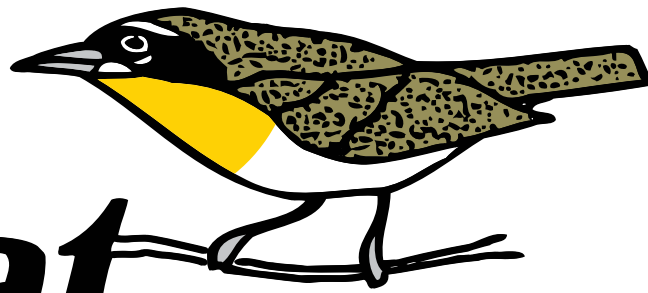


The

Chat



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

March 2016

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.

NOMINATIONS WANTED FOR UPCOMING BOARD ELECTIONS

It is time for new board elections and the nominating committee is working very hard. A slate will be presented at the March meeting, and will also appear in the April Chat. Voting will take place at the April meeting. The May meeting, which is a picnic, will be the last meeting under the current team and the new team will begin in September but can have planning meetings in the summer.

We have several members who are interested in joining the board. However, the nominating committee is interested in nominations, especially self-nominations, for the offices of:

- Secretary
- Vice President
- President

Nominations should be given to Laura Hillman, the chairman of the committee at 442-3703 or 573-397-1010 or hillmanl@missouri.edu. We have a lot of fun on the board and have a large number of new and ongoing projects that need board input. *- by Laura Hillman*

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DOCUMENTING RARE BIRDS IN MISSOURI

While enjoying a warm winter's day along the Current River in southern Missouri, Joanna and I noticed an interesting bird perched in the trees above Blue Spring. "That's a weird-looking robin," I thought before bringing up my binoculars to see a pinkish bird with dark wings and white wing bars, rather unlike anything we'd seen in our home state before. And thus we were launched unexpectedly into the process of observing and documenting a rare bird in Missouri.

The Audubon Society of Missouri (ASM) maintains the official state checklist of bird sightings, and its Missouri Bird Records Committee (MBRC) is the official arbiter of rare or unusual bird claims. Individuals who think they see such a bird are encouraged to document their sighting to the best of their ability, and submit an official report through the ASM website. There are certain "best practices" involved in observing the bird, taking proper notes, and submitting their sighting. Brad Jacobs, an ornithologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation and a member of the MBRC, told me that the group "is always looking for more ways to share the documentation process with birders. We do workshops on bird identification for lots of species groups, do note-taking workshops, and eBird use."

A comprehensive guide to the process is available on the ASM website at http://www.mobirds.org/RecordsCommittee/Documents/How_MBRC_Works.pdf. In short, birders who think they've seen something unusual should take pains to immediately document as many details as possible BEFORE consulting any bird guides, which can sway even experienced birders from raw observations. Photos are encouraged, even grainy or long-distance ones, as they can still show or rule out certain basic features. For example, our camera could only capture a blurry image of our bird (below right), but it was enough to show the basic spotting features that made it unusual (color, wing bars) while ruling out a mistaken identify for something common. In our case, we took field notes before consulting a guide. Only after watching videos of the behavior of two suspected species did we develop enough confidence in our identification to put the bird on our life lists, the arbitration of which is up to us.

Another useful tool is ASM's MO-BIRDS list-serve, where member birders can submit observations and questions for the state-wide community. We posted our photo and findings here first, and the responses, though varied in opinion, confirmed that it was worth putting in the work to submit a report to the MBRC.

- by Eric Reuter, photo by Joanna Reuter



Poems by James Townsend, 4th grade student

Tufted Titmouse

*His eyes are as black as stone,
his crest is his prized possession
like a human with diamonds
he swoops down
and plucks a hair from a lazy dog
he quickly lines his nest
hair after hair from the lazy dog
then perches on a branch calling softly
in the early morning,
“Peter Peter Peter”*

The Thick Woods

*I’m going to the thick woods
I’ll only stop
to listen to the eastern towhee
calling “drink your tea”
and watch the northern flicker
drum on the tractor
out in the field
I won’t be gone long
you come too.*

*I’m going to the barn
to watch the barn owl snooze
and watch the barn swallows
incubate their eggs
I won’t be gone long
you come too*

Inspired by Robert Frost

SHOWING OF “THE MESSENGER” IN COLUMBIA

CAS is working with Ragtag Cinema to host a showing of “The Messenger”, a new documentary about songbirds. The film’s director, Su Rynard, says:

Songbirds are disappearing, and their absence is a message to us all. To understand why this is happening, and what can be done, we embarked on a journey. Over the course of a year, following the seasons and the birds, our team filmed on three different continents. We discovered that the causes are many, and the solutions are few. Yet around the world, we met people who are concerned and are working for change – as this is not just about the future of birds, it’s about us too.

Humans share an ageless bond with birds, their song, and their persistent presence in our lives. In ancient times, to predict the future, humans looked to the flights and songs of birds. Today once more, the birds have something to tell us. For me, the first step was to simply stop, listen and see for myself what was going on in the skies above. The next step is this film.

The date isn’t finalized, but will be an evening during the week of April 25. The showing will be free, sponsored by CAS with funds received during the CoMo-Gives campaign this past December. Final info will be announced soon.

- by Eric Reuter

2016 FIELD TRIPS
Lori Turner, Field Trip Chair

Birding & optional work day at Chert Hollow Farm

Date & Time: Saturday, March 5th, 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Departure Point: Moser's Foods (née Patricia's), 900 Keene St, Columbia, MO. Meet at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Eric & Joanna Reuter, eric@cherthollowfarm.com, (573) 474-0989

Come explore and enjoy the many habitats and birding opportunities on our diversified farm 10 miles north of Columbia. We'll bird from 8-10 a.m., exploring riparian corridors, open pasture, woodland, and more. Then, from 10-noon, we'll hold an optional work session for those who wish to lend a hand in our ongoing habitat improvement efforts. At noon we'll serve a light farm-sourced lunch to thank those who stay to work. Please contact us by Wednesday March 2 if you're interested so we can plan for appropriate numbers. Also contact us if you're willing to lead the carpool from Columbia. Read more at www.cherthollowfarm.com

Return of the Twilight Timberdoodle Trek, Forum Nature Area

Date & Time: Saturday, March 12th, 7:00 p.m.

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

Leader: Lori Turner, loricatrips@gmail.com

Meet at Songbird Station's parking lot at 7:00 pm. The goal for this evening field trip is to hear and see (hopefully!) the twilight mating ritual of the American Woodcock (AKA Timberdoodle). Please bring a flashlight. We'll return to Songbird Station around 8:00 pm.

Here's a description of the Timberdoodle's mating behavior from http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Woodcock/id

"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."

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

2016 FIELD TRIPS, CONTINUED

Lori Turner, Field Trip Chair

Lick Creek Conservation Area, Harrisburg, MO

Date & Time: Saturday, March 19th, 8:00 a.m. to noon.

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

Leader: Lori Turner, loricatrips@gmail.com

We will leave Moser's parking lot at 8:00 a.m. to explore the 315 acre conservation area located east of Harrisburg off Hwy 124. There is a 12 acre lake with a pine stand on the other side of the dam. We should return back to Moser's by noon. To learn more about this conservation area visit:

<http://mdc7.mdc.mo.gov/applications/moatlas/AreaSummaryPage.aspx?txtAreaID=9228>

Gans Creek Recreation Area, Columbia, MO

Date & Time: Saturday, March 26th, 8:00 a.m to noon.

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

Leader: Louise Flenner , (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's 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 for coffee and donuts.

Greater Prairie-chicken Viewing Event through ASM and MDC

Date & Time: Saturday, April 16th

This special chance to view Greater Prairie-chickens on Wah'Kon Tah Prairie is open only to members of the Audubon Society of Missouri (ASM) until April 1st, and only seven slots remained as of this writing. Contact Edge Wade or check the ASM website at www.mobirds.org for more information.

Happy Hollow Farm

Date & Time: Sunday, April 24, 7:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m.

Departure Point: Columbia Mall parking lot near Wendy's, meet at 7:00 a.m.

Leader: Eric & Joanna Reuter, eric@cherthollowfarm.com, (573) 474-0989

We'll travel 45 minutes south to this beautiful diversified farm nestled in the hills south of the Missouri River near Lupus. We hope to find many interesting birds taking advantage of the wide range of habitats from bottomland to hilltop. Trip is held on Sunday so that Farmer Liz can join us (no conflict with the Saturday farmers market). Read more at <http://www.happyhollowfarm-mo.com>

2016 FIELD TRIPS, CONTINUED

Lori Turner, Field Trip Chair

Prairie Garden Trust: Joint Field Trip with River Bluffs A.S.

Date & Time: Saturday, May 7th, 7:00 a.m to 1:30 p.m.

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

Leader: Lori Turner, loricatrips@gmail.com

Lorna and Henry Domke will guide us through the many native habitats that are maintained in this private nature area outside of New Bloomfield. We will explore the savanna area overlooking miles of forests, walk along Hillers Creek, explore the native prairies that are sustained by prescribed burns, and walk along the lotus ponds. If meeting at PGT be there by 8 a.m. For directions or to learn more about PGT please visit their website at <http://prairiegardentrust.org/>

UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd, Columbia.

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

Presenter: Mary Nemecek, Burroughs Audubon Society

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

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.

Wednesday, May 18, 2016

Spring Picnic, more details expected in April.

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI SPRING MEETING

April 29 - May 1, Bunker Hill Retreat (Mountain View)

Enjoy birding in the Ozarks with speakers, field trips, and more. Details and registration online: <http://www.mobirds.org/ASM/NextMeeting.aspx>



Columbia Audobon Society wants to thank our corporate sponsor:

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