



# The Chat

Volume 54 Number 1

Columbia Audubon Society

September 2011

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

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

## Three Big Membership Changes

- *The Chat* newsletter is moving to an electronic, e-mailed format.
- All memberships will renew on September 1
- Online payment of dues will soon be available through the new C.A.S. website

### *The Chat*

Those of us who enjoy following the treasurer's reports may have noticed that the coming year's budget will be much leaner than before. For many years, rental income from the Wildhaven house provided a major portion of the Columbia Audubon Society's budget. With that house now leveled, we will now mostly rely upon local membership dues to support the C.A.S. mission. Unfortunately, the cost of printing *The Chat* newsletter almost exactly *equals* our total membership dues. In order that our financial support remains directed towards the immediate conservation and education goals of the C.A.S., the board has voted that *The Chat* newsletter will now solely be distributed by e-mail — except in the case of those older members who are not comfortable using computers and e-mail.

### September 1 Membership Renewal

Because of the complexity and cost of handling membership renewals and reminders throughout the year, the C.A.S. board decided to transition to a fixed membership period, beginning on September 1 of each year. On that day, **all** membership payments will be due for the following year. There's no tidy way to bring everyone's membership into the same period except by drawing a dividing line:

This means that we will need your e-mail address if you wish to continue receiving *The Chat* newsletter. If we don't already have your e-mail address, please send it along with your name (so we can match with your membership) to: ***columbia.missouri.audubon@gmail.com.***

- Everyone who joined or renewed **since March 1, 2011** will remain active members up until September 1, 2012 — next year.
- Everyone who sent payments **before March 1, 2011** will renew as of September 1, 2011 — this year.

Fortunately, annual C.A.S. dues are very inexpensive so at most it's only a few dollars difference either way.

### New Website and Online Membership Payments

This year the Daniel Boone Regional Library announced that it would be ending web-hosting services for non-profit organizations like the Columbia Audubon Society. So over the summer, our website moved to a new address:

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

With the new web space we look forward to offering new membership benefits:

- Online payment of membership dues. (This should be available in the next few weeks.)

- Later in the year, C.A.S. members will be able to view and update their membership accounts through the website, through which they may sign up for e-mail alerts concerning field trips, program information, society news and membership renewals.
- Also coming: those C.A.S. members who keep field notes of their visits to the C.A.S. nature areas will be able to record that data through the website. This information will help us monitor the nature areas, as well as provide visitors with seasonal forecasts of birds to watch for during their visits.

If you have any questions about any of these changes, please feel free to contact Douglas Miller (Membership Chair and Webmaster) at [columbia.missouri.audubon@gmail.com](mailto:columbia.missouri.audubon@gmail.com), or at 442-5550.

### **Columbia Audubon Society Programs and Speakers: 2011-2012**

**Please note NEW MEETING TIMES. Beginning with September's meeting, the Board will meet from 6:00 to 7:00. Our monthly programs will begin at 7:00 and will be followed by a business meeting and refreshments beginning at 8:00. All at the Unitarian-Universalist Church 2615 Shepard**

**Sept. 21: 7 P.M.** "The Natural History of the Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary"; Allison Vaughn, natural community ecologist, will explore historic documents including witness tree data and presettlement landscape descriptions to offer a portrait of the site in the early 1800s. She will discuss the sanctuary's current condition, offering a glimpse of the plants and animals you may see there throughout the year and talk about some of the challenges to managing a small nature sanctuary in the midst of an urban center.

**October 19:** "The Science of Bird Conservation"; Dr. Dylan Kesler, MU professor and researcher; MU Avian Lab

**November 16:** "Backyard Conservation"; Mel Toellner, Songbird Station owner; Small Business Owner of 2011

**December 17:** Christmas Bird Count and Chili Supper

**January 18:** "Threats to Biodiversity in Missouri"; Paul Nelson, Forest Ecologist for the Mark Twain National Forest, and author

**February 15:** "International Bird Conservation"; Brad Jacobs, Missouri Department of Conservation Ornithologist, and author

**March 21:** "Discovering Missouri's Natural Areas"; Mike Leahy, Missouri Department of Conservation, Natural Areas Coordinator and author

**April 18:** "What You Can Do for Missouri Bird Conservation"; Edge Wade, Veteran Birder and Lister

**May 16:** Annual Picnic. Time and place TBA

#### **TIPS FOR TYROS** by Edge Wade

Tyro: A beginner in learning; a novice.

Tips for Tyros will continue to appear in the CHAT as a column especially for beginning birders. These tips are to improve birding skills so birding experiences are more successful (and fun).

#### Tip #1: When to bird.

Go birding as often as you can (and if you can't get out, bird from your window). Bird alone and practice your

skills, BUT you'll find that you learn faster, with leaps from personally achieved plateaus if you also bird with other people. In this way, you share skills and birding lore: you teach and learn. Bird with a birding buddy or two AND go on CAS field trips to learn how to bird nearby sites (as important as knowing where the site is). Learn useful techniques, bird behavior, habitat preferences and expected occurrence.

#### Tip #2: How to get the best possible views with your 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. Start turning the focus wheel to bring the correct distance into focus before 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.

#### **FEATHERS: The Evolution of a Natural Miracle,**

by Thor Hansen.

Noted by Bill Mees

Since you are an avid birder, this new book may give you another reason to marvel at, enjoy, and protect our fine, feathered friends. From the dust jacket: "Engineers call feathers the most efficient insulating material ever discovered. ... Feathers are an evolutionary marvel: aerodynamic, functional, beguiling. Their story begins in the Jurassic period and leads through the development of flight to high fashion...Applying the research of paleontologists, ornithologists, biologists, engineers, and even art historians, Hanson asks: *What are feathers? How did they evolve? What do they mean to us?*" Enjoy the read!

## Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary

By Bill Mees

The past few months have been busy, frustrating, and potentially transformative for Columbia Audubon Society's 22 acre nature sanctuary. A brief history review and look into the future is warranted.

**History:** As long time members know, Columbia Audubon Society (CAS) has opposed the construction of a bustling bike/pedestrian trail on Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary (CANS). Members expressed a strong preference for habitat restoration, natural surface foot paths, and a natural nature experience not currently available in Columbia's park system. The CAS Board has steadfastly defended its property from encroachment through meetings with Columbia's Parks & Rec. Department, City Council members, Parks Commissions, Bicycle & Pedestrian Commission, Disability Commission, PedNet Coalition, Columbia's Mayor and new City Manager. This list, which is far from complete, represents the Board's efforts to protect CANS.

**Current:** In spite of our relentless efforts, it became obvious the City Council was prepared to exercise eminent domain against CAS. Legal representation sought by the Board confirmed these fears. It was at this point, having exhausted every option, the Board surrendered, but with stipulations. These stipulations will limit the impact and thus protect CANS:

- An 8 feet wide trail and 2 feet on either side (maximum easement width 12 feet)
- Trail to run as close to the South property line as possible.
- The trail will have NO switchbacks.
- NO tree removal or tree destruction will be allowed.
- CAS will have input into trail location and final approval.
- NO dogs on CAS property.
- The City will vacate the Cunningham road/utility easement on CAS property.
- CAS has the right to cross the trail to access a future parking lot.

The Board realized this was a dramatic change from the oft stated wishes of CAS members. As a result, a special summer membership meeting was convened. The ensuing meeting was marked by an open unlimited discussion and debate. Much angst was expressed regarding the turn of events. Given the threat of eminent domain and the stipulations, the membership voted (29 yes, 19 No, 1 abstention) to support the Board of Directors' decision.

Recent meetings with Columbia's Parks & Rec. Department have resulted in an agreement which will be formalized by CAS's attorney and forwarded to Columbia's City Council. This legally binding agreement with the City of Columbia will

guarantee adherence to the CAS stipulations. Also, CAS will receive monetary compensation for the easement.

There is an unexpected and positive outcome of the bicycle/pedestrian trail controversy. CAS has acquired many new friends. Columbia's environmentalist community has begun to come together, motivated by a goal to protect our dwindling natural green space. Many people, unknown to CAS heretofore, stood up before Columbia's City Council to express their support for CAS. The passion of these new friends, many are now new members of Columbia Audubon, should encourage all of us.

**Future:** With the trail issue settled CAS is now able to focus its efforts on the restoration of the sanctuary's habitat. This fall, thanks to the Missouri Department of Conservation, Audubon members will scatter seed as prairie restoration continues. The current 0.8 mile foot trail will be extended, opening more of the 22 acres to nature exploration.

**Really Big:** Especially exciting is the prospect for a spring, community wide, work session at both Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary and Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary. It has always been the intention of CAS to work with the City on the development, and restoration of these two nature sanctuaries. A committee is forming to unite ALL of Columbia's nature and outdoor interest groups into one huge community work session. This will not only unite groups with a common interest but also serve as a formal introduction to Columbia's two nature sanctuaries. Stay tuned for more information on this spring extravaganza.

So there you have it. With some detours, the future for Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary continues to unfold and move toward our ultimate vision of habitat restoration, nature education, and natural outdoor experience.

### Scouts Polish Columbia's Gem

Scouts continue to add to the luster of Columbia's nature sanctuary. This positive note relates to young men seeking to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. Alex Terry, Troop 4, has identified and marked the perimeter of Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary's 22 acres by installing steel fence stakes. As habitat restoration continues, CAS needed to know where its property begins and ends; now we do. Iain Gould, Troop 52, constructed and installed 4 information kiosks. Each kiosk is located where visitors enter Audubon's property. They provide a place to not only welcome visitors but explain the rules for our nature sanctuary. Other scouts are in the exploratory stages for additional projects. We owe these young people special thanks for selecting Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary to be the beneficiary of their Eagle rank quest. If you know members of other organizations whose interests and goals converge with CAS's, by all means encourage them to contact us.



### COLUMBIA AUDUBON SOCIETY EARLY FALL FIELD TRIPS

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. All trips are probably "a go" even in light rain. If in doubt, contact a trip leader the evening before or one hour before the scheduled meeting time.

What to bring on a field trip: Binoculars, field guide, water, snack, layered clothing, sunscreen.

**September 10, Saturday morning (beginners especially welcome)**

**ROCK BRIDGE MEMORIAL STATE PARK**

Trip co-sponsored by Songbird Station. Participants may meet at the store at 8:00 a.m. to caravan to the park, or join us at the Devil's Ice Box Parking Lot at 8:30 a.m. After the field trip (about 10:30a.m.), we'll go 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, [edgew@mchsi.com](mailto:edgew@mchsi.com)

We will look for resident birds and fall migrant warblers. Beginners are encouraged to join us to learn about the site, what migrants to expect in September, and practice techniques to locate them.

**September 11, Sunday all day**

**TOWER GROVE PARK, St. Louis**

Leader: Edge Wade cell 268-3714 or [edgew@mchsi.com](mailto:edgew@mchsi.com)

RSVP no later than September 8, so we know how many cars/drivers will be needed.

Meet: 6:30 a.m. at Patricia's Supermarket parking lot on I-70 Drive SE and Keene St.

Bring a picnic/brown bag lunch, water, folding stool/chair (optional).

We'll look for fall warblers and other migrants as we walk around Tower Grove Park, especially near the bubbler, and to Gurney Ct. off Magnolia, and perhaps drive to another portion of the park.

If something unusual has been reported at Riverlands or Confluence Point SP, we will probably leave Tower Grove immediately after lunch and head for the Riverlands area. We will be back in Columbia about 5 p.m.

**September 17, Saturday morning**

**LITTLE DIXIE LAKE CONSERVATION AREA, Callaway Co.**

Leader: Edge Wade cell 268-3714, [edgew@mchsi.com](mailto:edgew@mchsi.com)

Departure: 8:00 a.m. from the 63/AC commuter lot (southeast corner of US 63 and AC/New Haven Rd. intersection). Or join us at the main Little Dixie lot on the southwest corner of the lake between 8:20 and 8:30.

We will drive to the 5 parking lots, walk some on trails (including the asphalt trail on the southeast corner), and learn about the diverse habitats of this area. Bring a scope if you have one.

Trip length: We'll be done between 11 and noon.

**September 20, 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 as the beginning of the CANS checklist. Beginners especially welcome. Experienced birders will help with i.d., binocular use, and offer birding tips. We anticipate finishing the walk about 10:00.

**September 23-24-25, Friday, Saturday, Sunday**

**AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI FALL MEETING**

All birders are welcome to enjoy this opportunity to meet other birders from around the state, go on field trips led by Missouri's top birders, learn about birds and bird research projects, and go off diets for a couple of days.

To learn more and to register, go to ASM's web page, [www.mobirds.org](http://www.mobirds.org)

**October 8, Saturday morning**

**EAGLE BLUFFS CONSERVATION AREA**

**Trip is a joint trip with Burroughs Audubon Society, CAS as hosts**

Leader: Edge Wade cell 268-3714, [edgew@mchsi.com](mailto:edgew@mchsi.com)

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the McBaine Katy Trail parking lot on Rt. K.

Bring FRS radio if you have one. We will caravan through Eagle Bluffs, stopping to scope areas along the distribution channel and the various pools.

Plan to join the Burroughs Audubon folks for lunch at a local restaurant (to be determined).

**October 11, 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 trail, learn about the nature sanctuary, and identify and count the birds seen as we help develop the 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.

### October 29, Saturday morning

#### **COLUMBIA AUDUBON NATURE SANCTUARY (beginners especially welcome)**

**Trip co-sponsored by Songbird Station. Participants may meet at the store at 8:00 a.m. to caravan to the nature sanctuary, or join us at the sanctuary (see directions below) at 8:30 a.m.**

**After the field trip, we'll go to 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: 8:00 a.m. at Songbird Station OR 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 trail, learn about the nature sanctuary, and identify and count the birds seen as we help develop the CANS checklist. Experienced birders will help with i.d., binocular use, and offer birding tips. We anticipate finishing the walk about 10:00.

### November 5, Saturday morning (afternoon optional)

#### **GOLDCREST/SONGBIRD STATION WAREHOUSE GARAGE SALE IN MEXICO & BIRDING A MEXICO LAKE with WHETSTONE CREEK CA OPTION**

Leader: Edge Wade cell 268-3714, [edgew@mchsi.com](mailto:edgew@mchsi.com)

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

We will check out all the bargains at the warehouse, then bird a lake in Mexico, and go to a local restaurant for lunch.

Participants may opt to return to Columbia immediately after lunch, or bird Whetstone Creek CA and return to Columbia by 4:00 p.m.

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

\* indicates a voting member

\*President: Howard Hinkel

\*Vice-President: Julie Fisher

\*Secretary: Alice Robinson

\*Treasurer: Eric Seaman

Directors: \*Bonnie Heidy

\*Laura Hillman

\*Bill Mees

Membership: \*Douglas Miller

Communication: \*Allison Vaughn

Chat Editor: David Schenker

Website: Douglas Miller

E-mail List: Jim Gast

Outreach: Lisa Schenker

& Education:

Field Trips: \*Edge Wade

Natural Areas: \*John Besser (Wild Haven)

Nicholas March (Albert Area)

Cleo Kottwitz (CANS)

Hospitality: Dolores Clark

Bird Counts: Laura Hillman

Allison Vaughn

Past President: \*Vanessa Melton

**We welcome some help. The positions noted below must be filled as soon as possible. If you would like to serve in one of these roles, please let Howard Hinkel know by calling either 573-442-3408 or 573-424-4471 or by e-mailing me at [hinkelh@missouri.edu](mailto:hinkelh@missouri.edu).**

**EDITOR, "THE CHAT".** Our monthly newsletter remains a very important means of communicating with CAS members. At its last meeting, as you will read in this edition of the newsletter, the Board is trying to save paper, cut mailing and printing costs, and reduce the Editor's time-commitment by moving, as much as possible, to a "Chat" delivered by e-mail rather than by a mail carrier.

**CHAIR, OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE.** According to our Bylaws, this committee's main responsibilities are: a) "Organizing nature material for schools and libraries; b) Developing Society-sponsored educational activities; c) Developing and providing Society-related materials for presentation and/or display at community events." Several CAS members currently are actively helping us meet these responsibilities, **but we need a Chair. This position includes being a voting member of the Board.**

**CHAIR, CONSERVATION COMMITTEE.** Our Bylaws describes this committee thus: "The Conservation Committee shall be responsible for identifying, studying, and evaluating environmental problems and opportunities. The committee should be alert to the conservation action priorities of the National Audubon Society and establish local conservation priorities. In addition, the committee should bring these priorities to the attention of the Society and, where appropriate, represent the Society at hearings." **This position includes being a voting member of the Board.**

The Chat  
Columbia Audubon Society  
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Columbia MO 65205

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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)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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.*

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and mail this form to Columbia Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1331, Columbia, MO 65205. Check the correct category below:

New Introductory Rate (\$20.00)  Renewal (\$35.00)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**NEXT MEETING: Sept 21 at 7:00pm**

**BIG CHANGES IN CHAT DELIVERY AND MEMBERSHIP! See page 1.**

**OPENINGS ON THE CAS BOARD. See page 5.**