

The Chat

Volume 56 Number 2

Columbia Audubon Society

October 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.

BOARD'S EYE VIEW

Monthly Meeting

**Wednesday
October 16, 2013
Unitarian Church
Shepard Blvd.
7:00 p.m.**

**Program:
D. Todd Jones
Central Hardwood
Joint Venture****

**Hosts:
Marge Meredith and
Alice Robinson**

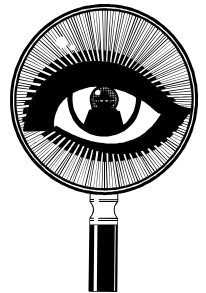


Even though the new CAS year is barely underway, it has started with a flurry of activity.

I want to acknowledge and thank CAS members Eric Wood, Bonnie Heidy, Susan Hazelwood, Kevin Wehner, Laurie Shawver, Lori Hagglund, Janice Gaston, and the organizing skills of Edge Wade. They were leaders for the 40+ guests of Gold Crest Distributing on field trips to Little Dixie Lake and Whetstone Creek CA. This is the 3rd year Mel Toellner has drawn upon the expertise of CAS members.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the second annual Band With Nature 2nd grade field trip will be in full swing. At this writing, over 1100 students are scheduled to visit Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary. All the activities relate directly to the school district's science curriculum. This event is the culmination of a partnership between 6 different organizations. Thirteen CAS members are volunteering their time to help make the event a success.

Please note on page 2 the field trip planned for October 12th. CAS members will become scientists as they collect bird species data at Lake of the Ozarks State Park. This trip is the first step for a project that will examine the impact of a scheduled controlled burn. A subsequent field trip will collect data after the burn. This pair of field trips will enable park naturalists to assess the burn's impact. This should be a fun and useful partnership between CAS and a state park naturalist.



Lisa Schenker and Lottie Bushman, both elementary school teachers, are initiating a youth birding club. Undeterred by recent rains, their inaugural bird club field trip is now scheduled for Saturday October 26th. What a great way to cultivate an interest and appreciation for the outdoors, nature, and birds. Can you say "future CAS members?" If you want to be a charter adult mentor in this club, contact either Lisa or Lottie.

As you can see, CAS has made a quick start to a new year.

With even more to come,
Bill Mees, President

**** D. Todd Jones "Central Hardwood Joint Venture"**

Todd will talk about the Central Hardwood Joint Venture and what they do in Missouri as well as the Shortleaf Pine initiative, in addition to hearing more about the American Bird Conservancy.

FIELD TRIPS

Kevin Wehner, Field Trip



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

Destination: Ozark Caverns, Lake of the Ozarks State Park, 823 Ozark Caverns Road, Linn Creek, MO

Leader: Allison Vaughan

Contact Phone: (573) 703-6448

Departure Point: AC Commuter Parking Lot

We'll carpool from the AC Commuter Parking Lot at 7:30 a.m. The lot is located just south-east of Highway 63 at the AC/Grindstone Parkway/New Haven Road exit. If you're not joining the carpool, meet at the Ozark Caverns Visitor's Center off of "A Road" at 9:30 a.m. After the trip we'll have lunch at the Seven Springs Winery in Linn Creek.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 - SONGBIRD STATION ANNIVERSARY FIELD TRIP

Destination: McBaine Wetlands & Lower Perche Creek

Departure Point: Songbird Station, 2010 Chapel Plaza Court #C, Columbia, MO

Leader: John Besser

Contact Phone/Email: (573) 639-2211 or jbesser1@gmail.com

Meet at Songbird Station at 7:30 a.m. or the Katy Trail parking lot in McBaine at 8 a.m.

On the last weekend before duck-hunting season, we'll check out early ducks and other wetland species at Wetland Cells 1 and 4 along Perche Creek near McBaine.

We'll carpool into the wetlands area and bird on foot around the large cattail wetlands, along the lower MKT Trail, and along lower Perche Creek. Target birds will include ducks, rails and other marsh birds, as well as birds of the fields and forests along the creek. A spotting scope may come in handy for viewing ducks on the wetlands. The trip will be 3 hours long. **We recommend water resistant footwear.**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 (RESCHEDULED FROM OCTOBER 5)

Destination: 3M Flat Branch-Hinkson Creek Wetlands

Departure Point: Songbird Station, 2010 Chapel Plaza Court #C, Columbia, MO

Leaders: Lottie Bushmann and Lisa Schenker

Contact Phone: Lottie - (573) 445-3942

This trip is especially for children 9 years old and up (accompanied by an adult). Meet at Songbird Station's parking lot at 8 a.m. We'll walk the 3M Wetlands and then return to the store at 10 a.m. Participating children will receive a free "Feeding Backyard Birds" poster from the Missouri Department of Conservation.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 - JOINT FIELD TRIP WITH RIVER BLUFFS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Destination: Runge Conservation Nature Center and Binder Lake, Jefferson City, MO

Leaders: Jane Frazier & Rich George

Contact Phone: Kevin Wehner - (573) 815-0352

Departure Point: AC Commuter Parking Lot

We'll carpool from the AC Commuter Parking Lot at 8 a.m. The lot is located just south-east of Highway 63 at the AC/Grindstone Parkway/New Haven Road exit. If you're not joining the carpool, meet at the Runge Nature Center at 8:45 a.m.

Directions: From the intersection of Highway 63 and 50 in Jefferson City, take 50 west to the intersection of highway 179.

The Runge Conservation Nature Center is located approximately half a mile north on 179. After the trip we'll have lunch near Binder Lake at Dudley's Café. **Dudley's Café only accepts CASH!**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Destination: Fayette Lakes (D.C. Rogers & Peters) for birding, and Possum Haw Antiquarians for coffee and book browsing/buying.

Departure Point: Northwest corner of the Columbia Mall parking lot (Target end, near the corner of Bernadette and Fairview Rd.). Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Edge Wade

Contact Phone/Email: (573) 268-3714 or edgew@mchsi.com

We will bird the two lakes, then go into Fayette to Possum Haw Antiquarians on the north side of the square for coffee, book browsing and visiting with owner and long-time CAS member, Jim Wallace. Participants have the choice of returning to Columbia before lunch or having lunch in Fayette.

RSVP to edgew@mchsi.com by Wednesday, November 13, so we will know how many to expect. Please indicate if you can drive, if needed, and whether or not you want to return to Columbia for lunch.

See page 9 for future field trip dates



BOOK REVIEW

submitted by Bob Bartlett

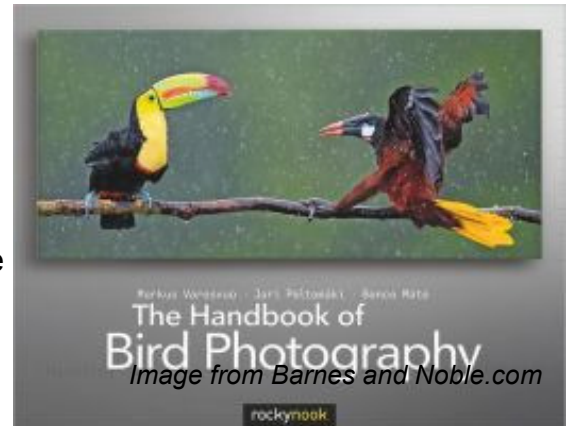
The Handbook of Bird Photography

by Marcus Varesvou, Jari Peltomaki and Bence Mate

This book is a magnificent piece of work. Not only are the hundreds of photographs of birds of all varieties and life situation beautiful, but complete technical information accompanies each photo. In addition, the textual information is well written and easy to read. These make the book a pleasure to browse in again and again to gain fresh insights into the art of bird photography and into the lives of the birds themselves.

For an amateur bird photographer such as myself, the book is at first overwhelming and intimidating. It makes my own photographs seem so puny by comparison. But a deeper appreciation sets in as one studies the time and effort that lie behind each of these photographs. These are mature art and provide examples which an amateur can strive to emulate. And the text describes how it can be accomplished.

My own bird photography was initiated by a simple desire to accurately identify the various species of birds on my life list. The thought of my photographs as art never crossed my mind. Only later, when friends admired a few unusually good ones, did it occur to me to try to create attractive photos for their own sake. And I believe that this is probably true of the great majority of birders who buy a good camera and try their luck at photographing the birds they see. This book should be an inspiration to a whole generation of birders who want to study the birds they see more closely and to share their observations with others.



However, what most beginners are not aware of is the digital processing required to turn a raw camera image into a respectable photograph. This is the only criticism I have of the book. The authors have intentionally left out any reference to digital processing. It would be helpful if they at least told the reader where to find good information on it. Better yet would be to describe what steps were taken to create a few of the photos in the book which were digitally enhanced. All of my own photographs required it because the birds would never allow me to get close enough to create a satisfactory picture without considerable digital manipulation.

That said, this book is beautiful and very informative. It provides all would-be nature photographers with a handbook they can go back to many times for information and inspiration.

Women in Wildlife: Wild Haven Nature Area provides a haven for young girls to learn about careers in wildlife

Article and photos: Melody Kroll, Division of Biological Sciences, University of Missouri

Nine Girl Scout troops from Columbia spent a day catching insects and learning about careers in wildlife at a Women in Wildlife event held at the Columbia Audubon Society's Wild Haven Nature Area on July 20, 2013.

Women in Wildlife is a program designed to expose young girls to careers in wildlife and wildlife conservation. Held annually since 2008, the event is organized by female graduate students from the University of Missouri in coordination with the central region of Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland and the Columbia Audubon Society.

Girls at the event learned about how scientists use radio telemetry and GPS to track birds, identified insects and flowers using field guides, caught insects in nets, and got the chance to see a live bat and bird close up.

Although every part of the event involved learning about nature, the main point of the event was "to let girls see that women go out and get dirty and work outside with wildlife," said Cara Joos, the graduate student who founded the program and who helped organize this year's event.

"It used to be that girls didn't really know wildlife jobs existed, but now they know they exist but see it as a man's job because they only see men doing it. They don't have many female role models. We want girls to see women working hands on with wildlife in the field," said Joos, who is studying the habitat characteristics that influence the population success of the neotropical migrant songbird the Bell's Vireo.

Joos was joined at the event by three fellow graduate students: Julianna Arntzen, who studies forest neotropical migrant birds, and Clarissa Starbuck and Kathryn Womack, both of who study bat populations.

Providing opportunities for girls to interact with women like Joos and her colleagues is of great interest to the Girl Scouts, said Christine Wehner, one of the troop leaders at the event. "Recently, Girl Scouts launched a program called 'To Get Her There,' which works to show girls that they are equal to boys, that they can do whatever boys do, and to be leaders in all fields, especially in science, technology, education, and math. So a program like this is just fantastic. It gives girls exposure and the opportunity to think more broadly about what they can potentially do."

Kimberly Matthews, who was in attendance with her daughter, also liked that the program gives the girls an appreciation for nature. "Sometimes, we take nature for granted. Programs like this give us the opportunity to talk about nature and about how you can't get it back when you destroy it. I think that's important."

The event definitely peaked the interest of the girls – who eagerly asked questions, tried out the equipment, peered at pond water with magnifying glasses, and ran around with nets catching insects in the fields.

Malinda from Troop 70571 had a hard time pinning down what she liked best. "I liked when I got to find the bird using the radio tracker. I also liked the bat. I liked touching the turtle too. That was fun."

Wild Haven Nature Area has been a great location for the Women in Wildlife program. Located along Hinkson Creek just northeast of Columbia, Wild Haven includes a wide diversity of habitats in over 100 acres, including woodlands, prairies, wetlands, pond and streams. The site also has a pavilion and outhouses, features that, as Joos points out, have some practical advantages: "We didn't have to do a tutorial on how to go to the bathroom in the woods."

John Besser, who oversees Wild Haven for the Columbia Audubon Society, is happy to have CAS host Women in Wildlife at Wild Haven. "Of the three properties we own, Wild Haven is the largest and has the highest quality habitats, yet it is pretty much unknown. It's not that far from Columbia, but it doesn't get as much use as it probably should."

Besser also said the program benefits the outreach and education goals of the Columbia Chapter of the Audubon Society by reaching out to the public beyond the membership and especially to young people. "We're especially pleased with the association of Women in Wildlife with Girl Scouts, which is a great group that we want to work with more," said Besser. "Giving kids the opportunity to get outside and have a hands-on experience with wildlife is a memorable part of the program, but having these graduate students who are doing amazing stuff as role models, well, that's got to make an impression on these girls. I'm hoping that the awareness these girls gain through Women in Wildlife will translate into a lifelong interest in nature."



Clarissa Womack shows Scouts a live bat and talks to them about what to do (and not to do) when you find a bat.



Women in Wildlife 2013 (L-R): Kathryn Womack, Julianna Arntzen, Clarissa Starbuck, and Cara Joos



Julianna Arntzen (right) shows three Scouts how scientists use radio telemetry to track birds.



Kathryn Womack (left) captures insects with Scouts and shows them how to use a field guide to identify what they caught.



Cara Joos gives Scouts a chance to see up close an indigo bunting she captured in a mist net and talked to them about how scientists use bird banding to study bird ecology and movement.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Photo from en.Wikipedia.org

Last month's TIPS centered on setting goals. Working toward self-set goals is one way to maintain focus. Focus adds to interest level and motivation. The first goal in that list was "Keep birding fun." We're staying with that thought for this month's tip: **Learn "official" bird names because knowing them adds to the fun of birding.**

The "official" English names of birds in North America are determined by the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Committee on Classification and Nomenclature. Whew, that's a mouthful!

Your first reaction may be, "But I just want to enjoy watching them; what does it matter if I know some "official" name for birds like wrens, or cardinals, or ducks?"

- Redbird. Would that be a Northern Cardinal, or a tanager? Which tanager?
- Chicken Hawk. Is that a Red-tailed Hawk, or an accipiter? Which one?
- Blue Bill. Is that a Ruddy Duck or a scoter? What kind of scoter?

You get the idea. We learn the proper name so we can know what we're looking at. That's a big deal for most bird-watchers. Even those of us whose birding is limited to watching our own feeders want to know what we're looking at and what to call that new bird that just showed up today.

We learn proper names so we can communicate with one another. True, we don't need to say Northern Cardinal when we tell others about the red bird coming to our feeder because we can be talking of only one kind of bird, but if you ask, "Why NORTHERN Cardinal?" you've taken the first step to a new level of enjoying the cardinal at your feeder and toward greater understanding and enjoyment of the fascinating world of birds.

If you pursue that question, you'll learn that our Northern Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*, is one of three species in the genus *Cardinalis* (family Cardinalidae). One of the others is the Pyrrhuloxia, *Cardinalis sinuatus*, found in the deserts of southwest U.S. and northern Mexico (but not in the photo above, even though that bird is on a cactus).

The third member of the genus is the Vermilion Cardinal, *Cardinalis phoeniceus*, found only in Colombia and Venezuela. It is the bird pictured above (did you note that big dark bill?), and it is the reason the bird in Missouri is named the Northern Cardinal.

Learn more about all three of the "cardinals" and add to your appreciation of the Northern Cardinal and the fun of birding as you learn.

Beginning this month I'm going to write a series of articles about the birding apps I demonstrated at the September 18 CAS Meeting. I'll begin the series with my favorite and most often used app: BirdLog by BirdsEye, a company that develops apps for birders (see birdseyebirding.com).

The BirdLog app allows you to quickly and easily record and submit your bird sightings to eBird from the field. eBird is an online database of bird observations providing researchers and birders with real-time data about bird distribution and abundance, but it also makes a terrific personal birding "notebook" because it will keep track of your life list and all of your observations including locations, dates, species seen, etc. You can even use eBird to create personal frequency and abundance reports from your own observations. eBird is a free service. For more info and to register for an account go to ebird.org.

eBird has a web-interface that allows you to submit observations, but if you own a smart phone or tablet, BirdLog saves you from having to record birds in your notebook and then coming home and entering them again in eBird.



If you're birding from a new site, BirdLog uses your phone's GPS to find your location on the map, but it also shows your previously birded personal locations as well as eBird Hotspots. To begin recording, you select your location and the time. If you're birding from an area that doesn't have cell phone service, you can create an offline checklist, save the checklist when you've finished birding, and submit it to eBird later when you're back in range of a cell phone tower. You can also submit observations over a Wi-Fi network.

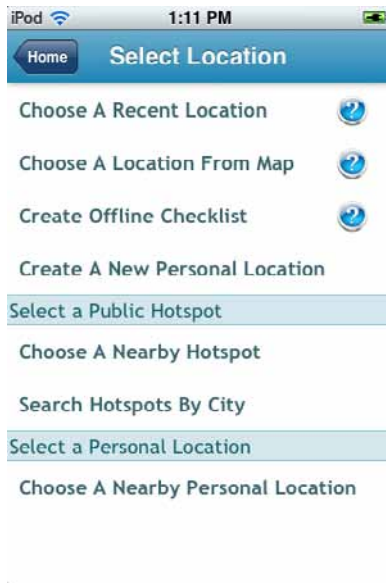
You enter species by scrolling through the list of birds, typing the bird name, or typing the four-letter alpha code of the bird. The alpha code method is definitely the fastest way to enter birds into BirdLog and I strongly suggest learning the codes (they're easy!) to get the most out of this app. As you're birding, the app keeps a running tally of how many of each species you've seen. You can also easily enter comments for species, comments on the entire checklist, and use different protocols such as Stationary, Traveling or Incidental.

When you're ready to submit your observation to eBird, you review your checklist, enter the protocol used, enter the number of observers, enter how long you birded (the app will calculate duration), enter the distance traveled (the app doesn't calculate distance), tap the Submit button and you're done! It's really quick and slick!

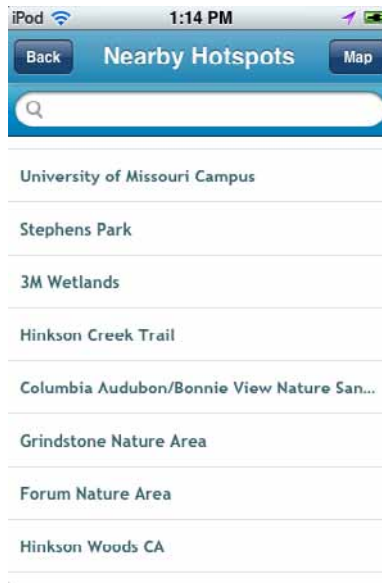
I've been using BirdLog for several months now and because it's so quick and easy to use, I know that I've entered more eBird checklists than I would have without the app. BirdLog is \$9.99 for the North America version and is available for iPhone, iPod, iPad and Android devices. A demonstration video of BirdLog in action is available here: <http://birdseyebirding.com/index.php/2012-09-27-00-35-10/birdlog-demo>.

BIRDLOG SCREENSHOTS

Checklist location options



List of nearby hotspots



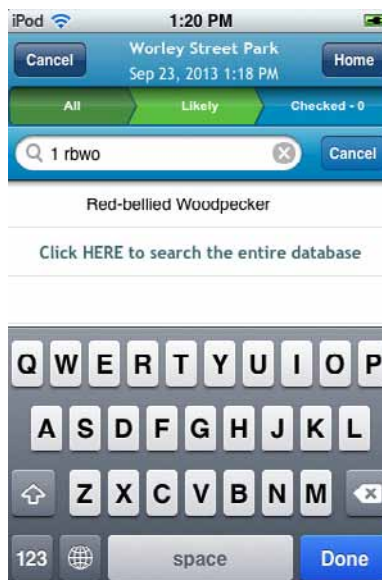
Location Selection from map



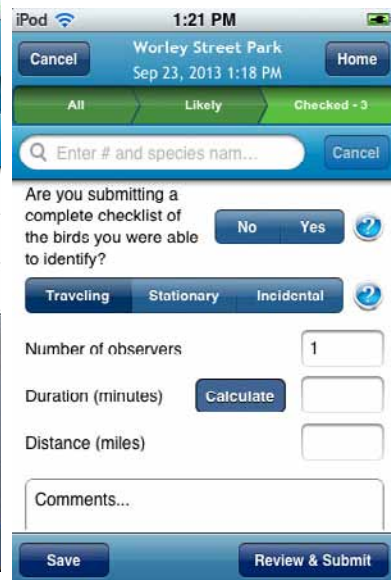
Start time



Quick entry by alpha code



Final submission page





Some items of interest:

Café Songbird: Thursday, October 10, 2013 at 10:30 a.m.

Join fellow bird watchers and friends at the monthly Café Songbird Coffee Club.

Songbird Station Warehouse Sale

"World's largest bird seed, feeder, house and accessory sale."

Saturday, October 12 from 8 a.m. to noon
1600 Bassford Drive
Mexico, MO 65265

Many items are simply in "damaged boxes."
Many are overstocks and discontinued items.

Editor's note: this is a birder's dream garage sale.
For the best selection, get there early.

A field trip note from Edge Wade:

Nineteen birders enjoyed a beautiful morning at Bradford Farm September 25, as Paul McKenzie and Brad Jacobs led a CAS field trip billed as a search for Le Conte's Sparrow. The grasses of the west end of Bradford Farm, including great, head-high stands, were diligently scrutinized. No Le Conte's were found, but many present got very satisfying looks at cooperative Nelson's Sparrows, and were entertained by watching 100 winter-clad Bobolinks flying low and feeding on seeds, and with good looks at Sedge Wrens and an immature Dickcissel.

The conversation (other than Paul's "jokes") was lively, and when birds were not immediately evident, entertainment was close at hand in the form of hundreds of stick-tights to remove from clothing.



CAS members led a field trip at Little Dixie Lake on October 2, 2013, for out-of- state guests who were attending the Wild Bird Expo

Front row: Janice Gaston and Susan Hazelwood

Back row: Eric Wood, Laurie Shawver Bonnie Heidy, Kevin Wehner



photos by Bill Mees



Mark your calendars for future field trips!

March 22, 2014—Joint trip with St. Louis Audubon Society to Eagle Bluffs

April 26, 2014 - Joint trip with St. Louis Audubon Society to Forest Park

Happy  Halloween

**Songbird
Station** 

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

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