

# The Chat

Volume 56 Number 5

**Columbia Audubon Society**

February 2014

<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.

## FEBRUARY MEETING

**Wednesday**

**February 19, 2014**

**Unitarian Universalist Church  
2615 Shepard Boulevard  
7:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:**

**Gene Gardner  
Missouri Bird  
Conservation  
Initiative  
(MOBCI)**

**Hosts:**

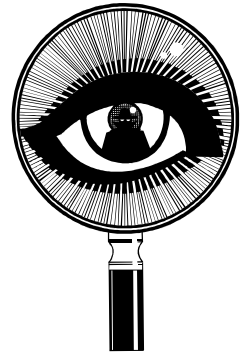
**Lisa Schenker and  
Pam Spencer**

## BOARD'S EYE VIEW

Each year the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society sponsor the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC.) Last year was the first world wide GBBC with participants in over 100 countries. The intent of the count is to give scientists a snapshot of bird species and numbers across the globe. This year's count is February 14-17, 2014.

So where does CAS fit in?

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 15, 2014. Field Trip Chair Kevin Wehner has devised something different and beyond an ordinary field trip: a way to involve CAS, and Columbia families in the GBBC (see page 3 for more GBBC information.)



CAS is partnering with our corporate sponsor and friends at Songbird Station. They've distributed a press release to Columbia's media outlets explaining the GBBC. David Lile has scheduled an interview on KFRU Radio 1400 AM with Bill Mees and Holly Seaver for Thursday January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:20 a.m. The following Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Songbird Station will have an afternoon GBBC presentation to encourage families to participate at their own feeders. Then on Saturday February 15<sup>th</sup>, Kevin takes over to lead the First CAS "Feeder Crawl" (see page 2.)

Participants in the "Feeder Crawl" are going birding at several backyards to record sightings for inclusion in the GBBC. Unlike pub crawls, the CAS crawl will have participants giddy from the excitement of birding and participating in a world wide citizen science event.

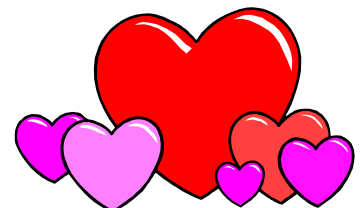
Importantly, the GBBC is an opportunity for parents and children to watch their feeders and birds for science. This could be the spark that ignites the next Sibley or Peterson.

### If the weather outside is frightful....

CAS meeting cancellations will be announced via KOMU-TV or CAS website, or call

445-7781 (Bill)  
or  
445-3942 (Lottie)

Happy birding,  
Bill Mees



## FIELD TRIPS

by Kevin Wehner, Field Trip Chair

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8 – JOINT FIELD TRIP WITH BURROUGHS AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

**Destination:** Burroughs Audubon Nature Center in Fleming Park, Blue Springs, MO

**Departure Point:** Northwest corner of the Columbia Mall parking lot (Target end, near the corner of Bernadette and Fairview Road). Carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. Blue Springs ETA around 9 a.m.

**Leader:** Sherry Leonardo

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

The Burroughs Audubon Nature Center has a comfortable viewing room with a large picture window overlooking a variety of feeders. If it's freezing cold outside, we'll bird from the inside! Burroughs Audubon will provide donuts, bagels and hot beverages. The center also has an extensive nature library, gift shop and Wi-Fi access! More information about the Burroughs Audubon Nature Center: <http://burroughs.org/library.html>.

Depending on the weather, we might also bird the Fleming Park/Lake Jacomo area that morning. Afterwards, we'll have lunch at a Blue Springs restaurant and then play it by ear for the afternoon and possibly bird Burr Oak Woods or Lake Remembrance. We'll hit the road for the return trip to Columbia around 3 p.m. **Please RSVP to Kevin by Wednesday, February 5, so we can let Burroughs Audubon know how many to expect: (573) 815-0352 or kevinwehner@gmail.com**

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15 – GBBC BACKYARD BIRD FEEDER CRAWL

**Destination:** Various Backyard Bird Feeders in and Around Columbia, MO

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

**Leader:** Kevin Wehner

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

The 2014 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will take place Friday, February 14, through Monday, February 17. The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day citizen science event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

You've heard of a Pub Crawl? Well, to help celebrate the 2014 GBBC, CAS is having a Backyard Bird Feeder Crawl! We'll carpool to various backyard bird feeders in and around the Columbia area. At each backyard feeder we'll count birds for 15 minutes or more, submit our checklist to eBird and then "crawl" to the next location.

Meet at Songbird Station's parking lot at 8 a.m. The trip will be 3-4 hours long and will return to Songbird Station for coffee and donuts. For more info on the GBBC, visit <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc> OR Page 3 of this newsletter



### SATURDAY, MARCH 8 – JOINT FIELD TRIP WITH BURROUGHS AUDUBON SOCIETY OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

**Destination:** Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, 6700 W. Route K, Columbia, MO

**Departure Point:** Meet at 9 a.m. at the Katy Trail parking lot in McBaine.

**Leader:** Vic Bogosian, Eagle Bluffs Wildlife Biologist

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

Lunch afterwards at G & D Pizzeria/Steakhouse at Crossroads Shopping Center (Broadway and Stadium.)

### SATURDAY, MARCH 22 – JOINT FIELD TRIP WITH ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

**Destination:** Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, 6700 W. Route K, Columbia, MO

**Departure Point:** Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Katy Trail parking lot in McBaine.

**Leader:** Edge Wade

**Contact Phone:** (573) 268-3714

Lunch afterwards. Option to bird another Columbia site after lunch.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 12 (more information to come)

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

### SATURDAY, APRIL 26 – JOINT FIELD TRIP WITH ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY (more information to come)

**Destination:** Forest Park, St. Louis, MO

# GBBC Instructions

[www.BirdCount.org](http://www.BirdCount.org)

**Count birds anywhere** you like for at LEAST 15 minutes—or even longer if you wish.

**Make your best estimate** of how many birds you saw of each species.

**Enter your list(s) online** at [www.BirdCount.org](http://www.BirdCount.org). If you already have an account for the eBird, Project Feederwatch, Nestwatch, or YardMap projects, you can simply use that login information. If you have never participated in the GBBC before, or did not take part in 2013, you'll need to set up an account at [www.BirdCount.org](http://www.BirdCount.org), providing your name and email and choosing a personal username and password. Additional profile information is optional.

**Map Your Location:** Log in to your account. Choose your country and state/province (if applicable), and county or city (optional), so you can quickly zoom to that location on the Google map. When the map zooms to your location, left-click with your mouse to place a "pin" at the site where you counted birds. Give that location a name (i.e. home, Central Park) in the box in the right-hand column of the page so you can use it again in the future.

**Date & Effort:** Fill in the date for the checklist you are submitting and indicate the type of count you did: **Stationary:** You stayed in one place, perhaps watching your feeders from a window. Enter your start time, how much total time you spent counting birds, and how many people contributed to this checklist.

**Enter Your Birds:** Next, you will see a list of birds that could be in your area during February. In the boxes, enter your estimate for the number of individuals of each species you saw while you were counting. Use an "x" if you can't estimate the number.

**Are You Reporting Everything?** It's important to let us know if you are reporting all the species you were able to identify. **You should always choose "Yes" in the right-hand column, unless you are leaving out some species on purpose.**

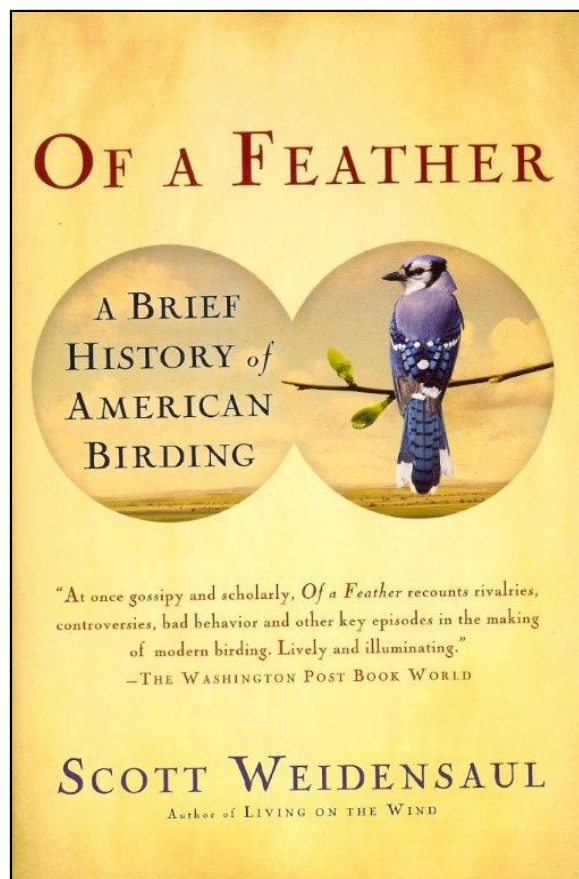
**Submit Your List:** Hit "Submit" on the lower-right when you're done. You'll see a confirmation page that shows the list you submitted. **Click "Email Yourself" at the top-right if you want a copy of your checklist.** If you were birding with one or more friends and want them to be able to add the list to their GBBC account (or eBird account) click "Share w/Others in Your Party."

**Tip: If you don't want your name to appear on the maps with your birding location(s), go to "Edit My Profile" and put "Anonymous" in the "First Name" field, and "User" in the "Last Name" field. Also choose a general name for your location if you do not want your specific address to be public.**



## BOOK REVIEW

submitted by Eric Seaman



### OF A FEATHER: A Brief History of American Birding by Scott Weidensaul

Superstar birder Pete Dunne of the Cape May Bird Observatory once wrote, "...if I could write like anyone else, it would be Scott Weidensaul". If you have read any of Weidensaul's books you know that he is also a tireless researcher. In *Of A Feather*, the fascinating history of American birding is chronicled from first explorations in the 1500s through a chance meeting of Alexander Wilson and John Audubon in a Louisville store in 1810 to present day. Weidensaul provides in-depth biographies of the giants of American ornithology yet also profiles local citizen-scientists who have made huge contributions to what we know about birds (ever heard of Martha Maxwell or Cordelia Stanwood?).

This book is written in a highly entertaining manner that will educate and help you understand why you do things like braving freezing temperatures to count birds the second Saturday in December.

### 2014 Natural Events Calendar for February ♥ Missouri Department of Conservation

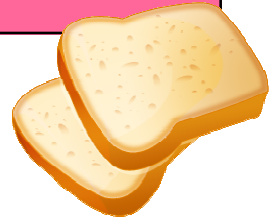
- ♥ Cackling geese migrate through Missouri.
- ♥ Great Horned Owls are incubating eggs.
- ♥ American Woodcocks are beginning courtship in southern Missouri.  
At dusk, listen for their nasal "peenting" in brushy fields.
- ♥ Turkey vultures begin arriving.
- ♥ Screech Owls search for mates.



*American Woodcock—image from massaudubon.org*

## A CURIOUS BIRDER....DUCKS DON'T BAKE\*

\*CAS member Edge Wade recommended this article for inclusion in *The CHAT*



For some people it's a family tradition to take their kids to the local pond or river and feed bread to the ducks and geese that congregate there. Arriving with a bag of stale bread, the ducks and geese approach you eagerly, anxiously waiting for a handout. It is a way to interact with wildlife, and seems harmless since the birds did eat the bread. Yes, I must confess, I'm guilty; I sometimes fed wild ducks and geese bread. That immediately stopped when I learned that feeding bread at the local duck pond or river was detrimental to their health and the water quality.

We know a junk food diet isn't healthy for people. We also know just because you like to eat it, that doesn't mean it's good for you. What applies to people also applies to our feathered friends. Bread, popcorn, and crackers are considered junk food for waterfowl and can cause a multitude of problems. If you think about it, birds don't bake. So how could bread be part of a natural diet for them to eat? Therefore, I thought I would share a few things that I have learned.

When birds become accustomed to handouts, they lose their natural fear of humans and may become aggressive in order to get more food. Ever been mobbed by Canada Geese? Not fun.

Uneaten bread will rot creating algae and fungal growth that can clog natural waterways and produce toxins that can harm fish and wildlife.

Because ducks will naturally seek out an easy food source such as human handouts, ducklings will not learn to forage for natural foods as easily. For example, it's easier to grab food at a drive-thru than to prepare food at home.

Ducklings eating junk food will not receive adequate nutrition for proper growth and development which can cause vitamin, protein and calcium deficiencies leading to weak bones, liver disease and Angel Wing.

Where an easy food source is abundant, ducks and other waterfowl will lay more eggs and the pond or lake will become overcrowded. This increases the likelihood of territorial aggression and predation.

Congregations at feeding sites can also lead to higher disease exposure among birds, including parasites, viruses and bacteria such as salmonella.

Feeding them bread also leads to increased bird feces that can harbor bacteria responsible for numerous diseases, including avian botulism. Uneaten bread can draw rats, mice and insects that harbor additional diseases that can be dangerous to humans.

Well, I think you get the picture. I am not saying that you shouldn't visit the ponds and rivers to see ducks and geese. I just don't advocate feeding them. If this is your family tradition, what do you tell your disappointed kids? Explain why you should not feed ducks and geese bread. Use it as a teaching moment for them to learn about the difference between good food and bad food. Investigate what specific foods each species of duck or goose eats. Take photos or videos and enjoy watching their natural behavior.

*Reprinted with permission of Maureen Eiger, a State and Federally permitted Wild Bird Rehabilitator, Board Member of Wildlife Care Alliance, The Roanoke Valley Bird Club and a very curious birder.*



## The Last Charter Member Dies

With the passing of Vicki (Marjorie) Love on January 13, 2014, the last known charter member of the Columbia Audubon Society has passed on.

The Columbia chapter came about as the birthday wish of Kay Eastman who had delighted in the activities and Audubon sanctuaries in Florida. To grant her wish, her husband Bob discussed the idea with his colleagues at the University of Missouri and found several who were interested in starting an Audubon chapter in Columbia.

The group met in private homes as a Nature Club, beginning in 1958, until they had the required 25 members to qualify for an Audubon chapter in March 1960.

Early newsletters (one page announcements of the meeting date and location) were copied on a hectograph in purple ink, then later in red and green inks and were typewritten by 1960.

John and Vicki Love were active members from the beginning, John being the ardent birder. Vicki's greater interests were in botany research and the photography of flowers, but she supported the Audubon mission. Both John and Vicki were officers of the fledgling chapter and were known for their meticulous record-keeping.

Vicki talked of a robin that stayed in their neighborhood all winter, so she provided a daily supply of chopped grapes for him. He was always waiting near her door when she went out to feed him.

Vicki and John worked hard to increase the chapter membership to 200 in the 1970's and '80's, helping to establish a solid Audubon chapter for Columbia. We are grateful for their legacy.

*Submitted to The CHAT by Lela Jeanne Barr*



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)

Columbia Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1331  
Columbia MO 65205

