launched a blue green coalition--labor and the environment. We faced four TV station cameras and the print media, and got coverage at the national and international level. Contact us if you'd like to join us for the September 29th meeting.

But the best is yet to come. We've been talking about adding a little dessert to the conservation plate, if anyone's interested. We've needed a comprehensive area plan for regional birding trails for quite some time. Let's meet. To get your interest up, try checking out information on the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative on the web--then pull out your maps, and look at the river running along the state border, north into Iowa. Settle back and think about loess prairie, bottomland forest, this glorious mosaic of communities unique to our little patch of the continent--and more endangered than the rainforests. Then just think about preserving, restoring and handing it down to future generations. What would it take? Well, to start with, a few ideas...hope you can make it. How about Thursday, October 21? I'll toss a little something together. Bring a dish if you like. Our place: 525 East 54th Street, KCMO (block and one-half northeast of 55th & Oak). Call for directions. 816-333-3293.

Conservation is a great reason to set aside time for the important things in life. Put conservation on the calendar this year! I hope to see you for short meetings at 6:30 prior to General meetings, first Thursday of the month at the Discovery Center.

--Jill DeWitt

jdewitt1@kc.rr.com

Searching for Sustainability: From Costa Rica to Colorado College

Dr. Howard Drossman,
Colorado College Environmental
Science Program

Though sustainability has become a key environmental goal, its meaning remains vague and the process for achieving a sustainable future is poorly defined. Building on the Wisconsin legacies of John Muir and Aldo Leopold, this presentation provides an overview of lessons learned in developing a "Six S" framework for educating students and the general public about ecological sustainability. The framework integrates an understanding of basic scientific principles for how systems work, the need for a more spiritual connection with nature, and the development of an ethos of service as requisites for instilling a sense of stewardship. With a critical mass of informed stewards, sustainability becomes possible.

This lecture will be presented on Thursday, September 23, 2004, at 5:30 p.m., in the Library's Main Reading Room.

Subscribe to Birding List-serve, join
the on-line birding community:

mobirds.org
Ksbirds.org

Rockhurst University Joins in Shirling Sanctuary Restoration



Joe Alburty, Don Arney, Jill DeWitt and Dick Dawson led Earth Day tours at Shirling Sanctuary.

In 1954, a 9-acre finger of old-growth bottomland forest in Swope Park, beloved to generations of the Burroughs Nature Club (now the Burroughs Audubon Society) as “The Peninsula,” was dedicated by the Burroughs Club and Kansas City’s Board of Park Commissioners. Burroughs donated money for a stone wall spanning the neck of the peninsula for fifty feet, and a dedication plaque, in honor of Albert E. Shirling. This was one of his favorite places to relax and enjoy nature. Mr. Shirling, long-time college teacher, inspiration for environmental education in our area, and spiritual father of the club, lived at the north end of Swope Park and loved to hike the hills and valleys. In 1920 he published his early studies in “*The Birds of Swope Park*.”



May Apple blooms in April now.

Shirling Sanctuary is a renowned and long-revered piece of riparian habitat. It

is a prime example of the meandering ways of Midwest rivers like the Blue. The ‘peninsula’ was once heavily birded, until the zoo expansion, when it was fenced off as part of zoo security, with the provision that Audubon members were guaranteed access in perpetuity (although advance arrangements need to be made to have someone there to unlock the gate).

Once two national champion elms grew in Shirling. Yellow-crowned night heron and barred owl nested. Prothonotary Warblers and Pileated Woodpeckers were seen, and fallen trunks decayed into the soil—it was a classic wild lowland forest. In recent years it has become overgrown with Euonymus (wintercreeper), one of the many alien invaders planted by gardeners (and even conservationists!) for food and habitat for wildlife.

The streamside, floodplain, riparian corridor of the Blue River, and similar streams around Kansas City, include areas of old-growth forest, mowed grass parkland and industrial developments. Often railroads follow the rivers—and trains may be so frequent that identifying birds by song is difficult. Swope Park’s Shirling Sanctuary is a “peninsula”, isolated from most intrusions. Birds found represent those typical of this habitat throughout western Missouri and eastern Kansas, where uplands were prairie, glade and savannah prior to Euro-American settlement.



Asimina triloba (Paw-paw) was abundant at Shirling Sanctuary this Spring.

Albert E. Shirling made a systematic survey of Swope Park in June 1916, in order to get a census of the nesting birds and determine the relative numbers of different species and their distribution. “The plan followed was to start out early in the morning, usually between four and

five o’clock, and walk back and forth across the section, stopping now and then for a few minutes to listen, and to note carefully the bird calls within a certain radius. Then I would travel on until I was beyond this radius and make another pause; in the meantime being on the alert to detect by eye or ear any bird that had not already been listed.” His count, published in 1920 in “Birds of Swope Park,” combined the entire strip west of the Blue River between the river and the railroad tracks. Heavy rains earlier had flooded portions of the valley, leaving a layer of fine mud sediment. Rains during the census kept the muddy plants wet. The ground was a soft, slippery, slimy ooze. This may have affected the listing of ground-nesting birds.



Rockhurst University Biologist Chad Shoales and students cleared invasive wintercreeper.

In 2004, another chapter was added to Shirling’s history, as a dedicated team of Rockhurst students, under the direction of Biologist Chad Shoales, removed invasive Euonymus from the area. Volunteers from Burroughs Audubon led birding tours throughout the day and assisted with the restoration.

Paw-paws were abundant. May apples survived, despite encroaching Euonymus. Other spring ephemerals dotted areas still free from invasives.

--Dick Dawson

Photos courtesy Laura Bogue and Bridging the Gap.

Keeping count in Kansas City WildLands



Burroughs birders and biologists, expecting sweltering heat at the Third Annual **Kansas City Wildlands BioBlitz**, were not unpleasantly surprised to awaken to a reasonably cool morning of birding and plant counts. This year's crack of dawn came in the form of earthshaking thunder at 2 am. This even got the attention of those of us who stayed up past midnight comparing notes with visiting herpetologists and lepidopterists. Pre-dawn birding proceeded in tranquil wooded areas of Burr Oak Woods, and in savanna, stream and glade habitats and the area's new prairie plantings.

Burr Oak Woods was this year's BioBlitz site. Burroughs' ornithology team was joined by members of Kaw Valley Mycology Society, Kansas City Herpetological Society, Central Missouri State University, Rockhurst University and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Data was being checked for duplications and typed into databases as we went to press, but thus far the counts are as follows: 11 mammal species, 70 bird species, 23 reptiles and amphibians, 53 fungi, 200 plants, 105 moths, 24 butterflies, 40 aquatic invertebrates and a whole lot of other insects! The data from BioBlitz counts will be used as a baseline species list for Burr Oak Woods. It will be available on-line on the Kansas City WildLands website, www.kcwildlands.org,

Make it a point to join us on 'the Blitz' next year. You'll doubtless learn of a few new species. You'll also have the chance of a lifetime to overnight—and spend a terrific day or two—in a really wild area—right here in the middle of the Kansas City Metropolitan region! We're counting—on you!



Dick and Ellie Dawson listen for warblers at Burr Oak Woods--BioBlitz 2004.

Field Trips

SATURDAY, AUGUST 21st: St. Joseph Oxbows with local expert Larry Lade 816-232-6125 or Gckingleet@wmconnect.com. Meet at 8:00am at the Stoney Creek Inn parking lot in St. Joe (located just West of I-29 on Frederick Avenue) to carpool to the Oxbow lakes. We will be on the lookout for shorebirds (maybe even a Stint?) and other migrants. If time permits we may look for other woodland migrants at Bluff Woods. This trip will mostly be an auto-tour.

SEPTEMBER 24, 25 & 26th: Audubon Society of Missouri Fall Meeting at Camp Clover Point, Lake of the Ozarks State Park. Visit www.mobirds.org for more information.

OCTOBER 1, 2 & 3: KOS Fall Meeting in Baldwin, KS. Visit www.ksbirds.org for more information.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16th: Stillwell Prairie (Vernon County, MO). We will do some prairie birding in conjunction with the Missouri Prairie Foundation family campout. Matt Gearheart 913-568-4678 or mgearheart@gwhm.com will lead KC birders down to the prairie. Arthur Benson 816-531-6565 or abenson@bensonlaw.com may be contacted for details about the campout. Bring along snacks, water, bug repellent and your camping gear if you plan to stay over in one of Missouri's beautiful prairies. Visit www.moprairie.org for more information.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14th: Lyon County Kansas Smith's Longspurs

Bob Fisher will lead a trip to Lyon County State Lake, Melvern Lake, John Redmond Reservoir and Wolf Creek. Meet at the Holiday Inn in Olathe at 7:30 a.m. for an all-day birding trip. Species that we will be looking for are Smith's Longspurs, loons, and migrating waterfowl. Bring a lunch or plan on stopping at a nearby Casey's for an afternoon snack. Dress for the weather and some walking. For questions, please contact Bob at bobgfisher@comcast.net

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20th: Squaw Creek NWR

Mike Stoakes and Mark Land will lead a trip in conjunction with the Wild Bird Center in the Corinth Shopping Center, 83rd and Mission Rd, Prairie Village. The trip will leave at 7:00 am from the WBC or meet at the visitor center approx. 8:45 am. This is an all day trip. Bring a sack lunch, snacks, optics, field guides, and overdress for the weather. We will witness the waterfowl migration at its finest and the Bald Eagles that follow them south. After lunch we may make another loop of the refuge or explore other areas for interesting species. Those who remember finding the Northern Shrike last year will enjoy this trip as well. Questions? You may contact Mark at 913-381-4324 or Kestrelland@aol.com This trip may be cancelled due to weather.

Lakeside Nature Center Monthly Birdwalks (September through June) with Elizabeth Kohler: Beginning September 26, 2004, a birdwalk will be held the LAST Sunday morning of each month in and around Swope Park. Participants will meet in the LNC parking lot at 7:45 AM for an 8:00 AM departure. These will be half-day (2 to 4 hours) excursions to various types of habitat. Dress appropriate for moderate hiking. For more information, contact Elizabeth Kohler at 816-353-1784 or by email, lizkvet@yahoo.com

Saturday Morning Bird Walks: Offered by the two Wild Bird Centers

Corinth Square Store: Third Saturday of each month, 4046 West 83rd, Prairie Village, KS. Meet at the store at 8:00am, bird for 2-3 hours, then return to the store. (913-381-5633)

Noland Road Store: First and Third Saturdays each month, 4201 South Noland Road, Independence, MO. Meet at the store at 7:30am, bird for 2-3 hours, then return to the store. (816-478-9399)

Audubon field trip participants usually carpool; riders chip in for gas. Cars leave at the stated departure time. From beginning birders to experts, all are welcome! All-day trips include restroom stops. If you have doubts about whether a field trip is "on" because of inclement weather, call the trip leader up to one hour before scheduled departure. The trip leader can also provide additional details on the trip.

MORE INFORMATION: For more information about one of our field trips or to volunteer to lead a field trip, you can contact our field trip coordinator, Matt Gearheart, at 913-568-4678 or mgearheart@gwhm.com.

Burroughs Audubon Center And Library

At Fleming Park, Lake Jacomo

**Open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday
12:30-4:30**

The center has a selection of bird feeders, bird guides and birdseed for purchase at nonprofit prices.

Directions: From Hwy 291 take Exit 12 east on Woods Chapel Road two miles. At the Fleming Park sign, turn south at the first road on the right. (816) 795-8177.

NOVEMBER SEED SALE! DETAILS www.burroughs.org.

**Burroughs Audubon Society
Of Greater Kansas City**

5915 Caney Creek Dr.,
Kansas City, MO 64151

Forwarding and return postage guaranteed.
Address Correction Requested

Please Note:

Articles, photos, art, ads and
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Please mail to Jill DeWitt,
525 East 54th Street,
KCMO 64110 or send by
email to jdewitt1@kc.rr.com.

Postings can be received
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but please let us know they're coming!

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