



GOAS *Scissortail*

Greater Ozarks Audubon Society Newsletter :: February 2012 :: Volume 35 Issue 2

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

GOAS BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14th
7:00 p.m., Quail Creek

GOAS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16th
7:00 p.m. Program

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

C2ZN040Z

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE

GREATER OZARKS CHAPTER

OF THE

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership in the National Audubon Society includes:

- ♦ Affiliation with Greater Ozarks Audubon
- ♦ Eight issues of the **GOAS Scissortail**
- ♦ Four issues of **Audubon** magazine

- Please enroll me as a member of NAS and Greater Ozarks Audubon.....\$20
- Introductory 2 year Membership.....\$35

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To join, make your check payable to National Audubon Society and mail with this form to:

National Audubon Society
P. O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, Florida 32142-2250

Please send renewals to National Audubon. Follow instructions provided with notice to renew your membership. If you have questions, contact Mary Murphy, 863-8475, lmurph34@gmail.com

Log on to www.greaterozarksaudubon.org to subscribe to the GOAS newsletter online, or contact the GOAS Secretary if you want your newsletter mailed.

TWEETS

By David Catlin, GOAS Chapter President



Volunteers contribute more to the study of birds than to almost any other science. That's partly because there are quite a few very good birdwatchers, people who can tell a Henslow's Sparrow from a Le Conte's Sparrow without looking in a field guide. They may be amateurs, but they are very knowledgeable ones.

It's also because, while trained bird scientists—professional ornithologists, I'm talking about—are scattered pretty thinly across the landscape, people who know at least something about birds are common. They can be in places and see things that professional ornithologists miss, just due to geography and timing. A high school student in Rogersville saw a Snowy Owl a few weeks ago near the junction of US-60 and Highway 125 (and photographed it with a cell phone). As a result, we learned a little something about this winter's unusual incursion of Snowy Owls, without an ornithologist for miles.

Non-professionals who contribute important observations in this way are often called "citizen scientists." And, if there is an entry-level opportunity to become a citizen scientist, it has to be the Great Backyard Bird Count.

The GBBC is a four-day event held every February—this year, February 17-20. Participation couldn't be simpler: You have to identify and count

birds out your window (or anywhere) for at least 15 minutes, and then report them to Audubon and Cornell University online at www.birdsource.org/gbbc. In my neighborhood, that means you'd have to know cardinals, house sparrows, juncos, chickadees, goldfinches, mourning doves, and—on a good day—downy woodpeckers.

Still sound like a challenge for you? If so, then join our chapter's expert observers any of the mornings of the GBBC weekend. We'll be watching birds at publicly-accessible bird feeders from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.—Friday and Saturday at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center (mdc.mo.gov/regions/southwest/springfield-conservation-nature-center) and Sunday and Monday (the President's Day holiday) at the Watershed Center (watershedcommittee.org/the-watershed-center).

It doesn't sound like a few minutes by the feeders would produce information of much value, but the secret is in the *volume* of information. Last year, observers turned in 92,218 checklists from all over the continent. As a winter snapshot of avian distribution, this actually means something.

We'd like to contribute our share of checklists this year, and we'd welcome your help. No longer just someone who enjoys birds, you'll be a *citizen scientist*!



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Representing:
 Cedar, Christian, Dallas, Douglas, Greene,
 Hickory, Polk, St. Clair, Stone, Taney,
 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.

GOAS website sponsored by
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Flash back to a GOAS Clean-Up circa 2000 at McCraw's Ford
 Left to right: Charley Burwick, Mary Murphy, Jan Carter, Sue Schuble,
 Ruby Ball, Betty Johnson, Steve Scroggs, Myra Scroggs

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Great Backyard Bird Count is February 17-21. Come on out; it'll be fun! See Dave's article on the front page for more information.

South Creek Clean-Up is Saturday, March 17, 9:00 am to noon. Rain date is March 24, (same time). Meet at the foot bridge on South Creek at Holland and Downing Streets. Wear heavy boots and gloves, bring water and snacks. Tools are optional.

Lake Springfield Spruce-Up Day is Saturday, April 14, 9:00 am to noon. Volunteers will work on trails and the glade area. Meet at the Boat House. Wear and bring the same items listed for the South Creek event. Lunch will be served from noon to 1:00 pm. You **must** call Ellen, 864-1051 at The Parks to reserve a meal!



THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM...

Donnie Nichols's program will present a general view of prairies in Missouri, including history about prairies, prairie ecosystems, the associated native plants and animals, and how Native Americans utilized these resources. He will also draw a comparison between Missouri prairies, pre- and post-European settlement.

A native of Blue Lick Missouri, Donnie Nichols earned a bachelor's degree from Missouri Valley College in Marshall, Missouri with a background in biology. After retiring from Kent Feeds, Inc. in 2005, he joined the Columbia chapter of the Missouri Master Naturalist (MMN) organization, has served on the MMN advisory council, and has participated with founding a Cole Camp Master Naturalist chapter. Recently, he participated as a member of the Greater Prairie Chicken reintroduction team, which has trapped prairie chickens in Kansas to release on Missouri prairies.

Come at 6:30 pm, Thursday February 16th for refreshments and to socialize. The program will begin at 7:00 pm, followed by the membership meeting at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center, 4601 Nature Center Way (off Business Highway 65).

Dan and Ann Liles, Program Chairs



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