

The Chat

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Columbia Audubon Society
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April 2014

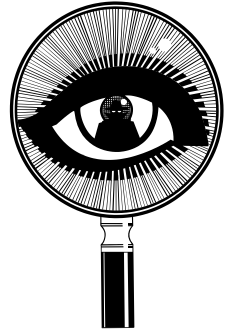
Serving Audrain, Boone, Cooper, Howard, Monroe and Randolph Counties

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

If I can borrow from Garrison Keillor: "It's been a busy few weeks at Columbia Audubon Society." Field trips, Boy Scout projects, speaking engagements, planning to restore prairie at Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary (CANS,) and razing the old hay storage building at CANS all occurred since we last communicated.

Kevin Wehner, Field Trip chairperson *par excellence*, has been busy. Two field trips took place at Eagle Bluffs CA. The first hosted Kansas City's Burroughs Audubon Society. Two weeks later St. Louis Audubon Society was our guest. Between these trips Kevin led the first CAS Twilight Timberdoodle Trek. Kevin gives his account of the Timberdoodle event on page 5.



In order to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, Boy Scout Grant Gould contacted CAS about doing a project at Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary. Last week, Grant and friends delivered and installed four scout-built park benches. Thank you Grant and Troop 52. See photos on page 6.

An invitation from the Discover Garden Club offered an opportunity for Dolores Clark to talk about native plants and how they can be used to attract more birds to backyards. The following day, Bill Clark and I extolled the benefits of Purple Martins to the Ashland Garden Club. Of course, both clubs had many questions about birds.

Those who attended the February 19th membership meeting had an opportunity to hear Gene Gardner talk about Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI.) Gene's encouragement has motivated CAS to apply for a MoBCI grant. This grant would help fund the restoration of native prairie at CANS and Columbia's Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary.

The old hay storage building at CANS has been razed, which is to say torn down. Albert Miller, his two sons, Cleo Kottwitz and I spent a recent Saturday dismantling the building. See photos on page 6.

I almost forgot Science Sleuth. Read all about Lisa Schenker's and Lottie Bushmann's exploits on page 5.

As our brochure states: "We also like birds!"

Stay tuned,
Bill Mees, President

APRIL MEETING

Wednesday
April 16, 2014
Unitarian Universalist Church
2615 Shepard Boulevard
7:00 p.m.

Speaker:
Allison Vaughn
Natural History of
Wild Haven

Hosts:
Bill and Jan Mees



FIELD TRIPS

by Kevin Wehner, Field Trip Chair

Tuesday, April 1

Destination: The Live Bird Shops in Columbia's Petco & Petsmart

Departure Point: Meet at 9 a.m. at Hooters, 1101 Woodland Springs Court, Columbia, MO

Special Guest Field Trip Leader: Y.B. Chat

Contact Phone/Email: Y.B. Chat - (277) 453-6657 or y.b.chat@April_Stulti.com

Meet at Hooters at 9 a.m. for carpooling. World-renowned birder, Y.B. Chat, will lead us on a fascinating exploration of the Live Bird Shops in Columbia's Petco and Petsmart. We'll observe a wide variety of species including the Fancy Parakeet, Yellow Canary and everyone's favorite, the Cockatiel! Please bring your binoculars, spotting scope, FRS radio and credit card in case you'd like to take a new, feathered friend home. The trip will last 3 to 4 hours and we'll have lunch afterwards at Hooters. For more info on the Cockatiel, check-out this YouTube video of the bird singing "If You're Happy & You Know It:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9NZnpleU0s>

Saturday, April 5

Destination: Chert Hollow Farm, Boone County, MO

Departure Point: Patricia's Foods, 900 N. Keene Street, Columbia, MO. Carpool leaves at 7 a.m.

Leaders: Eric & Joanna Reuter

Contact Phone/Email: Eric Reuter – (573) 474-0989 or eric@chert hollow farm.com

Chert Hollow Farm, located in northern Boone County, is a diversified homestead farm that focuses on sustainable, quality food production. The farm is owned and operated by CAS members Eric and Joanna Reuter who have graciously invited us to bird their property. Eric and Joanna were featured in the March 2013 issue of "The Chat." They often have very interesting birds on their farm! Please dress appropriately for seasonal farm conditions, including mud, manure, tall grass, ticks, and so on. The trip will conclude around Noon.

The access road down into Chert Hollow Farm valley is steep and graveled, with a bedrock stream crossing. We will need to carpool in with vehicles that have some clearance and/or 4WD. If you have this type of vehicle and can drive, please contact Kevin Wehner by Wednesday, April 2 at (573) 815-0352 or kevinwehner@gmail.com. For more info about Chert Hollow Farm: www.chert hollow farm.com.

Saturday, April 12

Brad Jacobs is leading a 7-10 a.m. Bird Watching Walk at Bradford Farms on the Native Plant Day Sale, April 12. All are welcome. We should find Smith's Longspurs, Le Conte's Sparrows, and other grassland specialists. We will be walking in the fields so wear comfortable boots. If there is water in the marshy areas wear rubber boots if you want to walk and wade.

Saturday, April 12

Destination: Grindstone Nature Area, 2011 Old 63 South, Columbia, MO

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

Leader: Greg Leonard

Contact Phone: (573) 823-4759

Meet at Songbird Station's parking lot at 1 p.m. The trip will be 3 hours long and will return to Songbird Station's parking lot.



Saturday, April 26 – Joint Field Trip With St. Louis Audubon Society

Destination: Forest Park, St. Louis, MO

Departure Point: Patricia's Foods, 900 N. Keene Street, Columbia, MO

Leaders: Dave Garcia & Bob Bailey

Contact Phone/Email: Kevin Wehner - (573) 815-0352 or kevinwehner@gmail.com

We'll carpool from Patricia's Foods at 5:30 a.m. If you're not joining the carpool, meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Forest Park parking lot that is accessed off Wells Drive where the MDC sign can be seen at the entrance. Directions: From Clayton Rd./ Hwy 64 and Skinker enter the park just north of that intersection. Stay on Wells Drive, going east past Government Drive. The entrance is on the north side of Wells, west of Tamm. We'll start in Forest Park and play it by ear as to whether we stay there or move on to Tower Grove Park.

FIELD TRIPS *(continued)*

Sunday, April 27

Destination: Columbia Audubon Society Albert Children's Wildlife Area

Departure Point: Patricia's Foods, 900 N. Keene Street, Columbia, MO (north parking lot)

Leader: John Besser

Contact Phone: home, (573) 874-5675 or cell, (573) 639-2211

Meet at Patricia's Foods parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Here's your chance to bird a high-quality but rarely visited

Audubon Nature Area. The Albert area is located about a 15-minute drive northeast of Columbia on the Boone/Calloway county line. Our property (about 80 acres) is part of a larger tract that has been extensively reclaimed after a history of coal strip-mining. Restoration has left a great mixture of habitats, including a grassland-shrubland-wetland complex along Cedar Creek. We'll look for area specialties such as Bell's Vireo, Henslow's Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, and Orchard Oriole, but a wide variety of migrant and resident species are possible. Check out the CAS website at columbia-audubon.org for more information on the area.

We'll carpool to the area, because vehicle access is limited. Most birding will be on foot, on and off trails, so come prepared for wet ground and insect pests. The group should be back at Patricia's Foods around noon.



Saturday, May 17

Destination: Gans Creek Recreation Area, Columbia, MO

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

Leader: Louise Flenner

Contact Phone/Email: (573) 268-7468 or lflenner@hotmail.com

Meet at Songbird Station's parking lot at 8 a.m. We'll carpool to Gans Creek Recreation Area where we'll go on a 3/4-mile walk to see two Great Blue Heron rookeries. There is lots of other land we can ramble on, or we may walk down Gans Creek Road that borders the recreation area where there are lots of birds in the trees along the road. The trip will be 3-4 hours long and will return to Songbird Station's parking lot.

Saturday, May 31

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

Departure Point: AC Commuter Parking Lot

Leader: Allison Vaughan

Contact Phone: (573) 703-6448

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.

NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATORY BIRD COUNT MAY 10, 2014

by Laura Hillmann

For several decades, Columbia Audubon Society has participated in the North American Migratory Bird Count (NAMBC) to assess the effects of winter habitat loss (cutting rain forests), migratory habitat loss (filling in wetland) and reproductive loss (cutting the Boreal forest). We know we have many species in serious decline. When the national NAMBC stopped, Missouri continued and even though the state has stopped, Columbia continues. The data is now put in eBIRD but can be linked to the prior data for anyone wishing to study "Columbia's Birds".

Saturday, May 10, we will have 13 teams out covering all of Boone County. These are different areas and teams than the Christmas Bird Count which covers a circle centered in Rock Bridge State Park. We are hoping to have the same team leaders as last year, so if you know your leader and want to participate this year, let them know. If you are new or want to change area, contact Laura Hillman at 573-442-3703 and leave a message. Allison Vaughn and Doug Miller will again compile the data.

The city of Columbia is working on a new city park in south Columbia called Gans Creek Recreation Area. If you are not yet familiar with the plans for this park, you may want to visit the city's website at www.gocolumbiamo.com or google Gans Creek Recreation Area for a quick link. The site is located at 3350 E. Gans Rd. across the street from Fr. Tolton Catholic High School. Bulldozing has already begun to create soccer fields. There is a large section of this park that is designated a natural area and within this natural area is an established heron rookery. There are also plans for glade restoration. Some members of Columbia Audubon Society (CAS), Wild Ones and Master Naturalists met with city Parks and Rec personnel, Brett O'Brien and Dave Dittmer and Chris Woodson from Mo. Fish and Wildlife. They are very interested in preserving as much of the wild area as possible and are also concerned about the impact of crowds, lights, and ball fields on the natural ecology that also includes Elbow Cave.

One of the suggested projects that came out of this meeting was to gather data to establish a baseline count of birds that now frequent the area. To this end I have been visiting the site over the past few weeks. There are now 20 herons gathered at the nests in 10 nesting pairs. I have also identified Wild Turkeys, American Robins, Red-tailed Hawks, American Crows, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Dark-eyed Juncos, and the sounds of many other songbirds that I just didn't see. I live near the park and would be glad to be the person who collects the data. I am suggesting two ways to send it. One way is to post it on ebird with the subject line of GCRA and I will take the counts from there. You can also send it in an email to me at lfenner@hotmail.com with the same subject line of GCRA. If you don't want to use the Internet, just call or text my cell phone and leave a message of your count. Cell phone number is 573-268-7468. Please include the date, time, and air temperature of your count. The best way to get to the natural area is from the parking lot on Gans Creek Rd. If anyone would like me to take them there, please get in touch. I hope that we can have a positive impact on this park as it can be a beautiful site for nature lovers.

Up From the Egg: The confessions of a nuthatch avoider by Ogden Nash

Bird watchers top my honors list.
I aimed to be one, but I missed.
Since I am both myopic and astigmatic,
My aim turned out to be erratic,
And I, bespectacled and binocular,
Exposed myself to comment jocular.
We don't need too much birdlore, do we,
To tell a flamingo from a towhee;
Yet I cannot, and never will,
Unless the silly birds stand still.
And there's no enlightenment so obscure
As ornithological literature.
Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,
Or a migrant *alouette* from Picardy?
You rush to consult your nature guide
And inspect the gallery inside,
But a bird in the open never looks
Like its picture in the birdie books-
Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage,
And plunges you back into ignorant gloomage.
That is why I sit here growing old by inches,
Watching the clock instead of finches,
But I sometimes visualize in my gin
The Audubon that I audubin



Image from www.flickr.com

Submitted by Denny Donnell

From Ogden Nash Pocket Book, page 193/94, © 1962

SCIENCE SLEUTH

story and photos by Lisa Schenker

Columbia Audubon Society was invited to participate in the March 15th "Science Sleuth," an event organized by the University of Missouri and Columbia Public Schools. This program at the MU Bond Life Science Center was designed to make science fun, interesting, and accessible for elementary school children and their families. More than 800 families registered for the event and around 3,000 people attended.

It was an especially exciting and busy afternoon for CAS members Lottie Bushmann and Lisa Schenker. They offered young scientists the chance to learn about nesting behaviors of birds. Children used netting and twine to create nesting bags, filled with alpaca fur, which was generously donated by Songbird Station.

Lottie estimated that almost 300 children visited the CAS table. Parents and youngsters alike were enthusiastic and keen to learn more about birds and their behavior. Keep your eyes out for an abundance of nests lined with alpaca fur this spring!

President's note:

Although Science Sleuth is intended for students, parents are just as inquisitive about birds and bird behavior. Adults were asking questions right along with their children, i.e. "when should I put out my hummingbird feeder?" Lottie and Lisa are already planning next year's CAS "Science Sleuth" booth with an added attraction "Get your bird questions answered here!" Who better to answer bird questions than members of CAS? Stay tuned for the announcement of the date of the third annual "Science Sleuth" with the expectation of even more curious students and parents—it's all CAS hands-on deck to join the fun.



TWILIGHT TIMBERDOODLE TREK

by Kevin Wehner

Columbia Audubon Society had 23 participants on **Saturday**, March 15, for our Twilight Timberdoodle Trek at the Forum Nature Area. We arrived at the staging area well before dark. It was a perfect evening with mild temperatures, no wind, and a full moon. The American Woodcocks were in full force! We heard several "peenting," saw five or six aerial displays, and several of us got a good view of a "pre-launch" woodcock on the ground in a clearing. A few insomniac (or still hopeful!) woodcocks were plaintively "peenting" as we headed back to our cars around 8 p.m. A big thanks goes to Holly at Songbird Station for opening the store for us.

BOY SCOUTS AT WORK



Grant Gould



BARN RAZING



Columbia's natural history community in general and the Columbia Audubon Society in particular lost one of the area's most valuable leaders with the death on March 23 of Vernon Barr, 97.

Vernon, a native of Hartville, was married to Jeanne (Taylor) Barr in 1944 and they served the Columbia Audubon Society as a team for half a century. Jeanne survives.

The Barrs were early members of the Audubon Society, joining in the early 1960s when they came to Columbia to teach - Jeanne as a Spanish teacher and Vernon as a science teacher.

Together they were the driving force in the growth and survival of Columbia Audubon, promoting the Audubon Film Series for two decades, working as volunteers at the annual Christmas tree sales at Wild Haven Natural Area, leading field trips and serving in whatever capacity the Society needed.

Jeanne was the dedicated birder, editing *The Chat* for years handling calendar and book sales, serving as secretary for both Columbia Audubon and the Audubon Society of Missouri and as our first representative to Audubon Missouri.

Vernon had a wide variety of interests, serving the Central Missouri Rock and Lapidary Club as president at least four times. Vernon was in a leadership role in bringing Rock Bridge Memorial State Park to life and he and Jeanne were long-time leaders in the Friends of Rock Bridge.

The Barrs were deeply involved in the acquisition of three of the four Columbia Audubon properties. They were close friends with Lee Jenkins and leaders in working with Lee to turn his home and property into Wild Haven. Vernon then served as land manager for two decades.

He also was instrumental in negotiating the transfer of both Albert properties to Columbia Audubon and was the original land manager for the area near Murry.

Vernon was also proud of his Air Force service in World War II and his 34 years of teaching science in public schools. He was proud, too, of his efforts to see the Katy Trail become a reality and laughed often about being in charge of car parking at a huge rally at Rocheport to promote the trail.

He asked for volunteers to handle the overflow crowd, drafting one early arrival who worked most of the day in hot sun. His volunteer was Edward D. Jones, the financial fund director and premiere proponent of the trail.

It is reasonable to say that the reason Columbia Audubon Society is a strong organization today is because of the foundation the Barrs helped build half a century ago, then worked a lifetime to strengthen.



Native Plant Sale 2014

A sale will be held at Bradford Research Farm, 4968 Rangeline Road, Columbia, on Saturday, April 12, 2014, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sale is sponsored by University of Missouri Native Plants Program and Lincoln University



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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