



# GOAS *Scissortail*

Greater Ozarks Audubon Society Newsletter :: February 2010 :: Volume 33 Issue 2

## NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

By Myra Scroggs, GOAS Chapter President



Charley Burwick and I, along with 30 other Audubon chapter representatives from the Mississippi River basin, have just returned from a tour of the Louisiana coastal marshes. National Audubon working with National Wildlife Federation hosted a workshop to educate members regarding the critical importance of these marshes which make up 30-40% of the coastal wetlands in the continental U.S.

We drove out through the marshes to get a feeling for the vastness of these wetlands that are so important in many ways. Coastal wetlands protect communities from hurricane force winds and flooding. Every mile of wetlands can trim three to nine inches off of a storm surge, and marshes provide critical habitat for birds and other animals. Coastal Louisiana marshes are the wintering grounds for 3.2 million waterfowl, and during spring and fall migration, 360 species of birds move through coastal Louisiana. Many are refueling from their grueling flight north across the Gulf, or preparing to make the long flight south to Central and South America. These marshes support a productive seafood industry, providing many jobs for local families and food for the nation. They are home to native species; fifteen threatened and endangered species live in Louisiana's coastal marshes. The marshes also protect the economically important ports of Louisiana which carry 20% of the nation's waterborne commerce, and include the nation's largest port.

Louisiana has the highest rate of land loss in the nation. Every 30 minutes Lou-

isiana loses an area of marshland the size of a football field. The eighty miles of wetlands protecting New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico is shrinking every day.

The causes of wetland loss are many. Over thousands of years the marshes developed on sediments deposited at the delta of the flooding Mississippi River. Channeling the river and draining the marshes has resulted in a decline in the deposition of new sediments from the river, allowing the marshland to erode away faster than it is built up. There is hope for these areas though. Diversion of fresh water and sediments from the river into the eroding areas will allow the coastal wetlands to build again. With that purpose in mind, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, and Environmental Defense Fund are partnering to advocate for three large proposed projects to address this problem. If you would like to learn more about these projects visit [mri.audubon.org](http://mri.audubon.org) (Issues and Action) or [nwf.org/Wildlife/Wild-Places/Coastal-Louisiana](http://nwf.org/Wildlife/Wild-Places/Coastal-Louisiana). In the fall we plan to have our own David Ringer present a program concerning this very important issue.

Don't miss any issues of the  
*GOAS Scissortail!*  
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Log on to [www.greaterozarksaudubon.org](http://www.greaterozarksaudubon.org) to register to receive the GOAS newsletter online, or contact the GOAS Secretary if you require the newsletter to be mailed.



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Representing:  
 Cedar, Christian, Dallas, Douglas,  
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 Webster, and Wright Counties in Missouri.

*Our mission is to promote bird conservation in southwest Missouri through birdwatching, education, habitat preservation and restoration, and public awareness, for the benefit of humanity and wildlife.*

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**GOAS ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN UPDATE**  
 By David Catlin, Chapter Vice-President

Last month we announced here in the *Scissortail* that GOAS has an opportunity to build an endowment—a fund that will help support the organization's conservation work into the future. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks has pledged to match every dollar we raise up to \$10,000, and the GOAS Board voted to use money from the organization's reserves to match the first \$5,000 contributed by members. The math isn't complicated—every dollar that members donate (up to \$5,000) will therefore be matched with \$3 more, and we'll have a \$20,000 endowment before we know it!

Individual Board members, together with other key GOAS supporters, have already pledged more than half of the \$5,000 we need. Now we need you! You'll be getting a personal request to contribute soon, and we hope you will give generously. The Greater Ozarks Audubon Society has been doing important conservation work in Southwest Missouri for nearly 50 years . . . and this is your chance to extend that legacy far into the future!

**GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

When: February 12-15  
 Where: 12th and 13th Nature Center,  
 14th and 15th Lake Springfield Boathouse  
 Time: 9:00-11:00 each day  
 We'll count birds, enter our results online,  
 and have a great time learning about  
 wintering bird behavior and activity!  
 If you can't join us, count at home or any  
 other location and enter your data online at  
[www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

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**FEBRUARY PROGRAM**

**THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM...**

Mark's Hutchings' program will feature Missouri Department of Conservation's Prairie Chicken Project. The MDC is partnering with Kansas to trap and relocate Greater Prairie Chickens to Missouri. The intent is to establish a sustainable population of birds, while monitoring them with radio telemetry to learn more about their movements and habitat needs. Most of the trapping takes place on federal lands in and around Salina, Kansas. Birds are relocated to managed prairies near Eldorado Springs, Missouri.

Mark graduated with a B.S. in Wildlife Conservation and Management from MSU. He has worked 28 years with MDC, 23 with Wildlife Division and the past 5 with Private Land Services. Mark has managed a variety of public lands starting with the Wetlands Section in his early years. Much of the past several years, Mark has worked with uplands programs including prairie, glade, and woodland communities.

Come at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 16th for snacks and social time. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. followed by the membership meeting at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center, 4600 South Chrisman (off Business Highway 65).

*Dan and Ann Liles, GOAS Program Chairs*