BIRDATHON 2006: Burroughs Team Logs 146 Species

Before sunrise our team of six met at Lakeside Nature Center in Swope Park for the annual Burroughs Bird-a-thon. Our goal was to count as many different species of birds in a twenty-four hour period as possible in order to raise funds for bird conservation.

After hearing Barred Owl at the nature center (and making certain that the sound wasn't coming from one of the rehab pens), we checked a few other spots where Great Horned and Screech Owls had been heard in the past. Unfortunately, we had timed our start too late and the sun was starting to come up by now. Luckily, we had Great Horned Owl later in the day. Next year we'll know to start half an hour earlier.

Our two cars then drove north on 71 Highway to Weston Bend State Park, arriving just after its gate opened. While Chuck-Wil's-Widow was calling at the entrance, none of the other expected goatsuckers could be heard. Several species, such as Yellow-breasted Chat, were ticked off as the day started to unfold.

Once inside the gate, we parked in the lot, getting out of our cars to see a brilliant red Summer Tanager in the treetop as we entered the trailhead. Next it was Tennessee Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Scarlet Tanager, Acadian Flycatcher, Kentucky Warbler and Red-eyed Vireo, but the most common bird in the forest seemed to be American Redstart, eventually causing us almost to assume any bird landing above our heads would be this animal.

Finally we came to the Cerulean Warbler's habitat, hoping to catch a glimpse of this difficult-to-see species. We'd heard several Northern Parula by now, and we were familiar enough with its call to feel confident that what we were now hearing was indeed the Cerulean. After ten or so minutes listening to it sing with no sightings, we were able to close in on the source. Someone said 'There it is!' and we all strained our necks to look vertically. At last it popped where it could be seen for just two seconds – and then it was gone. We'd all had good looks, and though most of us were experienced birders, for the first time. The blue-streaked pattern and neck band were gratifying to see after many failed attempts by this writer.

Next we visited the overlook where Hooded Warblers had been reported. Easily finding this bird – as satisfying as the Cerulean Warbler, we left Weston Bend and headed north toward Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

This was the best I'd ever seen Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge for shorebird habitat. There were thousands of sandpipers of all shapes and sizes. Despite competition from the wind and a pair of Peregrine Falcons stirring things up, we were able to study and debate the fine points of peep identification at length.

The temperature was just warm enough that no one was uncomfortable. We finished past sundown at Bob Brown Conservation Area with the unexpected Great Horned Owl. Our tape playing turned up Sora, but that was about it. All in all, it was a good day – with 146 species.

The Bird-a-thon is Burroughs Audubon’s annual fund-raising tradition to help support conservation programs such as KU Ornithology research, our sanctuaries and Audubon Adventures in the classroom. If you have not sponsored a team already, please consider sending a donation check to our treasurer made out to BAS with either a per-species or flat amount.

--Joe Alburty, Fairway, KS

Editor’s Note: Joe’s team included Don Arney, Nic Allen, Mike Stoakes, Paul Habiger, and Lori Lind.

General Meetings are held the FIRST THURSDAY of each month, September through June (except in April, when we hold our Annual Dinner), at the Missouri Conservation Department’s Anita Gorman Conservation Discovery Center, 4750 Troost, Kansas City. Meetings begin at 7 PM; come at 6:30 for coffee and conversation.

THURSDAY, JUNE 1: Least Bittern Project at Squaw Creek NWF, by Frank Durbian, Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Amanda Griffin, graduate student, Northwest Missouri State University.

THURSDAY, JULY 6: SUMMER MOVIE NIGHT: “Eagles” and “Loons”, Peter Roberts Productions, in the Discovery Center Auditorium. Free refreshments will be available at 6:30 PM; films will begin at 7:00 PM. There will be an intermission between the films, with a door prize drawing before the second film begins. Admission is free. For more information, contact Elizabeth Stoakes at (816) 554-1956 or see http://www.burroughs.org.

SUMMER PROGRAMS AT ERNIE MILLER PARK with Chris Pistole.

--Continued on page 3
FROM THE PRESIDENT’S NEST:

I’d like to thank outgoing president Mike Stoakes for his extraordinary commitment to Burroughs. It is a pleasure to serve in an organization in which integrity and civility are priorities. Mike’s work with our website and our events post, Burroughs-Announce, have been instrumental in making our offerings available to the public. Thanks, Mike! We have also very fortunate to have had the expertise of Phil and Nancy Reicher as Treasurers. The Reichers have kept accurate and timely financial records, and their position will now be open. Thanks go to outgoing Board members Don Arney and Joe Alburty, past BAS presidents whose work on Birdathons and our sanctuaries is critical to our organization.

Like a healthy bird, Burroughs Audubon has two wings: birding and conservation. We’re fortunate in the Kansas City region. Whether we head north to the loess hills or south to the prairies, to the Ozarks or west into the Flint Hills, great birding adventures await us. We have a first-rate, vibrant community of birders, listers, birdwatchers, and birding enthusiasts in the KC metro area. Preserving and protecting wildlife corridors and nesting sites for birds is becoming increasingly critical to their survival—and may be possible, with your help.

We’ve taken on policy commitments, partnerships and stewardship responsibilities. We’d love to hear from those of you who are able to take an hour or two each month for conservation. Whether you’re beginning a birding trail, participating in natural area restoration projects, working on regional conservation policy initiatives, volunteering at the Burroughs Library and Nature Center, working on our fledgling international birding committee, attending open Board meetings on third Thursdays -- or just helping to keep the bills paid by paying your dues -- we’re pleased to have you as part of this great community.

Elections at the national level are pending. Peter Cannon, Jr., is running for the Central Region director’s seat on the National Audubon Society Board. His letter, and additional information, is available at burroughs.org or by request. Please send your comments to myself or another board member. Our board will cast four votes, by proxy, for the entire Burroughs chapter.

Bird early – and often. Great birding!

--Jill DeWitt, President

Donations are fully tax deductible. BAS is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Burroughs Audubon Society Local-only Membership Form

Local dues are voluntary. Your local dues support graduate education in ornithology and promote restoration of habitat, our sanctuaries, Audubon Adventures in the classroom, speakers, and this newsletter. Please make checks for local dues payable to BAS and mail this form to: Heidi McCullough, 5915 NW Caney Creek Dr., Kansas City, MO 64151.

- Student $10.00
- Individual $15
- Family $25

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Email

Burroughs Audubon Society National membership Form

New Membership $20  CHANGE OF ADDRESS  RENEWAL $35

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Email

Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to: MEMBERSHIP DATA CENTER, PO Box 51005, Boulder CO 80323-1005. Questions: Call (816) 554-1956. Moving? Enter new address, check CHANGE OF ADDRESS, and mail to the MDC. Your gift to Audubon is tax deductible except for the $15 fair market value of AUDUBON magazine.

National Audubon Society / Burroughs Audubon of Greater Kansas City N-02 7XCH

Burroughs Audubon Officers

President: Jill DeWitt
525 E. 54th Street
Kansas City, MO 64110
816-333-3293
jdewitt1@kc.rr.com

Vice President: Elizabeth Stoakes
104 SE Greystone Dr.
Lee’s Summit, MO 64063
816-554-1956
lizkvel@yahoo.com

Secretary: Karen Stair
1404 SW Sampson Rd.
Lee’s Summit, MO 640
916-333-3876
preicher@kc.rr.com
nlreicher@hotmail.com

Treasurer: Phil & Nancy Reicher
401 W. 58th Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64113
816-333-3876
preicher@kc.rr.com
nreicher@hotmail.com

Board of Directors

Ray Covency……………….coveneyr@umkc.edu
Kelly Gillespie…………………………
kelly.gillespie@leesummit.k12.mo.us
Pat St.John………………………..psjohank@kumc.edu
Ellen Zellmer………………..towhee@sbcglobal.net
Matt Gearheart………………mgearheart@gwhm.com

Committees and Chairs

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Website: Mike Stoakes

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 natural history and wish to preserve both for future generations. Our members share and promote this interest through a variety of activities that are open to the public. 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!
Coming Events, con’t from pg.1:

Thursday, September 7: Kenya Adventures, by Photographer Priscilla Wilson

Thursday, October 5: Building Green – Audubon’s Wildcat Glades Conservation Center, Joplin, MO. by architect and BAS Board Member Matt Gearhart.

Thursday, November 2: Birds of the Galapagos, with Greg Griffith

Thursday, December 7: Holiday Party & Pot Luck.

Summer at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge

To help with prairie restoration efforts, contact Jeanine and Ed Montgomery, chairpersons of the Prairie Committee at (660) 935-2254 or visit www.squawcreek.org.

The refuge is located five miles south of Mound City, MO, and 30 miles north of St. Joseph, MO, just off of Interstate 29. Take exit 79, and drive 3 miles west on highway 159.

JJ Audubon featured at Ernie Miller Park Summer Program

Friday evening outdoor programs are scheduled at 7 PM in the Ernie Miller Park amphitheater. Chris Pistole will do the Audubon program, which is a first-person interpretation. Programs are typically 45 minutes long, but the Audubon program is an hour, with questions and answers. These promise to be wonderful evenings. The four programs are:

- June 16: Birds of Prey
- June 23: Snakes Alive
- July 7: The American Naturalist: John James Audubon

July 14: Wildlife Who's Who Ernie Miller Park is in the Johnson County Park & Recreation District at 909 N. Highway 7, Olathe, KS, 66061. For additional information check the website at www.jcprd.com.

Our Vote for Audubon director

A. Peter Cannon Jr., is running for the Central Region director's seat on the NAS board. Our board will cast four votes, by proxy, for the entire Burroughs chapter, after we receive your input. Please find the information on our website, www.burroughs.org, or contact a Board member for details.

Classroom kits available

Classroom teachers teaching within the Kansas City area can receive a free kit of Audubon Adventures nature newspapers. Each set includes a copy for each student and teachers manual. This is a great resource for your classroom! Contact Kelly Gillespie before September 15 at: kelly.gillespie@leesummit.k12.mo.us

EE. Miller Park is in the Johnson County Park & Recreation District at 909 N. Highway 7, Olathe, KS, 66061. For additional information check the website at www.jcprd.com.

Participate in Audubon at the state level! Contact Jill DeWitt (816) 333-3293 or jdewitt1@kc.rr.com for details

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Karen Stair and Willodean Johnson introduced visitors to Burroughs Audubon at the Shawnee Mission East Earth Festival in April.
Victor Shelford Sanctuary: The Origin of the Name.

Victor E. Shelford is often referred to as the father of animal ecology in North America. He received his Bachelor’s Degree in 1903 and his Ph.D. in 1907 from the University of Chicago. He taught at Chicago until 1914, when he accepted a position at the University of Illinois.

I first became acquainted with the man’s work when I purchased a copy of his 1963 book, *The Ecology of North America*. Shelford’s detailed descriptions of almost every biome and community in North America were very informative for a student who had few means for extensive travel. Primarily studying avian ecology, I did not often encounter his work. The professor belonged to the Wilson Ornithological Society for a year or two and published a paper during that time on birds. He had a very wide interest in animals and ecological topics.

While preparing an academic tree for my major professor, Dr. John L. Zimmerman, at his retirement from the Kansas State University about ten years ago, I learned that Shelford was my academic great-grandfather. A Shelford biography published in 1991 by Robert A. Crocker titled “Pioneer Ecologists” gives the reader a good overview of his life. After reading the book, one has the impression that he was an extremely productive man and was well liked by students. The part of his career that became one of his most effective teaching methods was his extensive transcontinental ecology field trips. These summer and holiday trips exposed students to a wide variety of biomes and communities.

Lena Feighner took all the summer courses taught by Shelford during the thirties and forties. The expeditions usually involved a bus and a commissary truck with everyone living in tents. Shelford’s fame was widespread. Feighner visited Moscow University during the sixties. Once the faculty learned that she was a former student of Shelford, they had many questions for her. It was the popularity of the man that kept students such as Lena Feighner going back for additional courses each summer and participating in the most extensive field trips ever offered by the famous animal ecologist of the time.admiration ultimately lead Feighner to donate her property as a nature preserve and to name it after the eminent ecologist, Victor E. Shelford.

*Thomas G. Shane*
*Garden City, KS*

For family-oriented nature and birding-related activities at Ernie Miller Nature Park in Olathe KS, check out the Upcoming Events Calendar at [http://www.erniemiller.com/index.htm](http://www.erniemiller.com/index.htm)

**Audubon Adventures**

Classroom teachers teaching within the Kansas City area can receive a free kit of Audubon Adventures nature newspapers. Each set includes a copy for each student and a teacher’s manual. Consider contacting instructors at schools in your area. A great resource for your classroom! Contact Kelly Gillespie before September 15 at: kelly.gillespie@leesummit.k12.mo.us

**Conservation Matters**

Conservation Committee meets Second Mondays. Bi-state issues include birding trails in Northeast Kansas and Northwest Missouri, the Loess Hills Initiative, regional water and clean air issues and defense of conservation funding. To receive email updates or to serve on WildLands, trails, or energy subcommittees, send your email address to Jill DeWitt: jdewitt1@kc.rr.com

**A Legacy for All**

A pre-settlement prairie, a woodland nesting site for Pileated Woodpeckers, a streamside stopover for migrating songbirds, a nature center and library...what do they all have in common? Someone cared enough about preserving the natural world to leave a legacy in perpetuity. Contact Burroughs Audubon about planned giving and conservation easements.

--Jill DeWitt
jdewitt1@kc.rr.com
(816)333-3220
Bird Profile: Brown Creeper

There are six species of creepers in the world with but one in North America: the Brown Creeper.

If you see what looks like a piece of bark silently crawling up the tree trunk, you are witnessing the spiraling ascent of the Brown Creeper. This 5-5 1/2” bird has a rather complex pattern of browns, buffs, black and white above, which is good camouflage against the tree trunk. It has whitish underparts with buff on the flanks and undertail coverts. Its bill is long, slender and decurved. It has large feet with long, curved claws. The stiff, spiny, longish tail acts as a prop as the Brown Creeper jerkily ascends the tree trunk.

The Brown Creeper is one of the most secretive birds to see. We are more likely to hear its single high, thin ‘seep’ call, rather like the Golden-crowned Kinglet’s, before we see it jerkily spiraling up the tree trunk. It then flies down to the base of another tree and probes in the crevices of aphids. It is sometimes seen with chickadees and titmice, but it is more often a solitary bird. The song of the Brown Creeper is short and wiry ‘see-tee-tee-tee-tee-see’ with the pitch of the Winter Wren. The song is heard only in late winter or early spring on its breeding grounds.

One afternoon in the late 1980’s, Evelyn Johnson and I were returning from birding at Shell Osage Wildlife Refuge. We were on a narrow gravel road lined with box elder and other trees. We stopped to scan the trees where there was activity and bird sounds. As we got out of the car, we startled a Brown Creeper, which flattened itself against the trunk of an elm tree. It remained perfectly still. We got back in to the car. After about five minutes, the creeper flew to the base of another tree, creeping up the trunk. It then flew back to the base of the elm tree and hitched up the trunk. About eight feet, we saw it disappear under a piece of loose bark. We sat there for a while. As it never came out, we assumed it had gone to roost.

After doing some research, I have learned that creepers build their nests behind loose bark or a crevice in a tree trunk. The nest of the Brown Creeper is 5-15 feet above ground. The nest is hammock-shaped, built entirely by the female with bits of fine twigs, fern down, and webbing. The nest is lined with feathers and thin strips of bark. The male contributes nesting material, which the female constructs into the nest. The male feeds the female as she incubates five or six eggs, white with dark spots, for 14-16 days. They are born altricial (naked). Both parents feed the nestlings, which fledge in 19-23 days.

Brown Creepers have been known to come to feeders for chopped nuts and suet.

If you want to see Brown Creepers, they prefer areas with multiple trees, some of which are dead. They have been seen in the trees in the feeding area of Burroughs Audubon Library.

Audubon Land Bird guide, Richard H. Pough

--JoAnn Garrett

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The Spring garlic mustard pull at Isley woods, Excelsior Springs, included a spectacular wildflower show, great views of migratory songbirds, and of course – the yearly search for morels.

A Prairie planting at Jerry Smith Farm Park added species diversity.

Burroughs members co-sponsored Walkin’ Jim’s concert and enjoyed a photographic tribute to our nation’s wilderness areas with members of area environmental organizations.

Field trips increase birding skills.

Summer Movie Night with BAS

Join us on Thursday, July 6, for two relaxing and intriguing short bird films, accompanied by free refreshments. We will show “Eagles” and “Loons”, from Peter Roberts Productions, in the Discovery Center Auditorium. Refreshments will be available at 6:30 PM; films will begin at 7:00 PM. There will be an intermission between the films, with a door prize drawing before the second film begins. Admission is free. For more information, call Elizabeth Stoakes at (816)554-1956 or see www.burroughs.org.

Check our website or join Burroughs-Announce at www.burroughs.org to be notified of birding field trips.

10 BEST BIRDS ANNOUNCED AT ANNUAL DINNER

1. **Cave Swallow** (two immature) sighted by Mark Land, July 17 (A Four-State record!)
4. **Ruff**, Squaw Creek, Tommie Rogers.
5. **Burrowing Owl**, Squaw Creek, April 18th and 19th, Frank Durbin.
6. **Greater Black-backed Gull** on the Kansas River, Dave Fisher.
7. **Black Rail**, Bean Lake, August 13th, Doug Willis.
10. **Lazuli Bunting**, Fairfax, Atchison County, May 8th, Evonne and Wilbur Wright.

Chris Earley tutored guests on making birdcalls at Burroughs’ Annual Dinner in April, along with an informative talk and discussion on hawks and owls. Area birders later joined Chris for a regional birding tour.

Field Trips

**Friday and Saturday, June 9 and 10: Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary Garden Tour.** Six residential gardens and the gardens at Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary will be featured at a Garden Tour to benefit the Nature Sanctuary located in Liberty, Missouri. The Garden Tour will be held Friday and Saturday, June 9 and 10, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., rain or shine. A Plant Sale and Garden Art Silent Auction will take place those same hours at Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary. Highlights on the tour include a Japanese style garden, a hillside rock and perennial garden, a hidden playhouse on a wooded acre, slope gardening, water lily ponds, shady patio retreats, and a butterfly and hummingbird garden. A 15-acre biodiverse, organic farm with heirloom fruit trees and vegetables, a tallgrass and wildflower garden, a culinary herb and edible flower garden, honey bees, and heritage poultry will offer one-hour tours each day.

The Garden Art Auction will feature concrete cast leaves, garden paintings and photography, mosaic pots, gourd art, rain barrels painted by Liberty High School art students, and many other pieces of garden art and décor. Items will be on display at the Nature Sanctuary and silent bids may be placed from June 2 until the end of the tour on June 10.

All proceeds will be used toward the enhancement of natural science and environmental educational programs for all ages. Tickets will be available for purchase on May 19 for $8.00 (ages 13 and older) at the following locations: By the Book Bookstore, Historic Liberty Square, Bloomer's, just north of the 291 Hwy bridge, Family Tree Nursery, Liberty location, Penrod's Greenhouse, Kearney, MO, Backyard Bird Center, I-29 and Barry Road in the Boardwalk Square Shopping Center, and at Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary, 407 N. Lafrenz Rd., Liberty, MO. Tickets are available at each garden tour location and at MLTNS for $10.00 on the day of the event. Call 816-781-8598 for more information or visit: www.naturesanctuary.com

**Saturday and Sunday, June 17-18th: Quivira National Wildlife Refuge and Cheyenne Bottoms with Ed McCullough.** Come see these great Kansas destinations during the breeding season with many species of waterfowl, shorebirds and waders. We'll encounter various ages of young birds, including Avocets, Snowy Plovers and Black-necked Stilts. We'll also look for nesting Mississippi Kites, Least Tern, Barn Owls and Burrowing Owls. Participants travel via their own means to Great Bend, KS on Friday evening and stay in the lodging of their choice. We'll meet outside the Highland Hotel and Convention Center (3017 10th St - Ph. 620-792-2431) at 8:00am on Saturday (full-day) and Sunday (half-day) for birding. Bring plenty of drinks and munchies, due to the remoteness of some locations, plus appropriate clothing and sunscreen. Lunch on Saturday can either be picnic or fast food in Great Bend. Contact Ed McCullough at 816-718-3861 or ejmccullough@moltensystems.com for more information.

**Saturday, June 24: First annual NABA Butterfly Count at Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary.** The MLTNS 15-mile diameter count circle will include the Nature Sanctuary, Cooley Lake Conservation Area, Watkins Mill State Park, and the gardens of William Jewell College in Liberty, MO. (Birding opportunities abound!)

We will be meeting at 9:00 a.m. at MLTNS, 407 N. Lafrenz Road, Liberty, MO, $3 fee required by NABA for official counters. Or, you may also come at 8:00 a.m. for a family butterfly event which will include a short program on butterfly identification followed by counting and identifying butterflies in our gardens and on the trails, fee $5 per family.

Call 816-781-8598 to sign up for the family event.

See www.naturesanctuary.com for Nature Sanctuary map, directions, and more information. Linda Williams will be the compiler for the official count and may be reached at 816-792-3643 (home) or 816-536-5001 (cell) or lkwilliams@kc.rr.com for more information and to sign up for the official count.
Saturday Morning Bird Walks: Offered by the KC area Wild Bird Centers

**Corinth Square Store:** FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH, 4046 West 83rd, Prairie Village, KS. Meet at the store at 8 AM, bird for 2-3 hours, then return to the store. Call 913-381-5633 for more info.

Bird Walks through January 2007:

**June 3** - Minor Park / Blue River (Tennis courts south of Red Bridge Rd. & Blue River Rd. in KCMO)

**July 1** - Lakeside Nature Center / Swope Park (4701 E. Gregory Blvd. in KCMO)

**August 5** - Mill Creek Streamway (Wilders Road access near the Kaw River in Shawnee, KS)

**September 2** - Prairie Oak Nature Center at Ironwoods Park (14701 Mission Rd. in Leawood)

**October 7** - Antioch Park (67th & Antioch in Merriam)

*November 25* - Squaw Creek NWR (*day-long trip*)

**December 2** - Indian Creek Streamway (105th and Roe in Overland Park)

**January 6** - Fleming Park / Lake Jacomo (Burroughs Library)

**Noland Road Store:** 4201 South Noland Road, Independence, MO. Currently this store is looking for a new field trip leader, so the Saturday morning walks are not being held. If you can help, don't hesitate to call 816-478-9399 for more info.

**MORE INFORMATION:** For more information about our field trips, or to volunteer to lead a trip, please contact Helen Hewins by email at silverystreak@aol.com or phone 913-642-0498, or Pat St. John by email at pstjohn@kumc.edu or phone 913-599-3106.

**NOTE:** Audubon field trip participants usually carpool; riders chipe 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.

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**Burroughs Audubon Nature Center And Library At Fleming Park - Lake Jacomo**

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

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

Directions: From I-470/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. **21509 SW Woods Chapel Road** - Phone (816) 795-8177.