

# The Chat

Volume 55 Number 7

**Columbia Audubon Society**

March 2013

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

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

The mission of Columbia Audubon Society is to preserve the natural world and its ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and the earth's biological diversity, through education, environmental study, and habitat restoration and protection.

## **MARCH 2013 GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, March 20, 2013  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
2615 Shepard Blvd.  
Columbia, Missouri**

**Program and Meeting 7 p.m.  
Dr Patricia Hagen,  
Executive Director  
Audubon Center at Riverlands**

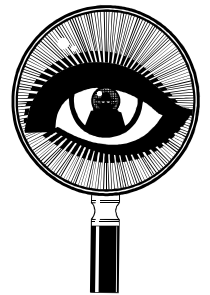
**Hosts:  
Martha Donnell and Nancy Bedan**



## **BOARD'S EYE VIEW**

On February 20<sup>th</sup> your CAS board made several decisions I call to your attention. I refer you to Lisa Schenker's announcement (page 3) of the next teacher that CAS will sponsor to attend the National Audubon summer camp at Hog Island. This is a continuation of the CAS commitment to carry out its mission to support nature education.

The Board also enthusiastically supported a funding request from Reed Gerdes, one of CAS's younger members. The CAS funds will enable Reed to attend an American Birding Association Young Birders Camp this summer at Estes Park, Colorado. The camp provides an opportunity to hone birding skills, meet other young people with similar interests, and explore careers in birding and ornithology. Again, CAS is supporting an educational experience.



Finally, but importantly, CAS is actively seeking volunteers for the BAND WITH NATURE 2<sup>nd</sup> grade field trip to Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary. Consider volunteering for as little as one shift of only three and a half hours. Your time will make a difference. The dates are Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> and Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. Unless we instill an interest in nature early in their lives, we will be "blessed" with a population that looks no further than the screen on the latest techno gadget.

You and CAS are making a difference and we're having fun doing it.

Happy bird watching  
Bill

Note a "Special Event" planned on March 19 at the Museum of Art and Archeology.

## FIELD TRIPS

### **MARCH 20, 2013—Wednesday (NOTE DATE CHANGE)**

**Location:** Diana Bend Conservation Area

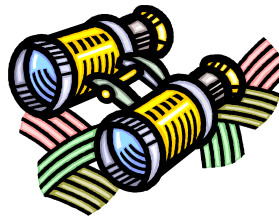
**Leader:** Eric Wood

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. at the Diana Bend CA parking lot. People driving from Columbia on I-70 will travel west to the Midway/US 40 exit. Travel 10.5 miles on US 40. As you cross the bridge down to the flood plain farm fields, turn left onto the first gravel road (at the grain bin). There is an MDC sign for Diana Bend CA. The parking lot is at the end of the gravel road about 1 mile. This is a walking field trip so wear your hiking boots.

**APRIL 13-Saturday**—Wild Haven—John Besser

**MAY 18-Saturday** —3 Creeks CA—Eric Seaman

**MAY 3, 4, 5, 2013** –Friday thru Sunday—ASM Spring Meeting, St. Joseph



## MARCH MEETING

The Missouri River has recently been named one of the most endangered rivers in the United States by American Rivers. This great river — once wide and meandering, with broad floodplains and wetland areas—has been contained in enormous reservoirs in its upper reaches, and a narrow, deep channel on the lower river. As a result of this channelization, flood damages have become worse and clean water, wildlife, recreation and overall river health have deteriorated. Audubon Missouri is working with the Corps of Engineers to advance Missouri River restoration and to help save this great river, and its birds and other wildlife.

**Join us on Wednesday, February 20 at 7:00 p.m. to hear Dr. Patricia Hagen from Audubon Missouri speak on this topic.**

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**March 10**—Sunday—Bluebird Seminar—Songbird Station—2:00 p.m.

**March 13**—Wednesday—Grant School 4th grade field trip to Rock Bridge State Park

**March 19**—Tuesday—University of Missouri Museum of Art and Archeology—10:30 a.m. Program: **Tour of Birds in Art**—Hosted by Rachel Navarro, Assistant Museum Educator. Handicapped parking is available directly behind museum (Pickard Hall) off 9th Street

**April 10-11, 2013** Marsh Bird Survey training  
Eagle Bluffs CA—sponsored by Missouri River Bird Observatory

**May 11**—Saturday— Migratory Bird Count



## EMAIL DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

At the Board meeting held on February 20, 2013, the Board of Columbia Audubon Society voted to limit distribution of emails using the CAS email list. The Board is committed to maintaining the privacy of its members' personal information. Email distributions by other than authorized persons could be interpreted as a breach of the privacy commitment. The following guidelines apply:



1. Requests for email distribution to the Columbia Audubon Society email list must come from a voting member of the CAS Board. Current voting members: President Bill Mees; Vice President Julie Fisher; Secretary Alice Robinson; Treasurer Eric Seaman; Board Members at Large Lori Hagglund, Laura Hillman, Bonnie Heidi; Past President Howard Hinkel; Natural Areas Chair John Besser; Communications Chair Allison Vaughn; Membership Chair Doug Miller; Outreach and Education Co-chair Lottie Bushmann.
2. Requests received for email distribution from other than a voting member of the board should be forwarded to the President of CAS or other voting board member (listed above) who will determine the appropriateness of the request.
3. Voting board members agree to forward only emails for CAS distribution that relate to birding and or CAS

## HOG ISLAND by Lisa Schenker

The Columbia Audubon Society is pleased to announce that Kimberly DeVorss is the 2013 scholarship recipient for summer studies at the National Audubon's Hog Island in Maine. Kimberly is a National Board Certified first grade teacher at Paxton Keeley Elementary School and impressed the CAS board with her obvious enthusiasm for integrating nature studies into the curriculum. She has taught her students about birds through science, math, art, reading, and writing and is anxious to learn even more through this unique summer program.

Kimberly will be attending a workshop called "The Arts of Birding" for a week at the end of June. She will be working with some of the country's best bird artists, photographers, recordists, and writers, and will learn how to use words, images, and audio to enhance her birding abilities, while exploring bird habitats along the Maine coast. Kimberly is the fifth Columbia Public School teacher to receive funding from CAS to study at Hog Island. Thanks to this support, the next generation of birders in Columbia is getting off to an early and enthusiastic start.

## VIEW FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE

It's time to get a new ground hog. February 2<sup>nd</sup> Punxsutawney Phil predicted an early spring. Since that prediction Columbia has received over 18 inches of snow. So much snow that many of us were confined to our homes, waiting expectantly for the plows that seemed not to come. What to do, clean out closets or watch birds?

The nice thing about bird watching is you can do it any time, any where, and even any weather. In fact, the same snow that confined us humans also put some limits on our feathered friends.

So there I sat, drinking a cup of coffee at the kitchen table, no newspaper to read (never delivered.) I watched out the window at the 3 bird feeders on our deck. It was a veritable feeding frenzy--literally dozens of birds fluttering and pecking for a position at the table I had set before them. What a treat to watch them up close (20 feet away). There were so many individuals and species, I began to count. Before I had finished my second cup of coffee I had tallied 27 species. I didn't include the Canada Geese that flew over, but I did count the Red-shouldered Hawk and Cooper's Hawk each of which landed in the tree next to the deck. Needless to say, every other bird and squirrel instantly disappeared simultaneous to their arrival. So as my wife weeded out the closets, I watched the birds and contemplated the purchase of more seed, if the plows ever arrive.



## Late-Winter Burn at Wild Haven

We recently conducted a successful prescribed burn of about 8 acres of open woodland and meadow at the CAS Wild Haven Nature Area north of Columbia. The burn unit covered the area from the tributary creek (west of the picnic shelter) nearly to the western boundary of the Audubon property. Fire lines had already been cleared last December, so when 'burn boss' Roxie Campbell called late on a Thursday night, there was little that needed to be done except put out a call for volunteers available on Saturday.

Fortunately, volunteers responded, the weather cooperated, and we conducted a successful burn on the chilly afternoon of February 16. Burning conditions were pretty moderate (light west wind, not too dry) so the burn progressed slowly in some areas, but ground fuels burned on over 90% of the area over a two-hour period. The only real excitement came when the fire raced through the dried native grasses and torched some dead cedars in the meadow area.

We hope this burn will help us meet our goal of controlling invading trees and shrubs (like red cedar and autumn olive) and stimulating growth of native grasses and wildflowers. During the growing seasons after previous burns, the meadow has put on a nice display of wildflowers, especially rough blazingstar in late summer. We'll have a chance to inspect the progress of spring wildflowers in the burned area during a CAS field trip in April (see CAS Field Trip calendar).

Many thanks to volunteers Roxie Campbell, Allison Vaughn, Becky Erickson, Eric and Joanna Reuter, Bill Mees, and members of the MU Student Association for Fire Ecology (SAFE): Carter Kinkead, Benjamin Hess, Calvin Maginel, and Ryan Sims.

John Besser  
CAS Nature Areas Chair



## STOP, LOOK, LISTEN

Many of us as children were warned of the danger of railroad crossings. We were taught always to stop, look, listen before crossing the tracks. We aren't likely to be run over by a bird, but the advice to stop, look, listen applies very well to birding quests.

**STOP.** We sometimes get into the mode of thinking we must move on to see that next bird, and we move through the landscape scanning the surrounding trees or grass for a telltale shape or movement. We probably miss many birds because they are doing the same thing—that is, watching their surroundings for telltale shapes and movements. We move, they hide.

Pick a comfortable spot and stay still. Lean against a tree, or just sit down. Wait for the birds to come to you. This often works very well if you have stumbled into an area with lots of activity that stopped when you arrived. The birds had a reason to be where they were before you disturbed them. If you are no longer perceived as a threat, they often will return and resume their activity. You will be in place to watch the show.

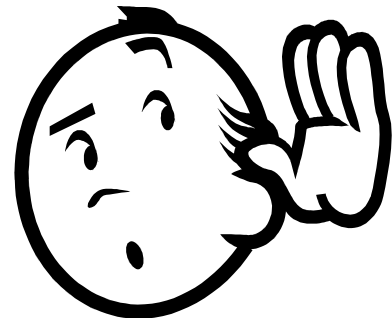
**LOOK.** Take the time to really look at a bird. Mentally click off some field marks. Take the time to look at what the bird is doing. And take the time to look at the micro habitat the bird is exploiting.

Each of these focused looks will add to the pleasure of this encounter and aid (sometimes subliminally) in finding the same species in the future. And if you think you don't need to look hard and long at a common bird, close your eyes and picture a Mourning Dove. What is the color and shape of the spots on the wing? What is the leg color? What is the color under the chin or on the crown? Is there color around the eye? If we can't answer questions like these about a very common bird, what else have we not been seeing?

**LISTEN.** Learn the common bird vocalizations (song, contact notes, etc.). Do this by listening to a bird and watching what's going on around it as it makes the sound. You'll soon be recognizing differences that, if you've paid attention, will alert you to what is going on in that bird's world.

If you work to match sounds and behavior, you may become able to distinguish the differences and detect the cause. For example, Blue Jays alerting others to the presence of a black snake sound different than when they are mobbing an owl, or a cat.

Stop, look, listen. Your birding experiences will be enriched.



### **Nature facts for March from Missouri Department of Conservation *Natural Events Calendar 2013***

- Barred Owls are nesting
- Wood Ducks nest around wooded ponds and backwaters
- Bluebirds begin nesting
- Field Sparrows are arriving
- Male Red-winged Blackbirds begin to set up territories
- Raise Purple Martin houses today (March 15)



# MEET OUR MEMBERS

**Names:** Eric & Joanna Reuter

**Board position:** just members

**Family:** Joanna's parents introduced her to birding; Eric's mom is an avid hiker and nature observer.



**Profession:** We run a full-time diversified farm, raising organic produce & fruit along with dairy and meat goats, chickens, pigs, timber, and more. We offer a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which members pay an annual cost to receive weekly deliveries of fresh farm products over the growing season, along with access to on-farm events such as birding days, farm & nature walks, cooking demonstrations, and more. [www.cherthollowfarm.com](http://www.cherthollowfarm.com)

**Pets:** 1 indoor cat

**Hobbies:** We are serious birders and outdoors-people, keeping near-daily bird records on the farm and reporting monthly bird lists on our website. When not actively farming, we enjoy cooking, reading, hiking, canoeing, history, rail-fanning, back-road trips, and other active pursuits.

**How long have you lived in Columbia?** We've lived on our farm in northern Boone County since 2006. Joanna also lived & worked in Columbia from 2000-2002 before moving to Vermont for graduate school and meeting Eric.

**How long have you been a member of CAS?** Since September 2012.

**What do you like best about CAS?** The opportunity to explore new areas, learn more about area birding, and build connections and friendships with others who value ecology and the outdoors. We'd love to host a CAS birding day on the farm, featuring our very diverse landscape of fields, pastures, forests, and more.

**How did you get interested in birding?** Joanna was raised in a serious birding family; Eric rapidly developed an equal interest upon meeting Joanna. It's one of our favorite things to do together and influences various aspects of our life & farm management.

**Most exciting bird ever seen:** Joanna: Cape May Warbler in a black walnut tree next to our porch. Eric: Loggerhead Shrike at Friendly Prairie C.A., or Red-cockaded Woodpecker in Louisiana.

**Most recent "lifer":** We checked off many life birds on a January road trip to southern Louisiana, including Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Inca Dove, Vermilion Flycatcher, Roseate Spoonbill, and all sorts of water birds. 32 lifers for Eric, ~16 for Joanna.

**ADDED CATEGORY:** Most interesting birds on our farm: We've had a pair of Broad-winged Hawks nesting on the forested ridge abutting our vegetable field for the past two years. While working in the field, we've had excellent views of them soaring, hunting, bringing food to the nest, and even teaching a fledgling to fly.



We also host several Woodcock displays every spring in our pastures, and never get tired of sharing this fantastic experience with others. Barred Owls regularly hunt our fields and have been quite tolerant of our presence at times.

# MEET OUR MEMBERS

**Name:** Boyd Terry

**Board position:** Treasurer long ago

**Profession:** Surgeon

**Family:** Wife -Carolyn



We have 4 children. From oldest to youngest:

Ann is a molecular microbiologist. She lives in a small village southeast of Harrogate, in Yorkshire, U.K. She works for Black and Decker, provides and services the PCR machines required by all hospitals in U.K. to screen patients for resistant Staph or C. difficile on admission, and trains their staff how to use them. (They do this b/c they have zero tolerance for those bacteria). Patients carrying either of them are treated on admission.) Ann is married, no children.

Kenneth was a stone/brick mason before the recession, now drives a truck cross country. He lives in Columbia with his wife. They have 2 children, identical twins, 24 years old: Jennifer is a fashion designer in L.A. (very thoughtful, never comments on anything I am wearing, although she did recently send me a couple of outfits). Camille is a biological engineer living in Colorado. We were startled recently to hear she had also taken a temporary job as an armed security guard for an armored car company.

Martha is a Family Practice doctor in Iowa City, currently staying home with two children, ages 9 and 12.

Matthew has a degree in physical biochemistry from Indiana Univ. He has been in Ecuador for the past 14 years, working with the government and the native people to preserve their beautiful free-flowing rivers, which are threatened by, prominently, Chinese gravel miners who drop their machinery and crews from helicopters, unknown (before Matt's arrival) to the Ecuadorean government. Gravel mining the rivers exposes heavy metals that poison the fish that are eaten by the natives. Matt has survived there so far but he is getting out soon - he will return to the U.S. and work in North Carolina. No wife - or children.

**Pets:** We're now horseless and catless

**Hobbies:** Genealogy, bird watching, butterflies, spiders, flowers, trees, woodwork

**How long have you lived in Columbia?** Since 1968, 44 years

**How long have you been a member of CAS?** 40-42 years?

**What do you like best about CAS?** Respected friends!

**How did you get interested in birding?** As a youth in Idaho, Boy Scouts, and natural interest

**Most exciting bird ever seen:** Sandhill Crane, up close

**Most recent "lifer:":** Green-tailed Towhee



## MAY 11 IS MIGRATORY BIRD COUNT

For many years there was a nationwide migratory bird count (you may still see all the t-shirts) on the second Saturday of May. Several years ago the national organization folded, but Missouri continued to count. Then last year we discovered that essentially only Boone County was counting and we submitted the data to e-birds. And we plan to count again this year and again probably submit to e-birds since it is probably here to stay. Maybe one of the scientists can use our very extensive and complete data to document what we all know, the second Saturday in May is no longer the peak of migration.

Hopefully we will again have 13 teams out in 13 regions of Boone County. Unlike the Christmas Bird Count which covers a 7 mile radius circle centered on Rockbridge State Park, the Migratory Bird Count covers all of Boone county. If you've done it before, contact your team leader. If you are new to this you can contact Laura Hillman at [hillmanl@missouri.edu](mailto:hillmanl@missouri.edu) or 573-442-3703 and we'll get you on a team. We'll be contacting all the prior team leaders, but if you know you will be gone please let us know soon.

It's great fun and there are a lot more birds than at Christmas but most important the chance of snow and ice is very low.



Columbia Audubon Society wants to thank our corporate sponsor:

### **Songbird Station**

2010 Chapel Plaza Court, Suite C  
Columbia MO 65203.

Phone 573-446-5941 or on the web at  
[www.songbirdstation.com](http://www.songbirdstation.com)



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