

# The Chat

Volume 56 Number 6

**Columbia Audubon Society**

March 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.

## MARCH MEETING

**Wednesday**

**March 19, 2014**

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

**Speaker:**

**Becky Erickson  
Missouri Native  
Plant Society**

**Hosts:**

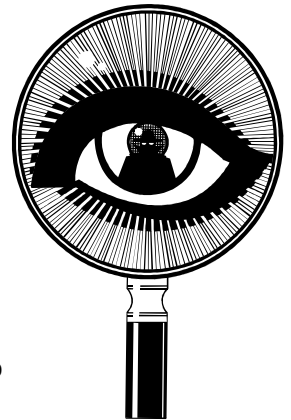
**Laura Hillman and  
Eric Seaman**

## BOARD'S EYE VIEW

At the time of this writing, more snow is predicted. Will winter ever be over? I take some heart in the fact that 30,000 snow geese were reported on Columbia's Phillips Lake and there are many ducks resting and feeding at Eagle Bluffs CA. Are these indications spring is coming?

In the meantime, I wait for spring and the arrival of the avian hoard dressed in their most alluring feathers. With nesting in the offing, several CAS, Master Naturalist, Wild Ones®, and Native Plant Society members visited the site of Gans Creek Recreational Area. As the landscape and topography change at Columbia's newest park, will it affect the two Heron Rookeries? (see photo on page 5.) That's the question everyone wanted to answer on a cold but sunny day's hike.

The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department is beginning the long process of developing the park. Although it will include many venues for athletics, there is acreage designated as natural area. Here, efforts are moving ahead to remove invasive cedars to restore what was originally a glade. The hikers seeing this were encouraged and thought it appropriate to compliment Parks and Rec. At the same time, the group wants to convey its concern for the future of the heron rookeries. Disruptive development activities during nesting season should be avoided. It seems to offer a "teachable moment" for those listening.



On another topic, the Great Backyard Bird Count presented an opportunity for a new kind of field trip, a Feeder Crawl. I refer you to Kevin and Susan's report on the event, page 4. I was one of those who participated in this first, of what I hope will become, an annual "crawl." We had a blast and we saw great birds. Some CAS members are blessed to have wonderful birding without leaving home. It doesn't get any better than that! Thank you Kevin Wehner and Susan Schabillon for organizing the feeder crawl and thank you Holly Seaver at Songbird Station for opening early and providing refreshments.

Happy bird watching  
Bill Mees, President



## MARCH MEETING INFORMATION

by Lottie Bushmann



Becky Erickson from Missouri Native Plant Society will talk about the connection with birds, native plants, migration and how it all works together and are all necessary pieces of the ecological puzzle.

## FIELD TRIPS

by Kevin Wehner

### 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/email:** Bill Mees - (573) 445-7781 or jandbmees@mchsi.com

Lunch afterwards at G & D Pizzeria/Steakhouse.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 15 – TWILIGHT TIMBERDOODLE TREK

**Destination:** Forum Nature Area

**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

Meet at Songbird Station's parking lot at 6:30 p.m. The goal for this **evening** field trip is to hear and see (hopefully!) the twilight mating ritual of the American Woodcock (A.K.A. Timberdoodle). Please bring a flashlight.

Here's a description of the Timberdoodle's mating behavior from AllAboutBirds.org:

"American Woodcock spend most of their time hidden in fields and on the forest floor, where they probe for earthworms. On spring nights, males perform very conspicuous displays, giving a buzzy peent call, and then launching into the air. Their erratic display flight includes a distinctive, twittering flight sound and ends with a steep dive back to the ground." We'll return to Songbird Station around 8 p.m. for pre-bedtime milk and cookies (seriously!).

For tips on "woodcocking," check out "Looking for Mr. Woodcock" on YouTube: <http://goo.gl/ExNoj1>

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

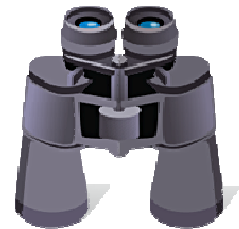
**Destination:** Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area, 6700 W. Route K, Columbia, MO

**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 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](http://www.chert hollow farm.com).

*(Continued on page 3)*

## FIELD TRIPS (continued from Page 2)

### 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 8 a.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.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 27

**Destination:** Albert Children's Wildlife Area

**Leader:** John Besser



*Internet photo from:  
philthach.wordpress.com*

Mark your calendars:

#### **The 2014 Missouri Bluebird Conference**

July 11-13, 2014

George Washington Carver Farm, Lincoln University

Special Keynote speaker: Ket Zimmerman Smith

For more info: [www.missouribluebird.org](http://www.missouribluebird.org)

### 2014 Natural Events Calendar for March 🍀 Missouri Department of Conservation

- 🍀 **Begin setting up Eastern Bluebird nest boxes**
- 🍀 **Male Red-winged Blackbirds begin to set up territories**
- 🍀 **Greater Prairie-Chickens “boom” through mid-April.**
- 🍀 **Raise Purple Martin houses today, March 15**
- 🍀 **Pileated Woodpeckers drum to establish territories**



*Internet photo from stlucieaudubon.org*

# GBBC 2014

by Kevin Wehner & Susan Schabilion

Since 1998, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society have sponsored the annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds. This year's count was February 14-17.

To spark enthusiasm for the GBBC, Columbia Audubon Society "hatched" a Backyard Bird Feeder Crawl. Similar to a pub-crawl, where a group travels from one pub to the next, CAS transformed the concept into a birding field trip where participants travel to various backyard bird feeders in and around the Columbia area.

On Saturday, February 15, a dozen birders gathered early in the morning at Songbird Station to participate in the event. A reporter and photographer from the *Columbia Missourian* tagged along, too. The birders caravanned to five backyards in addition to the Missouri Department of Conservation Research Center. At each location on the "crawl," we spent at least 15 minutes counting and recording the total number of each species observed in the backyards and at the feeders.

It was a chilly morning! At some of the homes, we birded from inside while enjoying coffee, hot chocolate, treats, and warmth! A little friendly competition took place over whose backyard had the most species (we're not tweeting who the winner was, but her initials are L.B.).

Of the 29 bird species sampled during the "crawl," the bird of the day was a beautiful Hermit Thrush who twice visited the heated birdbath at Lottie's home. Other highlight birds were Red-shouldered Hawk, Purple Finch, Fox Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow. After we were all "crawled-out," the final species checklist for each location was submitted to eBird. The bird counts CAS contributed went into a global data pool that helps scientists create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of wild birds.



Hermit thrushes seen at Lottie Bushmann's heated birdbath



A big thank you to all who opened up their backyards and homes for this event! A standing ovation goes to Songbird Station for opening early to be our "pre-crawl" rendezvous point and offering "post-crawl" donuts and coffee. The GBBC Backyard Bird Feeder Crawl will likely become an annual CAS event and next year we might have a party bus and fabulous prizes!





Rookeries spotted at Gans Creek Recreational Area

## **A request from the editor**

You may notice this month's newsletter is shorter than usual. The editor of THE CHAT is calling on members to submit articles to your newsletter. Have you read a book you think other bird watchers would enjoy? Write a short review for THE CHAT. Have you seen an interesting bird or visited a good birding location? With your help THE CHAT can tell other CAS members and friends. If you have an interesting anecdote or birding experience, share it with THE CHAT. Your submissions will make future issues of THE CHAT more fun and informative.

*Jan Mees, CHAT editor*  
jandbmees@mchsi.com  
573-445-7781



## **UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST**

**Video Lecture: Make Room for Nature**  
featuring **Dr. Doug Tallamy**  
**Daniel Boone Library, Columbia, MO Friends Room,**  
**Saturday March 8, 2014, 2 - 4 p.m.**

Dr. Tallamy will be presenting his concept of Ecosystem Services and the opportunity to protect biodiversity in your backyard.

Sponsored by the Mid-Missouri chapter of Wild Ones Natural Landscapers

**Purple Martin Seminar**  
**Sunday March 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.**

Songbird Station offers training for beginning and experienced Martin landlords. Learn how to attract Martins to your yard, raise more young in your houses, control unwanted tenants like Sparrows and Starlings and prevent problems from predators like snakes and owls.

Songbird Station, 2010 Chapel Plaza Court, Suite C, 573-446-5941

**Hummingbird and Oriole Seminar**  
**Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.**

Ahh spring! Time to get prepared for the arrival of some of our favorite visitors; the hummingbirds and orioles. Join us to learn a few fun facts and helpful hints to attracting and keeping these colorful birds in your yard.

Songbird Station, 2010 Chapel Plaza Court, Suite C, 573-446-5941



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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