

photographic record and second winter record for the state. The last sighting of this bird in eastern Missouri was by Jack VanBenthuisen in November 1991 at St. Charles Airport.



<http://i29.photobucket.com/albums/c281/bilrudn/42009/1-10-10e2-1.jpg>. Photo by the author.

Record Committee new dilemma: here is a bird that was not fully identified in the field, but only later based on photographs. It makes one wonder if any of the five specimens collected were not identified until later once in the hand.



The “overlooked, needle-tailed, thick-headed fly”

By Ted C. MacRae¹

While photographing the rare *Typocerus deceptus* on flowers of wild hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*) at [Trail of Tears State Park](#) in southeast Missouri last June, I encountered this strange fly also visiting the hydrangea blossoms. At first I thought it was some weird type of syrphid fly, but it turns out to be a member of an even more unusual group of flies in the appropriately-named genus *Stylogaster*². Although classified in the family Conopidae (thick-

¹ Reprinted from an article posted August 14, 2009 by the author at: <http://beetlesinthebush.wordpress.com>.

² Derived from the Latin *stilus* (needle) and the Greek γαστήρ (belly, stomach), a reference to the highly elongated female abdomen, or “tail.”

headed flies), members of this genus are placed in their own subfamily (Stylogastrinae) due to their unusual morphology and biology (obligate parasites of crickets, cockroaches and calyptrate flies). [Ninty-two described species](#) are currently placed in the genus, only two of which occur in North America (the remainder are found chiefly in the Neotropics and in sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia). This individual appears to be a female *S. neglecta* because of its short 2nd antennomere (antennal segment) and highly elongate 3rd antennomere (in *S. biannulata*, the 2nd antennomere is almost as long as the 3rd). Thus, the “overlooked, needle-tailed, thick-headed fly” – and who said common names are easier?



Stylogaster neglecta at flower of *Hydrangea arborescens*. Photo by the author.

Morphologically, stylogastrines are distinguished from other conopids by their eggs, which feature a rigid barbed tip. This, along with some behavioral observations, seems to imply a shooting oviposition technique; however, morphological evidence suggests that the eggs are forcibly jabbed into their hosts (Kotrba 1997). The larvae hatch and develop inside their host as internal parasites, but other than the egg very little is known about the life histories of species in this genus (Couri and Pont 2006). Adults are further distinguished by their long proboscis, which exceeds the length of the body when fully extended and is used to access nectar within a variety of flowers. Adult females aggressively intercept hosts in-flight for oviposition, and speculation has been made that they are obligate associates of army ants (New World subfamily Ectoninae and Old World subfamily Dorylinae), relying upon the ants’

raiding columns to flush out their prey. However, since the genus also occurs in Madagascar and parts of Africa where army ants are completely absent, it is clear that at least some species of *Stylogaster* have no obligatory association with these ants (Stuckenberg 1963, Couri and Pont 2006).

REFERENCES:

[Couri, M. S. and A. C. Pont. 2006.](#) Eggs of *Stylogaster* Macquart (Diptera: Conopidae) on Madagascan Muscids (Diptera: Muscidae). *Proceedings of the California Academy of Science* 57(16):473-478.

[Kotrba, M. 1997.](#) Shoot or stab? Morphological evidence on the unresolved oviposition technique in *Stylogaster* Macquart (Diptera: Conopidae), including discussion of behavioral observations. *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington* 99:613-621.

[Stuckenberg, B. R. 1963.](#) A study on the biology of the genus *Stylogaster*, with the description of a new species from Madagascar. *Revue de Zoologie et Botanique Africaines* 68:251-275.



Publications by Members

[Carl Darigo. 2009.](#) A County Checklist of the Mosses of Maryland. *Evansia* 26(4):193-218.



Maryland Heights Residents for Responsible Growth: 3rd Annual Trivia Night

By Deborah Moulton¹



Maryland Heights Residents for Responsible Growth, in conjunction with the Open Space Council, is sponsoring their 3rd annual trivia night to raise funds for

purchasing land in the Howard Bend area and to support their educational efforts. Maryland Heights Residents for Responsible Growth formed

¹ Board member, Maryland Heights Residents for Responsible Growth.

in 2008 in response to development threats in the City of Maryland Heights' Comprehensive Plan for Howard Bend and Creve Coeur Park.

The event will be held on **Saturday, February 27** at the Maryland Heights Centre, 2344 McKelvey Rd., Maryland Heights, MO 63043. Doors open at 6:15 p.m., and trivia begins at 7 p.m. The cost is \$25 for individuals or \$160 for a table of 8. Soda and snacks will be provided – or bring your own (alcohol allowed). There will be raffles, games and prizes, and all funds raised from the event will be held in trust for Maryland Heights Residents for Responsible Growth for the future protection of open space in Howard Bend. Your donation helps protect green space for future generations.

Registration deadline is by mail is February 13 – send cash, check or money order payable to ‘Open Space Council’ to:

Maryland Heights Residents for Responsible Growth
P.O. Box 28521
St. Louis, MO 63146

Or call (314) 732-5808 to make arrangements for drop off by February 20.



St. Louis Zoo Lecture Series

By Jim Jordan²

The St. Louis Zoo presents two lecture series: *Conservation Conversations* and *Science Seminar Series*. Both series are co-sponsored by the Academy of Science –St. Louis. Programs are **FREE** and open to the general public, no reservations required. Programs are held in the Living World, with free parking available in the North parking lot. Call (314) 646-4544 for more information.

CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS

There is no March program.

SCIENCE SEMINAR SERIES

St. Louis scientists present timely topics and/or recent "discoveries."

² Curator of Education, Saint Louis Zoo.