



The Chat

Volume 53 Number 4

Columbia Audubon Society

December 2010

<http://columbia-audubon.missouri.org/>

Serving Audrain, Boone, Cooper, Howard, Monroe and Randolph Counties

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: STILL TIME TO SIGN UP!

The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) takes the place of a regular December meeting. All chapter members are strongly encouraged to participate in the CBC on **Saturday, December 18, 2010**. If you would like to participate, contact Laura Hillman at 442-3703 (leave a message) or hillmanl@missouri.edu. Or else come to the organizational meeting at her house at 7:30 on Dec. 2 at 7900 Cave Creek Rd. There is always room for more counters.

And remember that after the count, 6:00 pm on December 18, is the **Chili Supper** at the Community of Christ Church located at 1111 Fairview Road in Columbia (formerly called the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). It is south of Fairview Elementary School. For more information, see the November *Chat*, or contact Laura.

COLUMBIA AUDUBON NATURE SANCTUARY IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY

A group of volunteers worked on October 28, to remove 6 piles of old fencing plus the metal calf feeder. They were delivered to Advantage Metals Recycling. Volunteers were: Jim Bryan, Dave Hayden, Rick Crowe, Bill Mees, Jeff Baker, and Cleo Kottwitz. Jeff is on staff with the Office of Creative Ministries. He brought their "disaster relief" loader and trailer to do the heavy lifting and hauling.

On November 1, Bill Mees and Howard

Hinkel installed a beautiful new sign at the Cunningham St. entrance (see below). Special thanks to Bill Mees for building the sign – an outstanding piece of work that is easily visible and helps visitors find our place.

Poles have been delivered, and construction of the trail bridges is scheduled to begin Saturday, Nov 13. This will be a major improvement for the trail. Jordan Asher of Scout Troop #52 is taking the lead in this as an Eagle Scout project.

Bill Mees and Cleo Kottwitz have begun the work of cutting the "thorny" locust trees that are invading the front meadow. One brush pile done and two or three to go.....Anyone interested in helping please call Cleo: 573-446-0799.



**COLUMBIA AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS – December, 2010**

Field trips are to find, enjoy and learn about wild birds. These free trips are appropriate for adults and children 9 years old and above who have shown an interest in birds. Children aged 9 through 11 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

December 4, Saturday morning**FAYETTE LAKES AND POSSUMHAW BOOKSTORE, Howard Co.**

Leader: Edge Wade 445-6697

Meet: 8:30 at southwest corner of the Parkade Center lot, Bus. Loop 70.

Bring water, layered clothing. We will bird Peters and D.C. Rogers lakes west of Fayette, then have a cup of good coffee or tea while browsing the fine selection (much natural history and Missouriiana) of Columbia Audubon Society member Jim Wallace's Possumhaw bookstore in Fayette.

Participants may lunch in Fayette or return to Columbia by 12:30. (We'll decide who is doing which before we leave Columbia.)

December 7, Tuesday morning**COLUMBIA AUDUBON NATURE SANCTUARY**

Leaders: Bill Mees & Howard Hinkel 445-7781

Meet: 8:30 a.m. at the CANS entrance at the stub of Cunningham Dr., off Bray. Bray goes west from Fairview Rd. between Rollins and Chapel Hill.

We will walk the new trail, learn about the nature sanctuary, and identify and count the birds seen to add to the developing CANS checklist. Beginners are especially welcome. Experienced birders will help with i.d., binocular use, and offer birding tips.

We anticipate finishing the walk about 10:00.

December 12, Sunday afternoon**MU HORTICULTURE & AGROFORESTRY RESEARCH CENTER (HARC), Howard Co.**

Leader: Susan Hazelwood 445-4925

Depart: 12:30 p.m. from the parking lot on the south side of the Worley St./Stadium Blvd. McDonald's. HARC is a 660-acre farm that includes several experimental fruit and nut orchards; forest farming, riparian buffer and silvopasture demonstrations; forage shade trials; greenhouses; a flood tolerance laboratory; five lakes and ponds; and one of Missouri's oldest brick homes, the 1819 Thomas Hickman House. The farm, set in the beautiful, rolling Missouri River hills, is also the U.S. National Arboretum Midwest Plant Research and Education Site.

Our goal is to search the pine trees for crossbills (unlikely), Long-eared Owls (possible) and Red-breasted Nuthatches (stronger possibility).

Participants should dress for being outside and hiking. Bring beverages and snacks.

Plan for a return to Columbia when daylight fades.

December 18, Saturday all day**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AND CHILI SUPPER, Boone Co.**

Event coordinator: Laura Hillman 442-3703

Call Laura to sign up as a Christmas Bird Count participant



TWO UPCOMING EVENTS

1. The 9th Annual Statewide Environmental Summit, sponsored by the Missouri Votes Conservation Education Fund (MVCEF), will be held in Columbia at the MU Natural Resources Building on Saturday, January 22nd from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For details and to register for the conference go to: <http://movotesconservation.org/MVCEFSummit.aspx>.

Contact David Bedan (573-445-9834) or Executive Director, Liz Forrestal (314-725-9494) if you have any questions.

2. Save the Date: 41st Annual Rivers & Wildlife Celebration, March 17-20, 2011.

Gather with wildlife enthusiasts from around the world to celebrate the annual migration of 500,000 sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl through the heart of the Central Flyway. The Nebraska Bird Partnership is proud to co-host the nation's longest running wildlife festival with Audubon Nebraska.

Check the web often for updates, because the agenda is still shaping up.

<http://www.nebraskabirds.org/>

Here are a few highlights of what we have planned for the 2011 Celebration:

- * Photography workshop with Michael Forsberg
- * Friday night keynote address by Rick Wright, "Oops My Mistake: Ten Big Birding Boobos and How I Survived Them"
- * Saturday night keynote address by Dr. Richard Beilfuss, President of the International Crane Foundation
- * An expanded "Wild Experience Room", with live animal shows returning from Raptor Recovery Nebraska and Dan Fogell with Nebraska snakes
- * A variety of field trips to choose from to see cranes, waterfowl, prairie chickens, and other birds and wildlife

REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN JANUARY 2011

Any other questions about the Celebration?

Email kpoague@audubon.org or call 402-797-2301.

Looking for other things to do during your stay? Visit nebraskaflyway.com for help planning your visit to central Nebraska during spring migration.

Nebraska Bird Partnership

203 W 2nd Street

Grand Island, NE 68801

Tel: (308) 382-6468

Email: birds@nebraskabirds.org

TIPS FOR TYROS

by Edge Wade

Tyro: A beginner in learning; a novice.

Tips to improve birding skills so birding experiences are more successful (and fun).

Using Binoculars

1. Practice using your binoculars, even when there is no bird present.
2. Learn and remember which way to turn the focus wheel for closer/more distant focus so it becomes an automatic, subconscious act.
3. Reset your binoculars after each sighting to about the same distance each time. Do this by pointing at a tree or bush about 20 feet away and bringing it into focus. If this becomes a habit, you will always know immediately how far away your binoculars are set and which way to turn the focus wheel to view the next bird sighted.
4. When a new bird is sighted, start turning the focus wheel to bring the correct distance into focus before your binoculars get to your eyes.
5. Vegetation looks different without and with binoculars. Avoid losing the bird seen by unaided eyes when you look for it in your binoculars. As you bring the binoculars up, make a mental note of the bird's location in the context of nearby vegetation. Example: Second limb to the right of the squirrel's nest.
6. Keep watching the bird as you bring your binoculars to your eyes. Don't look down at the binoculars (your hands know where the binoculars and your eyes are).
7. Practice, practice, practice.

SERENDIPITY AT ROCK BRIDGE STATE PARK

Howard Hinkel

Birding with a purpose such as targeting a specific bird sometimes pays off for me, but often does not. The Saturday before Thanksgiving it paid off handsomely and in unexpected ways. Four of us, short on time and wary of hunting territory, decided to bird Rock Bridge primarily to see the Winter Wren. Within five minutes and in the vicinity of the kiosk at the Devil's Ice Box parking lot, the Wren appeared. This year's Wren seems to enjoy an audience. Just as he did for Edge Wade's CAS group on Tuesday of that week, he allowed us varied and sustained views. Apparently knowing that we, three relatively inexperienced and one very savvy and experienced birders, would want to see that short tail, he gave us a side view, holding his tail high so we could not miss it. "Want to see the dark brown on my belly and my dark, heavy bars on my flanks? I'll turn and look you in the eye." And so on. Mission accomplished; we got our Wren, just as we had planned.

Then luck kicked in. The loud, resonant call of a Pileated Woodpecker sounded as though it was very close to us, and it was. No more than twenty yards away and very close to one another on the same tree trunk two of these awesome birds gave us terrific views. When they flew off we were able to focus on two Purple Finches and several Golden-Crowned Kinglets behind us. On we went to the Grasslands Trail just up the road; this time the mission was to see a variety of Sparrows. Slow, slow, slow—until we heard the raucous chatter of several Red-headed Woodpeckers coming from the woods just beyond the nearly stagnant pool on the left. On that part of the trail where grasslands meets woods, we turned right and stopped at the small pond on the right. The quest for Sparrows ceased as we found a community of various birds. Without moving more than thirty yards we saw at least a dozen Red-Headed Woodpeckers (most of whom were chattering at a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker), at least twenty Rusty Blackbirds with a Northern Flicker in their midst, perhaps fifty American Robins, a half-dozen Common Grackles, an abundance of Eastern Bluebirds still visible in the Grasslands area, probably a dozen Dark-eyed Juncos, and many Blue Jays and Starlings.

In a totally different context the English poet John Milton wrote a line something to this effect: "They also serve who only stand and wait." We four found great and unanticipated joy in birding while standing and waiting.

**BIRDS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Lisa Schenker, education chair, reports that she has a promising group of 24 birders in her 4th grade class at Grant Elementary this year. They spent one beautiful afternoon taking a bird-spotting field trip along the MKT trail. The students also presented a slide show featuring around 70 species of birds. Each student

researched several birds and presented "cool facts" about them to 8 classrooms at Grant and a packed house of families and friends one evening. Another promising birder at Grant, a girl still in Kindergarten, had a ready answer to the question who celebrated the first Thanksgiving: "It was the Indians and the penguins."



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cdk13@socket.netHospitality: Dolores Clark
474-4510Bird Counts: Laura Hillman (see above)
Allison Vaughn (see above)

Past President: *Vanessa Melton

Here is a poem for those of us who do not manage and tend our yards with as much care as others; I'd like to think it makes a good case for providing habitat as well.

This is Mary Oliver's "Backyard"

I had no time to haul out all
the dead stuff so it hung, limp
or dry, wherever the wind swung it

over or down or across. All summer
it stayed that way, untrimmed, and
thickened. The paths grew
damp and uncomfortable and mossy until
nobody could get through but a mouse or a

shadow. Blackberries, ferns, leaves, litter
totally without direction management
supervision. The birds loved it.

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1331, Columbia, MO 65205. Check a category: Student (\$10.00) Individual (\$15.00) Family (\$25.00) Donor (\$50.00) Friend/Business sponsor (\$300.00)

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