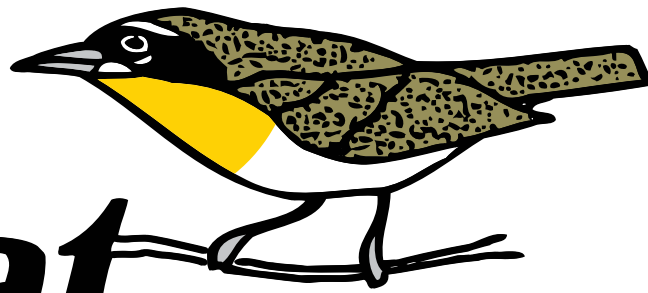


# The

# Chat



Volume 58  
Number 3

**Columbia Audubon Society**  
<http://columbia-audubon.org>

November 2015

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

The mission of the 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.

## **BAND WITH NATURE: "BETTER THAN RECESS"**

Columbia Audubon Society sponsors Band With Nature, a field trip for second grade students, in partnership with the science department at Columbia Public Schools. Each of the project's four years has seen a few adjustments intended to fine-tune an already remarkable event. Banding birds is one highlight, thanks to the efforts of Missouri River Bird Observatory. Not only do students have an opportunity to see birds up close, they learn how researchers design and conduct studies.

This year, bird feeders were installed near mist nets to entice birds to "volunteer" to be banded. Boy, did it work! Yellow-rumped Warblers, Magnolia Warblers, Downy Woodpeckers, Gray Catbirds, even an Ovenbird volunteered, just to name a few.

The Raptor Rehabilitation Project from the university veterinary school brought Owliver and Mo (Great-horned Owls) and Jacob and Emma (Red-tailed Hawks) to wow the students. No, owls can't turn their heads ALL the way around. It sure looks like it, doesn't it? Oh, did you know owls have quiet feathers, and they eat their food whole? The indigestible parts of their food go into a pouch which is where owl pellets originate. - *continued*

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**Edited by**

Eric Reuter, (573) 474-0989  
[eric@cherthollowfarm.com](mailto:eric@cherthollowfarm.com)

## BAND WITH NATURE: "BETTER THAN RECESS" (CONTINUED)



*Emily from Missouri River Bird Observatory is holding a Tufted Titmouse*

*- from previous page*

Doesn't everyone want to know what is inside an owl pellet? Well, second graders do, and they had a chance to see for themselves at one of the activity stations. In fact, sandwich bags were provided so students could take their discoveries home to show parents and siblings.

Beaks, feet, and skulls, oh my! Isn't it amazing how different bird species are adapted to how they live, eat, and survive? What does a bird with this beak eat? Why are these eye sockets so large? Look at that foot. It's a science curriculum guessing game.

It was a field trip of learning with every activity part of the second grade science curriculum. I suspect none of the participants would describe it as "school." This year's event was attended by 60 teachers and their students, more than ever before. That's about 1,200 students. Add to that number teachers, aides, and accompanying parents and grandparents who were also learning. The best compliment came from a student who volunteered his opinion that "this is better than recess." Need anyone ask for more?

A special thanks is extended to the many CAS members who volunteered their time to make this event a success. Other CAS members and friends also deserve recognition. It is their dues and donations that cover the nearly \$4,000 CAS budgets for this event. I hope you agree it is well worth the time and money. In addition the Missouri Department of Conservation provided each student with a copy of Feeding Backyard Birds, and Songbird Station provided a coupon for each student to receive a free birdfeeder for their backyard.

*- photo and story by Bill Mees*

## A LITTLE FREE LIBRARY AT CANS



*From left to right: Marilyn Hasselriis, Jayne Young\*, Mike Anderson\*, Sarah Anderson\*, Rick Kaufmann\*, and Ginny Crabb (\*members of Columbia Community Lions Club)*

It's 5:30 p.m. on a fall evening, and people are beginning to gather in the parking lot at the Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary (CANS) for the installation of a "Little Free Library" in memory of Peter Hasselriis. For those not familiar with the concept, the project's website ([littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org)) describes them as "front yard book exchanges." They started as a simple idea to promote literacy and the love of reading. There are now over 32,000 Little Free Library book exchanges around the world, bringing curbside literacy home and sharing over 1 million books annually.

Peter, a long-time professor at the University of Missouri, passed away last year. His many friends and neighbors wanted to do something in his memory. Since he was a lover of nature and birds as well as a professor of reading, and a teacher of teachers, a little library seemed like a fitting memorial.

So it was that Ginny Crabb, a neighbor of Peter and Marilyn Hasselriis, contacted Columbia Audubon Society and the Columbia Community Lions Club. The CAS board enthusiastically supported the idea. The Lions Club has installed several of these Little Free Libraries in Columbia, including one at Stephens Lake Park.

Lions Club member Mike Anderson built the library, and members Rick and Sarah Kaufmann applied the paint, with colors selected by Ginny Crabb. The library's installation was completed on October 22nd when Rick Kaufmann and Mike Anderson dug the hole and set the post.

Those interested in making book donations can leave them at 3808 Bray Avenue, give them to Bill Mees, or shelve them directly in the library at the CANS parking lot (3607 Bray Avenue).

Columbia Audubon Society wants to thank the Columbia Community Lions Club, Ginny Crabb, and especially Marilyn Hasselriis for allowing us to be a part of remembering Peter Hasselriis.

*- photo and story by Bill Mees*

## CHANGING SEASONS, CHANGING BIRDS



In the third week of September my half-full hummingbird feeders continued to hang from the shepherd's hook in the backyard, right next to the bird bath. The monarch butterflies began showing up to nectar on the fall wildflowers. While planting another round of kale on a Saturday afternoon, I heard my first-of-the-year White-throated Sparrow, the tell-tale sign of fall and winter bird movements. The temperatures were still hovering in the 80s, and our native woodland backyard was loaded with summer's wildflower seeds and invertebrates, so I wasn't in a huge rush to purchase birdseed.

Despite the warm weather, the shorter day-lengths naturally triggered the movement of my nesting House Wrens and Gray Catbirds, whose calls filled the air all summer. The katydids and cicadas quieted down in the nighttime air last month, with only crickets chirping from the

yard. Fall moved in slowly this year, and I already missed the sounds of summer.

Floral and faunal diversity has increased by leaps and bounds since 2007, when we began a woodland restoration effort in our little urban lot. We started with the removal of bush honeysuckle and wintercreeper, two homogenizing invasive species that choke out native flora and provide little to no nutrition for wildlife. Recurring fires have created a woodland structure including a distinct shrub layer of oak sprouts, herbaceous plants, and smaller shrubs. This shrub layer, along with the burgeoning brushpile, has become increasingly popular with our backyard birds. A large, stately chinquapin oak provides nesting grounds for Downy Woodpeckers this summer, and tangles of native grapevine supported breeding pairs of Northern Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, and Gray Catbirds. Our pet-sitters have commented, "I lost the Bassett hound in the yard forest." With woodland cover and over 23 mature trees, "forest" seems more appropriate than "backyard".

As dry autumn days moved in the past few weeks, I've watched from inside as large flocks of 40 or more American Robins jockey for space in the bird bath. Last weekend, my berry-laden Eastern red cedars hosted over 60 Cedar Waxwings. The wintering birds are moving into the yard, and the feeder-filling routine begins, especially with most of the wildflower seeds already eaten or fallen to the ground. I anticipate looking out to the backyard feeding station on cold mornings, filling the bird bath with warm water, and allowing the birds to remind me of seasonal change.

*- photos and story by Allison Vaughn*

## CAS SUPPORTS RENEWAL OF COLUMBIA'S PARK SALES TAX

At its October 21 meeting, the CAS board voted to support the renewal of the 1/8 of 1% sales tax for parks that will be on the ballot Tuesday, November 3. The funds from the renewal of this existing tax (NOT a tax increase) will be dedicated to maintaining, developing and expanding Columbia's excellent system of parks, trails, and recreation facilities. The city estimates that the tax will generate \$18.4 million over the next 6 years. The planned expenditures for these funds are listed in a document available at the city's website:

[https://www.gocolumbiamo.com/ParksandRec/Documents/2015\\_pst\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.gocolumbiamo.com/ParksandRec/Documents/2015_pst_factsheet.pdf)

Most of the funds are designated for development and maintenance of parks and trails throughout the city, but a substantial portion (14%) has been set aside for preservation of green space, which the city describes as "land for parks, green belts, stream buffers, and natural areas." Although the board does not agree with every line item in the parks budget, we hope that CAS members will agree that Columbia's outstanding park system makes our city a better place to live for both people and wildlife.

CAS's support for the Columbia parks system also includes an element of self-interest, because in recent years CAS has become both a neighbor and a partner with the Columbia Parks & Recreation Department as we jointly support habitat restoration at the Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary and the city's adjacent Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary. Parks & Rec has been an important collaborator in the ongoing restoration of native prairie vegetation on a 15-acre tract that includes adjacent portions of CANS and Bonnie View. It is our hope that maintaining financial support for Parks & Rec through the sales tax extension will allow this partnership to continue.

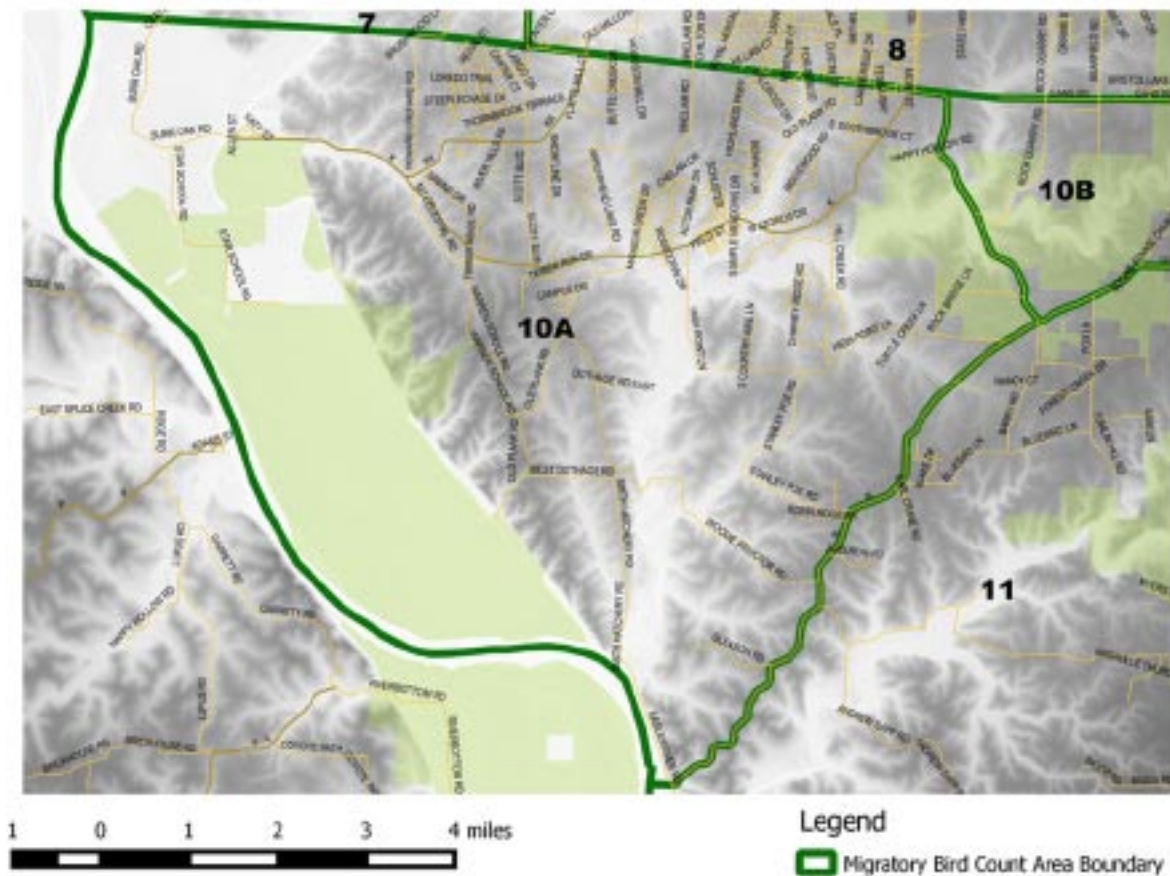
We urge you to vote 'Yes' on the parks sales tax renewal on November 3!

- by John Besser

## CHAT CONTENT WANTED!

Do you have an interesting birding story to tell? Perhaps it's your own experience in Missouri or elsewhere, or something you recently learned that other birders might be interested in. Please consider sharing your knowledge and passion about birding with other CAS members in The Chat. If you're not comfortable writing finished prose, I can always work with you to polish your rough idea, or follow up on a tip or subject. Interesting images, poems, and other material are also welcome as long as they're of general interest to our membership. The deadline for submission is one week before the end of each month. - Eric Reuter, [eric@cherthollowfarm.com](mailto:eric@cherthollowfarm.com)

## DIGITAL BIRD COUNT MAPS

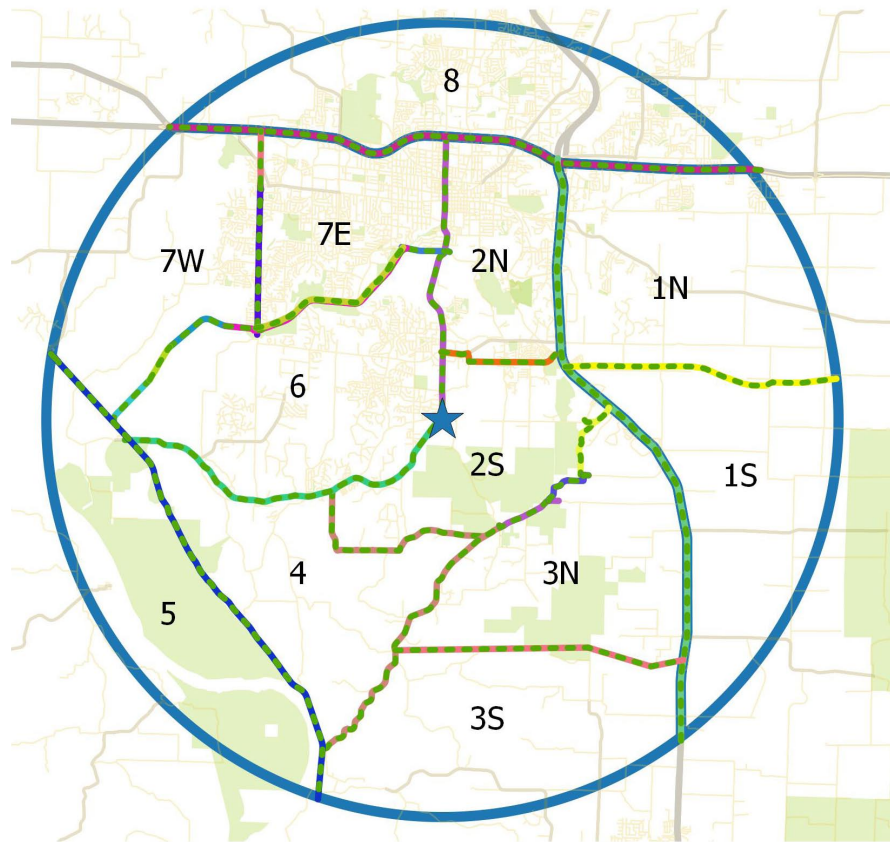


*This is the International Migratory Bird Count map for area 10A, showing roads, public lands, and topography.*

Each year, CAS participates in the International Migratory Bird Count (IMBC) in May and the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in December. For each event, teams are assigned to observe and count birds in specific areas, so it's important to have accurate definitions of who birds where. CAS has long relied on paper maps with hand-drawn boundaries, but this year I've been working to prepare digital, GIS-based versions of these maps to improve their accuracy and utility.

Printable, field-worthy maps of each area are complete for the IMBC areas and will soon be available on the CAS website; a Google maps version is available here: <http://ow.ly/TUoxz>. I hope to have the CBC maps finished in time for this year's December count; you can view a draft map of the CBC areas on the following page. Some boundaries are unclear on the old maps, or may need adjustment, so input from section leaders will be essential for best results. If you are a section leader, please keep an eye out for an email on this subject. Comments or questions can be directed to [joanna@cherthollowfarm.com](mailto:joanna@cherthollowfarm.com). - images and text by Joanna Reuter

## DIGITAL BIRD COUNT MAPS



*This is a draft, GIS-based map of the Christmas Bird Count circle and areas. Some boundaries need to be adjusted based on area leader input.*

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 19, 2015

As in many past years, Columbia Audubon Society members will be out counting birds the Saturday before Christmas. We will have the usual 12 teams out covering their respective areas (see map above). Although there are some yearly changes in leaders, generally the same leader has birded the same area for many years, so they really know what to find where. Teams are generally the same, too, but new participants are always welcome. If you haven't done it before and want to get on a team the most reliable way is to forget the computer and call Laura Hillman at 573-397-1010 cell or 573-442-3703 home.

After the count the real fun comes at the Chili Supper where we eat, call out the area results one species at a time, and come up with the grand total of species and birds. Courageous souls serve pots of chili in hot kitchens to provide food for the event. Lori Hagglund is in charge of organizing the dinner which starts at 6:00 p.m. at the Community of Christ Church on 1111 S Fairview Rd, Columbia, MO. Please contact Lori at [hagglund.lori@gmail.com](mailto:hagglund.lori@gmail.com) to volunteer to bring chili or other essentials like good desserts.

**2015-2016 FIELD TRIPS**  
**Lori Turner, Field Trip Chair**

**McBaine wetlands & lower Perche Creek**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, November 7th, 2015, 8:00 a.m.

**Departure Point:** McBaine trailhead (Katy Trail SP), McBaine, MO

**Leader:** John Besser, [jbesser1@gmail.com](mailto:jbesser1@gmail.com)

We will bird the City of Columbia's wetland cells 1 and 4, MKT trail, and lower Perche Creek, looking for ducks, marsh birds, sparrows, and raptors. We WILL NOT be able to drive on the city's access road, but plan to walk as much as we can. A spotting scope may come in handy for viewing ducks on the wetland. The trip will be 4 hours long. We recommend water resistant footwear. Afterwards Katfish Katy's will have a little something for lunch and some trailside beer. If you plan on having lunch with us please RSVP by November 5th to Lori Turner, [loricatrips@gmail.com](mailto:loricatrips@gmail.com)

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**Little Dixie Lake Conservation Area, Callaway County**

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, November 18th, 8:00 a.m.

**Departure Point:** Moser's Foods (née Patricia's), 900 Keene St, Columbia, MO

**Leader:** Eric Wood, [ewood802@yahoo.com](mailto:ewood802@yahoo.com)

A spotting scope may come in handy for viewing ducks. The trip will be about 4 hours long and it's recommended to wear water resistant footwear.

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**Katy Trail/City Wetland Cell Unit 2/Katy and Buck Pools**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, November 21st, 8:00 a.m.

**Departure Point:** McBaine trailhead (Katy Trail SP), McBaine, MO

**Leader:** Lori Turner, [loricatrips@gmail.com](mailto:loricatrips@gmail.com)

We will bird the trail walking south from the McBaine trailhead, stopping at Katy/Buck Pools (but staying close to Katy Trail) and City of Columbia's wetland unit cell 2. The trip will be 4 hours long; waterproof footwear is recommended.

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**Reform Conservation Area, Callaway County**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, January 9th, 8:00 a.m.

**Departure Point:** Moser's Foods (née Patricia's), 900 Keene St, Columbia, MO

**Leader:** Lori Turner, [loricatrips@gmail.com](mailto:loricatrips@gmail.com)

Reform CA is listed as a focus Conservation area by Audubon Society of Missouri and we are encouraged to bird the area this winter. We will leave Moser's parking lot at 8:00 am to explore this Conservation area located in Callaway County. We will return to Moser's parking lot by 12:30 p.m.



## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### **Wednesday, November 18, 7:00 p.m.**

**Presenter:** Sarah Kendrick, Missouri Department of Conservation

Come hear Sarah Kendrick, Wildlife Programs Supervisor at the Missouri Department of Conservation, speak about her Master's research on the breeding demography of the Eastern Wood-Pewee across a gradient of savanna, woodland, and forest in the Missouri Ozarks. Sarah will also cover her more recent work at the Department partnering with Missouri Bird Conservation Foundation to build the Great Missouri Birding Trail. Come and see how Audubon Societies around the state are integral to this effort now and in the future of this statewide effort highlighting the "best of the best" places to bird in Missouri.

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### **Wednesday, January 20, 2016, 7:00 p.m.**

**Presenter:** Mike Szydowski, Science Coordinator of Columbia Public Schools

Our Audubon chapter is a Partner with the CPS Science Dept. Come hear how Mike leads this department and inspires teachers to teach science.

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### **Wednesday, February 17, 2016, 7:00 p.m.**

**Presenter:** John Faaborg

Professor of Biological Sciences studying Avian ecology, behavior and conservation. John will speak to climate change and the effect on birds as well as his own research.

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### **Wednesday, March 16, 2016, 7:00 p.m.**

**Presenter:** Mary Nemecek, Burroughs Audubon Society

Neonicotinoids have become a widely used pesticide with increasing scrutiny on the impact it might have with honey bees. But what about birds? and people? How does it compare with the pesticides that came before? How does it interact with the environment today and what implications are there in the future?

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### **Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 7:00 p.m.**

**Presenter:** Mark Glenshaw

Mark Glenshaw is an award-winning naturalist who has closely observed and documented Great Horned Owls in Forest Park since December 2005. Mark's talk will cover how he found these owls, basic facts about the species and the different behaviors he sees with photos and videos to illustrate these behaviors.

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### **Wednesday, May 18, 2016**

Spring Picnic, more details TBA.



Columbia Audobon Society wants to thank our corporate sponsor:

**Songbird Station**  
2010 Chapel Plaza Court, Suite C  
Columbia MO 65203  
[www.songbirdstation.com](http://www.songbirdstation.com) 573-446-5941

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