Snowy Owl on Cora Island Road on November 9th. Photo by Doug Hommert.

Sandpiper at Teal Pond. Dunlin is one of the latest migrating shorebirds, and Least Sandpipers have been known to overwinter in mild years.

Brad Jacobs photographed an Iceland Gull at RMBS on the 20th,

On the 9th, a Snowy Owl, the first of a good number as it would later prove, was found along Cora Island Road near RMBS. This bird, which was very pale and appeared to be an adult, did not remain. It was probably disturbed by the extensive farm work in the area. On the 28th, Cory Gregory reported another Snowy Owl near the dam. This bird was heavily marked with black and is probably an immature female. It continued to be seen at various places around RMBS through the end of the year.

Pat Leuders had a late Barn Swallow on the 18th.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were at both Lake 6 and the Fallen Oak Trail at Busch on the 11th. There was a feeding flock of at least six at the latter location.

Mike Grant had a very late Summer Tanager at his feeder on the 28th.

There was flock of Rusty Blackbirds at Lake 33 at Busch on the 11th. Dave Rogles reported a Yellow-headed Blackbird just south of Annada on the 18th.

On the 1st, Chrissy McClarren had a brief look at flock of Red Crossbills in Carondelet Park. There were a variety of reports around the state, but the St. Louis area did not show activity. A female Purple Finch was a nice find near Lake 6 at Busch on the 11th.

Young Snowy Owl at Riverlands. Photo by David Becher.

Crypsis? Mimicry? "Crypsimicry"?

Ted C. MacRae[1]

Here is an interesting insect that I photographed in north-central Oklahoma in late June 2014. I was checking standing and fallen trunks of large, dead eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) trees in Woods Co. near the Cimarron River, where just a few days earlier I had found a jewel beetle (family Buprestidae) that had eluded me for more than 30 years—*Buprestis confluens*. I had found only a single individual and returned to the spot in the hopes of finding more. As I searched the trunk of one particularly large, fallen tree—its trunk still covered with bark, I noticed movement but couldn't make out right away what I was seeing. A closer look revealed the movement to be from a wasp-like insect, its antennae curiously quivering in a manner that reminded me of an ensign wasp (family Evaniidae). More careful looking, however, revealed the insect to be not a wasp, but a longhorned beetle (family Cerambycidae), which I then recognized to be the species *Physocnemum brevilineum*.

This beetle is commonly referred to as the elm bark borer, a reference to the larval habit of mining within the bark of living elm trees, but as far as I can tell this beetle is anything but common. Like the *B. confluens* that I had found a few days earlier, this was a species known to me only by pinned museum specimens (I'm always amazed

[1] Adapted from an article posted August 4, 2015 at *Beetles in the Bush* (http://beetlesinthebush.wordpress.com).

***Physocnemum brevilineum* on fallen cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*). Photo by Ted C. MacRae.**

A lateral view reveals the beetle, but is it trying to mimic an ant, or a wasp, or both? Photo by Ted C. MacRae.

when a woodboring beetle species is apparently common enough to warrant a common name and is said to reach pest status in some cases, yet eludes my net for decades!). At any rate, my impression based on pinned specimens and published images was that the species is another of the many longhorned beetles that seem to mimic ants (*Cyrtinus*, *Cyrtophorus*, *Euderces*, *Molorchus*, and *Tillocl*ytus being among the others). Like many of these other mimics, the species is dark with small amounts of red and bears polished, ivory-colored ridges at mid-elytra to give the illusion of a narrow waist. After seeing a living individual, however, and especially its behavior—in particular, the very wasp-like way it moved its antennae, I'm not so sure that ant mimicry alone explains the appearance and behavior of the species.

Of course, there is no reason why it must be ant mimicry or wasp mimicry (or crypsis, for that matter). Evolution has no rule stating that only one survival strategy can be employed at a time, and if, as it seems to me, the beetle is utilizing both crypsis and mimicry—the first to avoid detection and, failing that, the second to give the potential predator pause, then there is no reason why the mimicry portion of its defense couldn't be modeling both ants and wasps to maximize an overall "nasty hymenopteran" appearance.

Project Lead the Way Jennings High School Program

Burt Noll

After our September speaker (and recent new member), Dr. Patty Parker, told us of her work with the birds of the Galapagos Islands, we learned of another program in her lab at the University of Missouri-Saint Louis (http://www.umsl.edu/~parkerp/ParkerLab.html), "Project Lead the Way" (http://blogs.umsl.edu/news/2017/07/31/jennings- interns/). This program encourages students to work in science and other fields and continue into college by providing stipends for summer employment. WGNSS has contributed support for one of the Jennings students in the Parker lab for 2018. Our goal is to encourage in these students a life-long interest in natural history, regardless of what path they follow. Maybe they will participate in some of our activities.

WGNSS Group Activity Schedules

BOTANY GROUP

Chair—George Van Brunt

Monday Botany Walks, Leader—Fr. James Sullivan; now in his **50th year**! The WGNSS Botany Group visits many of the same locations as the Bird group. Sign up for WGNSS Botany Group e-mails from Wayne Clark by contacting him at wclark3@cs.com or (314) 962-5443 and receive an e-mail no later than Sunday about the following Monday's trip.