



The Chat

Volume 54 Number 2

Columbia Audubon Society

October/November 2011

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

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

NOVEMBER 16 MEETING: "Backyard Conservation" with Mel Toellner

Please note MEETING TIMES. 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

Please join us for a special program on "backyard conservation" that will be presented November 16, 7:00 pm by Mel Toellner, owner of Songbird Station in Columbia. Mel said, "My goal for the talk is helping you attract the birds you want to your backyards."

Mel and Bev Toellner started the now very successful Columbia store, Songbird Station in 1995. "INC 500" named Songbird Station "America's Fastest Growing Private Company" for 2002-2003. In 2011 the Columbia Chamber of Commerce named Songbird Station "Small Business of the Year." Songbird Station's wholesale division has grown to be the largest distributor of wild bird products in the United States. Their own "Songbird Essentials" brand has grown to be the "Fastest Growing Brand of Wild Bird Products in the United States" for the past four consecutive years. Mel says that they're proud that 90% of the products are made in the USA. Mel and Bev are strong supporters of Columbia Audubon Society.

AND NOTE FUTURE MEETINGS:

December 17: Christmas Bird Count and Chili Supper (see more details below)

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



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

THANK YOU to everyone who has sent in their 2011-2012 local C.A.S. membership dues, especially those of you who increased your support this year. We still haven't heard back from a number of members: if you use e-mail, you might double-check that your renewal notice didn't end up in a spam folder. Otherwise, if you haven't yet renewed your membership – or if you are a national Audubon member who would like to join in supporting our local conservation and educational efforts -- there's a mail-in form at the end of this newsletter, or you can go to www.columbia-audubon.org/membership to pay online. As always, if you have any membership questions, please feel free to contact Doug Miller at membership@columbia-audubon.org.



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).

Becoming a better birder is easy. Every time I go into the field, I take away something new that will come in handy on a future birding trip. I learn each time, especially when I'm with other birders.

Here is a sampling of tips picked up from other birders (and some of them were beginners!)

- Keep your elbows close to your sides, not pointed out away from your body as you look through your binoculars. This does four things: your arms will be steadier, you will be able to hold the binoculars up longer; you will not block other birders; and you present a less alarming shape to the birds you are watching.
- Watch the bird; don't just look at it. Let your eyes and your brain work together to gather and assimilate the pieces that say, "This is a ..." Study how it moves. Does it walk, hop, jerk, bob, flick wings, jab, probe, grab? Let your eyes go away from the bird, then return to it. Ask yourself, what is the first thing I see about that bird that tells me what it is? Ask yourself, what marks and actions do I use to separate this bird from a similar species?
- As you watch, think about where the bird is. Sure, it is in a tree or along a shore or mudflat or in grass. But make yourself think a little further. What kind of tree is that? Is the bird in the top or near the bottom? Is it working in the leaves or along the branch? Is it at the interface of mud and water or actually out in the water? Is this short or tall grass?
- Think about these and let your mind record the answer. It may help clinch the i.d. of this bird and/or of a future bird not seen well, but moving the same way and in the same habitat. Some of these suggestions may seem obvious--until you try them in the field. For example, it may be difficult to take your eyes off the bird, for fear of not being able to relocate it. That's part of the learning--the practice that is so essential, and the concentration and attention to detail that make all the difference between a

satisfying experience and a frustrating one. Other suggestions may seem just too much to be doing or thinking about while watching the bird. Again, the key is practice and concentration. Bodacious birding!

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AND CHILI SUPPER
DECEMBER 17**

Plan now for the usual Christmas Bird Count! Laura Hillman will again be the contact person, 442-3703. Any leaders not able to do their usual sections, any leaders needing additional members, and any other birders looking for spots contact her between November 9 and November 26 as she will be out of the country until December 15th, two days before the count. She'll be at the Nov. 16th Audubon meeting. Relevant forms and maps sent electronically last year can be used by changing the date. If there is enough interest, she will host an organizational meeting during that time and hand out the hard copy folders. She is hoping that the many volunteers who brought Chili and other food will again come forth and she will be looking for volunteers. We set a record last year both in birds and great food. Let's see if we can at least tie it.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR
NATURE SANCTUARY**

The Board welcomes members to help plan further improvements at Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary. If you are interested in serving on a planning committee please call Howard Hinkel at 424-4471 or email me at hinkelh@missouri.edu.

Likely first steps include restoring the area where fescue has been treated, planning a new trail which will link with Bonnie View trails, planning education programs, and restoring natural habitat that is disturbed by the construction of the Scott's Branch Trail on Audubon property.

Audubon and the Parks and Recreation Department believe that our combined efforts will result in nearly 100 acres of natural habitat available for education programs and for public enjoyment and appreciation of bountiful nature.

FIELD TRIPS – LATE OCTOBER TO EARLY DECEMBER

Columbia Audubon Society field trips are free and open to anyone interested in birds. 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.

For an autumn field trip, bring: Binoculars, field guide, water, snack, layered clothing.

Date : 10/29/2011 (Saturday trip)

Location : Columbia Nature Sanctuary

Details : Trip co-sponsored with Songbird Station. Beginners especially welcome. Meet at Songbird Station at 8:00 to caravan to the sanctuary or join us at the sanctuary at the Cunningham stub entrance off Bray at 8:30 a.m. We'll return to the store about 10:00 for coffee and donuts.

Contact Person : Leader Bill Mees 445-7781 and Howard Hinkel

Date : 11/5/2011 (Saturday trip)

Location : Goldcrest/Songbird Station Warehouse Garage Sale, Mexico, MO

Details : Meet at 8 a.m. at Patricia's Supermarket parking lot on I-70 Dr. SE and Keene St. We will go to Mexico, check out all the bargains at the warehouse, then bird a lake and have lunch in Mexico. Participants may opt to return to Columbia immediately after lunch, or bird Whetstone Creek CA and return to Columbia by 4 p.m.

Contact Person : Edge Wade 573-268-3714

Date : 11/17/2011 (Thursday trip)

Location : Eagle Bluffs

Details : Trip co-sponsored by Columbia Audubon Society and Songbird Station. We will tour Eagle Bluffs during the wildlife viewing window time period open during waterfowl hunting season. There should be a good variety of ducks present. Meet at Songbird Station at 12:30 p.m. Return by 3:45. If you have them, bring spotting scope and FRS radio.

Contact Person : Edge Wade edgew@mchsi.com 573-268-3714

Date : 12/3/2011 (Saturday trip)

Location : Binder Lake & MDC headquarter trails and Birds-I-View

Details : Columbia participants meet at US 63/AC (New Haven Rd.) commuter parking lot. We will depart at 7:45. Columbia & Jeff City groups will meet at the Binder Bait shop at the lake at 8:30. Lunch in Jeff City (place to be determined). Return to Columbia after lunch.

Contact Person : Edge Wade edgew@mchsi.com or Jane Frazier



WILD HAVEN UPDATES

From John Besser

House Demolition. The former rental house at Wild Haven was demolished by Loftis Company of Hallsville, with work completed in June. This project was proposed by the CAS board of directors last spring and approved by the membership at the April meeting. The contractors disassembled the steel structure, roof, and siding for reassembly at another site. The concrete

Wild Haven Updates, ctd.

foundation was broken up and buried in the former basement, and the site was covered with soil, graded to a gentle slope, and seeded with annual ryegrass.

There is still work to be done around the house site, including removal of fencing around the garden area and seeding the disturbed areas with native grasses and wildflowers. The adjacent workshop/garage building was not disturbed, although it is temporarily without electricity or water.

Scout Project. In September, a team led by Eagle Scout candidate Oliver Schuck of Columbia Troop 5 rehabilitated the decrepit dock on the pond near the Wild Haven picnic shelter. New shoreline support posts were set in concrete, deteriorating deck boards and railings were removed and replaced with new treated lumber, and new benches were added at the end of the dock. The finished project is safe and attractive. (Photo below) Next time you are at Wild Haven, stop by the dock, have a seat, and enjoy the scenery and bird life. Many thanks to Oliver and all his helpers.

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

I see a magical bird,
swooping down upon its prey
my binoculars aren't working
so I use my eyes to watch
the bird has a red tail,
brown everywhere else
it's almost to its prey
under the trees and their shadows
its talons are spread out
like spikes fired from a gun,
darting toward the animal
it's at its meal,
digging in the dirt
the sight is astonishing
I watch in the sunlight
the bird has been able to catch its now-dead
prey
it flies off,
mole in talons
I can only stare at its silhouette
flying away onto the farthest wire pole,
yards away from me.



By Nathan Schneider, student in Lisa Schenker's 4th grade class at Grant Elementary

I See a Bird

NEW CHAT EDITOR NEEDED!

Wanted: someone to edit the "Chat." We thought we had a new Editor in place to get the October newsletter sent to members. However, that person wished to produce something much different from what the "Chat" has been and is not interested in creating a Word document that would be distributed as an email attachment and that would allow the "Chat" to remain at least six pages in length.

Our previous editor, David Schenker, has agreed to produce this October / November issue.

In the meantime, please consider taking on this very important task. We believe that moving to email distribution will reduce an editor's workload greatly. Said editor will not be responsible for mailing hard copies to members who cannot receive the newsletter via email; a member of the Board has volunteered to do that.

If you are willing to serve as editor please call Howard Hinkel at 525-4471 or email at hinkelh@missouri.edu.

Natha

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. _____

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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.

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)

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