



# The Chat

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Columbia Audubon Society

May 2011

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

## **MAY COLUMBIA AUDUBON SOCIETY MEETING AND PICNIC, WEDS. MAY 18**

- Fairview Shelter on Fairview Road.
- Bring a dish to share. Iced tea, soft drinks, and fine crystal and china will be provided.
- We'll plan to eat about 6:00; see last paragraph below.

The main business will be to vote on a slate of officers, specifically secretary, vice-president, and a director. The nominations for these positions will be announced to the membership in the first week of May. At Chat deadline time we are looking for someone to agree to being on the ballot as secretary or vice-president. If you are interested please contact Howard Hinkel at [hinkelh@missouri.edu](mailto:hinkelh@missouri.edu). (We have 2 positions covered in one combination or another, but need 1 more either/or candidate; write-in nominations may be made at the meeting provided the person nominated is in attendance.) *We need a good turn-out for the vote to take place; bylaws require a quorum of 20!*

The second order of business will be to relax and enjoy the environs. Later details, sent by way of mass email, will lay out possible activities before we begin to eat at 6:00. The shelter is reserved for us from 4:00 to 9:00. There should be ample time to do some late-afternoon birding in the Sanctuary, or to walk it and learn more about it, or to do the same with the Bonnie View property.

## **NATURE SANCTUARIES CONTROVERSIES (DOGS AND TRAIL)**

This is a "bare bones" explanation of the issues of: (1) prohibition of dogs in the Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary [note that this is the City sanctuary, dogs are already prohibited in the CAS nature sanctuary per Board and membership vote]; and (2) the routing of a segment of the Scott's Branch Trail along Scott's Branch Creek, through the Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary and Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary.

The City Council has requested citizen input before their decisions on these issues at the May 16 Council meeting. CAS members are encouraged to email the mayor and council representatives, even if the opinion expressed is not that endorsed by CAS.

**Dogs:** CAS has endorsed the prohibition of dogs on the City land, Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary, because domestic dogs disturb wildlife, have a detrimental effect on natural systems, and disturb people trying to enjoy/learn from the natural systems. Neighborhood dog owners have gotten into the routine of walking dogs on the city and on the CAS land. Despite protestations that, "I always have my dog on a leash," by nearly all who testified, recently CAS members have encountered 13 dogs on our property; only one was on a leash.

A compromise offered by Fourth Ward councilman Dudley would allow dogs in the approximately 10 acres cut off by Rollins St. and allow them on the 8-foot wide concrete bike trail [a segment of the Scott's Branch Trail] that will run along the far east side of Bonnie View. CAS has endorsed this compromise.

*SANCTUARIES CONTROVERSIES, ctd.*

**Trail:** CAS has endorsed the portion of the Scott's Branch Trail that will be an 8-foot wide concrete strip along the far east side of Bonnie View. It will run from the stub of Weaver on Bray Ave. [on the south of the property] to Rollins Rd. on the north. Spurs will go into Fairview Park and to Fairview School. The controversy centers on another segment: How to route the trail as it connects Chapel Hill/Scott to the Weaver stub on Bray.

The route proposed on the Bonnie View Master Plan is unsatisfactory to many people. Some question the safety of sidewalks. Particularly troublesome is the portion along sidewalks of Dublin Ave. and Bray Ave. CAS originally supported this route, but an alternate route along Cunningham appears to be more desirable (see description of Cunningham route below).

An alternate route previously rejected by planners is again under consideration. It runs from Scott/Chapel Hill through the narrow Scott's Branch creek bottomland corridor, then up the hill via switchbacks on CAS property, goes through the south portion of CAS property (proposed prairie restoration area), then into and through the Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary prairie area to the junction with the Weaver stub segment.

This route, gouged through flood-prone bottomland, would be the fourth non-motorized route connecting Chapel Hill on the south to Rollins on the north [the others are Scott, Cunningham, and Fairview]. Cost estimates to run the creek route from the connection at Scott Blvd. to the Weaver stub and up to Rollins vary, depending on the type of bridge required, from \$216,000 to \$296,000.

CAS opposes this route because:

- a. it is expensive and there are already alternatives;
- b. it is extremely destructive to the creek bottom;
- c. it would require several trees to be cut on the Audubon property;
- d. it would slice through prairie in the Audubon and Bonnie View sanctuaries; and,
- e. the intrusion of the hard surface and right-of-way, bicycle traffic and other activities it would support (jogging, etc.) are inconsistent with the purpose, use, and enjoyment of a nature sanctuary.

Additionally, this bike road would negate the compromise as to the presence of dogs in Bonnie

View and make prohibition of dogs impossible on the Audubon property.

The Cunningham Option: CAS members living in the neighborhood and those familiar with the area are advocating running the Scott's Branch Trail along the north side of Chapel Hill to Cunningham [there are no driveways on this stretch and it is ideal for a pedway], then along the east side of Cunningham, which is already designated as a "Green Route" by GetAbout Columbia [there are 7 drives near the south end and 3 at the north end], then one block east along Bray to the Weaver stub.

Please contact the mayor and council representatives to express your views and the reasons for your position on dogs in Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary and on the best route for the Scott's Branch Trail

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 Helen Anthony [ward5@gocolumbiamo.com](mailto:ward5@gocolumbiamo.com)  
 Barbara Hoppe [ward6@gocolumbiamo.com](mailto:ward6@gocolumbiamo.com)



### ***VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR EAGLE BLUFFS DAY WITH WILDLIFE***

CAS will be one of several organizations participating in this event (see May field trips list for description). We have promised to have members there to demonstrate birding with scopes and to lead walks along the trails.

This is a great opportunity to strike the spark that inspires people (children and adults) to take the first step toward discovering the wonders of birds and the joys of birding.

The event is from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. You would not have to be present for the whole event. We can work out 2-hours shifts with scopes and for short hikes.

Contact Edge Wade to volunteer:  
[edgew@mchsi.com](mailto:edgew@mchsi.com) or 445-6697.



### **TIPS FOR TYROS: THRUSHES AND FELLOW TRAVELERS**

Edge Wade

Migration is in full swing. Hard as it is, let's look beyond the warblers for more spring arrivals.

Thankfully, they are bigger, slower, more easily viewed.

May is the month for migrant thrushes. The thrush family is represented year-round in Missouri by the American Robin (AMRO) and Eastern Bluebird (EABL). Many individuals of these two species migrate through the state (the American Robin's Latin binomial is *Turdus migratorius*), so our wintering population is comprised of different birds than the summer breeding population.

One characteristic of thrushes is that the young have spotted breasts. Some lose the spots in adult plumages, some retain them. Another characteristic is the typical posture of sitting still with wings drooping. A brief look at a bird with drooping wings is often enough to narrow the identification process to this family. Then the sorting begins.

All of these thrushes are likely to be found on or near the ground, most often in moist (sometimes swampy), mixed woods.

The **Veery** (VEER) is the earliest of the "just passing through" branch of the family [other than the really early Hermit Thrush which is now winging further north], and it is the least likely to be seen (because of the small numbers).

The Veery has only residual spots on its breast. It is reddish brown above and a soft gray below. The face is grayish and it has an incomplete, indistinct eye ring. Its back and wing color is similar to that of the tail of the Hermit Thrush. It is softer than the bigger, heavily spotted Wood Thrush.

**Swainson's Thrush's** (SWTH) arrival overlaps the Veery. Swainson's is a browner (not reddish) bird above, with a complete white eye ring. The face is brown and buff. The breast is tawny with distinct,

dark spots.

The **Gray-cheeked Thrush** (GCTH) is passing through Missouri at the same time as the SWTH, but in smaller numbers. The back, wing and flank color may be indistinguishable from the Swainson's. Concentrate on the face. There may be a light, partial eye ring, but it is not the bold, complete ring of the SWTH. The face really is gray, especially the area below the eye. The spots are similar in size and darkness, but the breast they appear on is lighter than the Swainson's.

The best way to learn to distinguish between Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes is to study every one you find as long as you can keep it in sight, watching for each distinguishing characteristic. You may not be able to sort out the correct i.d. on every bird found.

**Wood Thrush** (WOTH) is a summer, breeding Missouri resident. It is reddish above, has an eye ring on a streaky face, and had large black spots on breast and flank. Its voice may be heard as a flute-like song, "e-o-e-o-lay" gracing our oak-hickory woodlands.

The thrushes are usually found by looking low in our woodlands. To see some of the other larger, colorful spring migrants, look up!

Summer and Scarlet Tanagers are Missouri summer residents. With a little study, they are easily distinguished. Note that clown-colored immature male Summer Tanager!

Watch for Rose-breasted Grosbeaks above, but Blue Grosbeaks may often be found in grasslands. Read your field guides to prepare for orioles. Our two summering species like different habitats. Revel in the beauty of a Missouri spring!



### **COLUMBIA AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS – 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.

**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, [edgew@mchsi.com](mailto:edgew@mchsi.com)

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**

**NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATORY BIRD COUNT DAY**

Boone County Coordinator: Laura Hillman-- 442-3703, [HillmanL@missouri.edu](mailto:HillmanL@missouri.edu)

This is an annual event held on the second Saturday of May. All of Boone County is covered in teams.

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. Birders of all skill levels are welcomed to help on the teams. Contact Laura to volunteer.

**May 15, Sunday**

**EAGLE BLUFFS DAY WITH WILDLIFE 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.**

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.

Event Description: Come see birds of prey, snakes, turtles, fish, wetland birds. Experience what it's like to bow fish. Try out your fishing and clay bird shooting skills. Learn about bear. See a sawmill in action. Watch how rocket nets are used to capture wildlife. Drive around a wetland. Hike. Use scopes with expert birders.

**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.



[schenkerd@missouri.edu](mailto:schenkerd@missouri.edu)

Website: Douglas Miller

### **CAS BOARD MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

\* indicates a voting member

\*President: Howard Hinkel  
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\*Vice-President: Alice Reese  
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\*Secretary: Bonnie Heidt  
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Hospitality: Dolores Clark  
474-4510

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

Past President: \*Vanessa Melton  
[vanndawn@hotmail.co](mailto:vanndawn@hotmail.co)

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### **SONGBIRD STATION ONE OF THE TOP SMALL BUSINESSES OF THE YEAR!**

Songbird Station, a long-time supporter of the Columbia Audubon Society, has been selected by the Columbia Chamber of Commerce as one of the top five small businesses of the year. Congratulations!

As part of small business week, Songbird Station will be hosting a seminar at their store (2010 Chapel Plaza Ct, near the intersection of Chapel Hill and Forum) on Friday, May 5, from noon-1:00 PM. The seminar is entitled "Helping Families Enjoy Nature Together," and lunch will be served. All are invited. For more information call 573 446-5941 or visit [songbirdstation.com](http://songbirdstation.com).

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## **SIGN UP FOR EMAIL DELIVERY OF THE CHAT!**

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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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Please deliver *The Chat* via e-mail to: \_\_\_\_\_

**National Audubon Society Membership Form Chapter N007XCH**

*For renewals, in order to avoid duplication, please complete the form exactly as it is on your Audubon Magazine mailing label.*

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