



# GOAS *Scissortail*

GREATER OZARKS AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER :: OCTOBER 2013 :: VOLUME 36 ISSUE 7

## OCTOBER CALENDAR

### GOAS BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY OCTOBER 8th

7:00 p.m. Environmental Resource Center

### GOAS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17th

7:00 p.m. Program

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

### C3ZN040Z

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

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Please send renewals to National Audubon. Follow instructions provided with notice to renew your membership, or renew through our web page, <http://www.greaterozarksaudubon.org>

Get the **Scissortail** in your inbox! Subscribe here: <http://www.greaterozarksaudubon.org/publications.html>

Contact Mary Sturdevant, GOAS Membership Chair with questions, or Jim Fossard, Secretary, if you want to receive the newsletter by mail.

## DR. RUTH REPORTS

Ruth Grant, GOAS Chapter President

Trogon, Motmots, Honeycreepers...just some of the magical names of tropical bird families that entice us to fly south. Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras all beckon to us.

One year I was privileged to take a float trip down the Rio Platano in eastern Honduras. Its drainage is the largest area of intact rain forest in Central America. As we floated down the river, Blue Morpho butterflies fluttered overhead and Scarlet Macaws flew above the treetops.

One of our guides was Robert Gallardo, who will join us for our October meeting and show us slides of some of these beauties. Robert first travelled to Honduras as a volunteer with the Peace Corps, and remained when his tour of duty was com-



pleted. He has become a leading (if not the leading) observer of birds in that country.

Robert is currently working on a field guide to the birds of Honduras.

On another subject, members should be aware that we have a new venue for board meetings. We now meet in the conference room of the city's Environmental Resource Center at 290 East Central Avenue, just down the street from Central High School. The room is equipped with a computer linked to a TV so that we do not have to carry a screen, laptop or projector to the meetings.

Board meetings are listed in the newsletter and usually meet on the second Tuesday of the month. Members are always welcome to attend or to bring any concerns or issues to an officer or board member. Our next board meeting will be Tuesday evening October eighth.



Blue Morpho Butterfly



GREATER OZARKS AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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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.*

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## CITIZEN SCIENCE AND HUMMINGBIRD RESEARCH

Lisa Berger, GOAS Publications Editor

A study published last winter in the AUK, the Journal of the American Ornithologists Union, used data collected by citizen scientists to compare first arrival dates of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds between 1890-1969, to arrival times during the past 15 years. The historical data come from surveys submitted by about 3,000 naturalists over many decades, comprising almost 6 million records. Historical documents were compared to about 30,000 recent reports of first arrival dates.

The authors found that these tiny hummers, most migrating over the Gulf of Mexico, leave their Central American wintering grounds to arrive in North America 12 to 18 days earlier than a century ago. Research indicates that rising temperatures in their winter habitat may trigger earlier departures.

It has been documented that many species, including American Robins, which migrate short distances, show similar patterns of increasingly early arrival on, and expansion to more northerly breeding grounds.

So, what do we learn from this study?

First, we are witness to a changing climate and corresponding evolutionary natural selection demonstrated through birds' life histories. Generalist species, which don't require specialized habitat and food, are able to adapt to habitat modifications brought about by weather and humans. If a preferred food source or habitat is no longer available at arrival time, other sources can be exploited. Generalists may fill new niches and prosper.

Food availability and arrival timing are crucial for specialists, however. These species are at high risk for decline from any rapid change. Specialists are selected against, because they are not able to adapt fast enough to exploit new food sources, and aren't programmed to just move somewhere else. As specialists' population numbers decline, so does genetic diversity and adaptive capacity.

One other thing we learn is that information collected over long periods of time by folks doing Breeding Bird Surveys, Christmas Bird Counts, and entered into data bases like E-Bird, CACHE, and SPARKS is quite valuable to assess trends in bird populations. So keep up the good work! All observations of common and uncommon, early and late sightings, and diversity and numbers of species may be used for scientific study. What we contribute as citizen scientists today may help inform studies a hundred years from now.

## OCTOBER CALENDAR

### THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM...

Robert Gallardo presents *Honduras and its Natural Treasures*

You will be swept away to all corners of Honduras to view flora, fauna and varied landscapes with this month's program. Twice the size of Costa Rica, Honduras harbors the highest percentage of natural forest cover in Central America. It boasts coral reefs and Mayan ruins, while the country's wide range of parks and reserves remain true hidden gems. The country has recorded 756 species of birds, and counting, and is a bird watcher's heaven, as birders often have entire parks to themselves.

Come at 6:30 pm, Thursday October 17th 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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