



The Chat

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Columbia Audubon Society

April 2011

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

APRIL 20 CAS MEETING: Joan Stack on Charles Schwartz, Missouri's Audubon

- April 20 at 7:30 p.m.
- Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd.
- Joan Stack, Curator of Art Collections, The State Historical Society of Missouri. Joan holds a PhD from Washington University in St. Louis. Among her areas of expertise are George Caleb Bingham, Thomas Hart Benton, and art in Missouri. Artist and biologist Charles Schwartz worked for forty years at the Missouri Department of Conversation and his wildlife drawings are celebrated for their scientific accuracy and aesthetic beauty.

CAS to Vote on Future of Wild Haven House

By John Besser

At the April 20 general meeting, CAS members will be asked to vote on the future of the rental house at the Wild Haven Nature Area. Details about the vote are at the end of this article; first, some background:

Over the past two years, members of the CAS board of directors have spent a lot of time considering the future of the rental house. CAS has operated this house as a rental property since the 1990s. From fiscal years 2000 - 2010 gross rental income from the house averaged about \$5000/year, with a net income of about \$2500/year after expenses for maintenance and remodeling.

In recent years the house has been plagued by moisture problems caused by the old, uninsulated metal roof. There is some leakage, but the biggest problem is condensation, which results in accumulation of moisture in the suspended ceiling panels and in the fiberglass ceiling insulation. This moisture could lead to development of mold: an unhealthy situation for tenants and a major potential liability for CAS.

After extensive research, the board received several bids to address the problems. The most credible were

over \$20,000. The board discussed these bids at a special board meeting on 1-26-11. After considering the cost of roof repairs relative to CAS' current financial condition and potential future income and expenses from the rental house, the board voted NOT to proceed with roof repairs. The board then voted to stop renting the house, and our last tenants moved out last month.

These decisions left CAS with two options for the house: (1) demolish the house to eliminate safety and liability concerns and to allow the site to return to a more natural condition compatible with the surrounding 100+ acres of Wild Haven; or (2) sell the house and a minimum acreage for a rural residence (probably 5-10 acres) to a private buyer. Because sale of the property was considered a last resort, the board first looked into costs of demolition. At its March 16th meeting, the board considered two estimates for demolition and voted to accept the low bid of \$4250 from the Loftis Company of Hallsville, specialists in salvage, recycling, and demolition of homes and commercial buildings. The board heard very positive comments from Loftis' previous clients, including the cities of Columbia and Moberly.

CAS by-laws state that real-estate transactions require approval by the CAS general membership. Therefore, a vote to accept or reject the Loftis demolition bid will be held at the upcoming (April 20) general membership meeting. We must have a quorum of 20 or more Audubon members (local or national) to have a legitimate vote. If you are a member but will not attend the April meeting, you may cast your vote by e-mail to CAS President Howard Hinkel.

Feel free to contact me or any board member if you have any questions about this.

BIRD COUNTS by Laura Hillman

The Christmas Bird Count was a great success. We had 68 people out in the field in 14-24 parties. We traveled 668 miles by car and 52 miles by foot for a total of 720 miles. We spent 164 party hours. It was an exceptionally good winter day starting at 17 degrees and climbing to 34. There was no snow or ice to contend with, and roads were fair from a previous snowstorm in some areas but our four wheel drives made it. Parties started as early as 5:00 AM and ended at 5:30 PM just in time for a great chili supper. We set a recent record with 108 confirmed species and 102,995 individual birds. 43,385 Mallard ducks beat out 7,856 Canada Geese and 19,496 Red wing Blackbirds with only 6,532 European Starlings being admitted to. We got at least one of almost every winter species seen in these parts. I can send the exact counts to anyone who is interested. Thanks to all the counters and thanks to everyone who helped with a great chili supper.

Now it's time for the North American Migratory Bird count. The areas are different but the counting is the same. The main difference is that THE BIRDS ARE DIFFERENT. Say hello to our new transient or permanent friends. The count is on May 14th when they should be at their highest concentration nationwide. This is a crucial count for determining which species are having trouble on their wintering grounds and during migration. This information can help focus interventions to help save declining species. Please contact me if you plan to count or if you wish to get on one of our thirteen teams. I will be contacting former team leaders and hope that they all plan to count this year.

**TIPS FOR TYROS: BIRDERS, START YOUR ENGINES! by Edge Wade**

April! At last! Let's get a jump start on what we hope to see.

Eastern Phoebe [EAPH]. This hardy flycatcher is the first to return to our climes. Look for it near water, and watch for its characteristic tail bobbing. It is a dark brown/gray (almost black on head, wings and tail), with white underparts. The bill is all black; it has no wingbars. Note that in the early spring, some may retain some yellow below, a fall plumage characteristic.

Some of you may have been fortunate enough to catch sight of Golden-crowned Kinglets [GCKI], lately. They are much more likely to show off their distinctive crown than their cousins, the Ruby-

Crowned Kinglets [RCKI] who are appearing now in greater numbers. Diminutive dynamos, the GCKI at 4 inches and the RCKI at 4.25, are among our smallest species, and are closely related to the European Goldcrest and Firecrest. If it is tiny, up in the tree and won't stay still enough for a good look, it is likely a kinglet! If you can get a decent glimpse, you can tell them apart. Both have two white wing bars, but the Golden-crowned has a white eye stripe (with a dark stripe above it), and the Ruby-crowned has a broken, slightly elliptical eye ring.

About mid-month, another really tiny bird will appear. It is the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher [BGGN], only 4.25 inches long, and much of that is the white-bordered long tail. Their full, white eye rings are prominent. BGGNs are active, often loudly scolding. Look for them building small lichen-covered nests, often on horizontal limbs near the junction with an overhanging limb (rain shelter for the little ones).

Hermit Thrush [HETH]. This 6.75 inch early migrant may be more of a harbinger of spring than its American Robin cousin. It has a whitish, complete eye ring, droops its wings (a characteristic typical of thrushes), and frequently bobs its reddish tail and flicks its wings. Watch for it in low branches (it likes cedars), and in low areas near water.

Brown Thrasher [BRTH] is distinguished from thrushes by its size (11 inches, not the 7 inch range of our migrant thrushes), by the heavy streaking on the breast and flanks, and by the really long tail. Watch for its leaf-scattering behavior, often under shrubs.

Yellow-rumped Warbler [YRWA]. These hardiest of all warblers will increase in numbers this month--and in the many varieties of plumages. Look at your field guide and be ready for them as they change plumage in readiness for the nesting season. The adult males are strikingly handsome.

Get those Yellow-rumped Warblers sorted out so you'll be ready for the first wave of early spring warblers (technically called Wood Warblers to distinguish them from unrelated European warblers). Wood Warblers migrate in waves. Some are early, some are mid-spring, and some are late spring arrivals.

Warblers to study in your field guide to prepare for the first wave: Northern Parula, Yellow-throated, Pine, Palm, Cerulean, Black-and-White, Prothonotary, Louisiana Waterthrush. Warblers to study for the second wave: Nashville, Yellow, Black-throated Green, Worm-eating, Swainson's, Kentucky, Hooded.

On their heels come: Blue-winged and Golden-winged, Tennessee, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush.

Bringing up the rear will be: Connecticut, Mourning, Wilson's and Canada.

Some words about Warbler Neck: Warbler Neck is an affliction encountered and endured by ardent birders in the spring. It is caused by seeking, following and carefully observing warblers flitting about high above in the maddeningly increasing growth of bird-obscuring leaves. The only known relief is the next dawn's chorus of northbound birds. Enjoy!



COLUMBIA AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS--April and early May, 2011

Field trips are to find, enjoy and learn about wild birds. These trips are free and 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.

Be sure to note the departure place and time for each trip. As we move into spring, participants are reminded to dress in layers, wear a hat or visor, bring water, a snack, and to apply sunscreen and insect repellent as needed.

If you own an FRS radio, please bring it. We have a limited number available.

April 14, Thursday morning

COLUMBIA PARKS BIRDING TOUR--Beginners' special (but all birders welcome)

Trip co-sponsored by Songbird Station. After the field trip, drop by the store at Forum and Chapel Hill (next to Clover's) for coffee, donuts and a 10% discount on merchandise.

Leader: Edge Wade--cell 268-3714.

Leaving at 8:00 a.m. from Hwy AC/ Grindstone Pkwy/ New Haven Rd./ US 63 commuter parking lot (SE corner of the intersection).

End time: about 11:00

We'll tour several of Columbia's city parks to learn where they are, what they offer for birding variety, and how and when to get the most from a birding visit. Time available and weather will determine how many and which parks we visit. Beginners are encouraged to join us to learn about the parks as birding venues, what migrants to expect in mid to late April, and practice techniques to locate them.

April 19, Tuesday morning

COLUMBIA AUDUBON NATURE SANCTUARY

Trip co-sponsored by Songbird Station. After the field trip, drop by the store at Forum and Chapel Hill (next to Clover's) for coffee, donuts and a 10% discount on merchandise.

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.

April 23, Saturday

PRAIRIE HOME CA, Cooper & Moniteau Co.

Leader: Edge Wade--cell 268-3714.

Leaving at 7:30 from southwest corner of the Parkade Center lot, Bus. Loop 70.

Lunch: Cafe in town of Prairie Home

Return: We'll be back at Parkade by 2:00 p.m.

We'll bird by car and foot, exploring this varied area as we look for residents and arriving migrants.

**April 29-May 1, Friday evening, Saturday, Sunday morning
ASM SPRING MEETING, Kansas City**

Hosted by Burroughs Audubon Society, headquartered at Unity Village in the southeast portion of the KC area. Check the ASM web page, www.mobirds.org <<http://www.mobirds.org>> for details and registration form.

The ASM Spring Meeting is an opportunity for all Missouri birders to meet and visit with one another, to bird new places with experienced leaders, and to learn more about birds and birding.

This is not a CAS scheduled field trip. This one is "do it yourself". Get a carload together and plan for an exciting weekend of birding.

**May 7, Saturday R.S.V.P as driver or passenger so we will have enough cars
TOWER GROVE PARK, St. Louis & Riverlands MBS, St. Charles Co.**

Leader: Edge Wade--cell 268-3714.

Leaving at: 8:00 a.m. from Patricia's Supermarket parking lot on I-70 Drive Southeast and Keene St.

Lunch: Bring a brown bag lunch (and drink) for a picnic in the park. Leader's car will have a large cooler.

Return: We plan to be back at Patricia's between 4:30 and 5:00 p.m.

This is expected to be the peak of passerine migration in the St. Louis area, and Tower Grove Park is the epicenter of great expectations for this weekend. Among the migrants we'll seek are Black-throated Blue and Cape May Warblers, two species whose spring migratory paths typically reach only barely into eastern Missouri. We'll center our search at the migrant-magnet bubbler, and will explore other parts of the park before decamping to Riverlands on a BDR (birder's direct route) return to Columbia.

Those who do not plan to walk in the park may wish to bring a stool or chair from which to watch the bubbler in comfort for an extended period.

**May 14, Saturday
NATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD COUNT DAY**

Boone County Coordinator: Laura Hillman-- 442-3703.

This is an annual event held on the second Saturday of May. All of Boone County is covered in teams. Birders of all skill levels are welcomed to help on the teams. Mark the date on your calendar, contact Laura to volunteer, and watch for additional information about participation.

**May 15, Sunday
EAGLE BLUFFS SPECIAL EVENT**

The Columbia Audubon Society will be one of several organizations participating in this event. We will have members there to demonstrate birding with scopes and to lead walks.

Watch for announcements about how you can help and/or participate.

**May, 17 Tuesday morning
COLUMBIA AUDUBON NATURE SANCTUARY**

Trip co-sponsored by Songbird Station. After the fieldtrip, drop by the store at Forum and Chapel Hill (next to Clover's) for coffee, donuts and a 10% discount on merchandise.

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.



CAS BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

* indicates a voting member

*President : Howard Hinkel
(Acting)

*Vice-President: Alice Reese

*Secretary: Bonnie Heidy

*Treasurer: Eric Seaman

Directors: *Jean Graebner
*Laura Hillman
*Bill Mees
jandbmees@mchsi.com

Membership: *Eric Seaman (see above)

Communication: *Allison Vaughn

Chat Editor: David Schenker

Website: Douglas Miller

E-mail List: Jim Gast

Outreach & Education: Lisa Schenker

Conservation: *Dave Bedan

Field Trips: *Edge Wade

Natural Areas: *John Besser (Wild Haven)
Harold Anderson (Albert Area)
Cleo Kottwitz (CANS)

Hospitality: Dolores Clark
474-4510

Bird Counts: Laura Hillman (see above)
Allison Vaughn (see above)

Past President: *Vanessa Melton

CAS FIRST ANNUAL IN-HOUSE AUDIT

At the April 20 meeting, copies of the proposed Fiscal Year budget (June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012) will be available for you to take home, review and comment on. We'll also have copies of the monthly report, annual report to National Audubon, and other documents you may want to review.

This is your chance to see where your membership contributions are spent, and to make your concerns known. Members will have approximately 30 days to make comments on the draft budget. The budget is expected to be adopted by the Board at the May meeting.

You can also see the budget on the CAS website, below the table of contents.

Support our corporate sponsor: **Songbird Station** at the corner of Forum and Chapel Hill, 573 446-5941, and songbirdstation.com.

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Columbia Audubon Society Membership and Dues Form

Local annual dues are voluntary. Dues support Columbia Audubon Society Functions such as *The Chat* and Christmas Bird Count. The membership is for 12 months. Make checks payable to the Columbia Audubon Society and mail this form to P. O. Box

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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