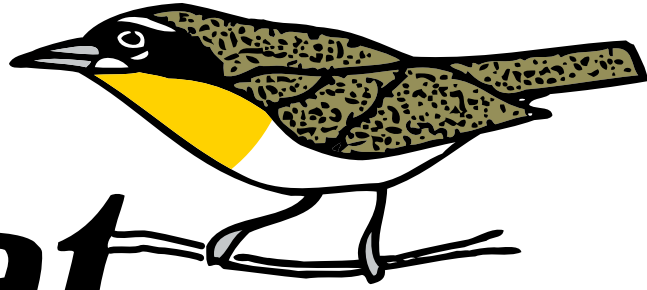


# The Chat



Volume 59  
Number 8

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

April 2017

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.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The board of Columbia Audubon has been working hard to consider changes we can implement to make our group more enjoyable and educational for current and future members while maintaining our group's status as a responsible community member & environmental steward. Your input will be requested in multiple ways, but if you have ideas about this process, please feel free to contact me or any member of the board. *-by Laura Hillman*

*\*Editor's note: all board contact information is available on the CAS website, <http://columbia-audubon.org>.*

---

## PROPOSAL FOR WEBSITE UPGRADE

The CAS board has been discussing ways to improve our communications with members and the general public while simplifying the work of some board positions that rely on communications with members (such as the Field Trips and Nature Areas Chairs). Following is a brief summary of a proposal under consideration by the board, along with a link to a brief online survey for members who wish to provide feedback on these ideas.

*- continued on next page*

## IN THIS ISSUE

**Proposal for Upgrading the CAS Website**

**CAS Approves Student Scholarships**

**ASM Spring Meeting**

**Help Maintain the U-U Church Grounds**

**Learning About Turkey Ecology**

**Minutes, Meetings, & Field Trips**

**Edited by**

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

## PROPOSAL FOR WEBSITE UPGRADE, CONT.

The core goal is to upgrade the CAS website, probably using Wordpress software, to allow for the following:

1. Easier online publishing of content such as The Chat and field trip notices. This could become the standard form of The Chat, though a printed/printable version would still be produced for members who prefer that format. An online Chat would allow more linking to internet content of interest, easier and wider distribution of the newsletter (including through social media), more efficient formatting and publishing, and more opportunities for members and readers to interact with the content (such as through online comments).
2. Mobile-friendly formatting for the website, making CAS's web presence easier to access and more attractive to many users.
3. An online calendar for field trips and other events, including a subscription option for automatic notifications of these events (and any changes), reducing the workload of the Field Trip chair (who current manually manages all such events).
4. The ability for members to subscribe (via email, RSS feed, or social media) to any content published on the website, reducing the need for independent emailings. For example, this would allow the Nature Areas Chair to directly recruit members or the public for work days.
5. Adoption of official CAS email addresses to standardize and formalize communications.

This work would not eliminate any current content on the CAS website, simply upgrade the layout and features of the site. It would cost money, potentially up to \$5,000 depending on the level of work the board approves, and would be overseen and aided by Doug Miller and Eric Reuter, the current web manager and newsletter editor, respectively.

If this work is to happen, it makes sense to do it over the summer with the goal of launching the upgraded website in September. Thus, the board welcomes comments and input from members now so that we can move forward (or not) in a timely manner. Please use the brief online survey linked below, if possible, to allow responses to be collected and analyzed most efficiently; this survey can be anonymous or not as you prefer. If you would rather provide non-online feedback, please contact Doug Miller or Eric Reuter.

*-by Eric Reuter*

---

### ONLINE SURVEY REGARDING WEBSITE UPGRADES:

To take the survey, go to the following link and click "CAS Web Survey" on the lower right. This survey was developed by Joanna and Eric Reuter and is hosted through their website: <http://cherthollowfarm.com/lime/>

## CAS APPROVES STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

In March, the Board reinforced our support for environmental studies by sponsoring scholarships for young people with two events. One takes place at a great local natural resource, the other at one of North America's most biologically diverse areas.

The Missouri River Relief organization hosts the Missouri River Academy, a 5-day adventure for high schoolers that connects them to the Missouri River with activities including studying live birds and fish and even some river cleanup:

<http://www.riverrelief.org/updates/entry/2017-missouri-river-academy/>

The Board also approved sponsorship of Columbia Public Schools' Grand Teton Science Adventure. This takes 6th to 12th grade students to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks to learn about and experience different ecosystems. Students have a curriculum and provide community service prior to their trip:

<http://www.cpsk12.org/Page/7022>

Both organizations determine if financial aid is required for certain students and the Columbia Audubon Society is proud to lend support to these future scientists and lovers of the natural world.

*-by Eric Seaman*



*CPS students show their enthusiasm for the outdoors; photo courtesy of CPS.*

## HOW YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT THE COLUMBIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Carrying out our mission through education, conservation, and outreach takes a wide variety of resources, from the valued time of dedicated volunteers to the financial support of members and donors. We welcome and appreciate all participants and supporters of our work through their generous donations of time, money, or other resources. Learn more at <http://columbia-audubon.org/>

## AUDUBON SOCIETY OF MISSOURI SPRING MEETING, MAY 5-7

This year's ASM spring meeting will be hosted by the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society in Springfield, MO. The weekend will feature a variety of birding trips in the area, a keynote address by Ted Floyd (editor of *Birding* magazine), and a Saturday night banquet. Learn more at:

<http://www.mobirds.org/ASM/NextMeeting.aspx>

## HELP MAINTAIN THE GROUNDS AT THE UU CHURCH (OUR HOST)

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, the host for all CAS meetings, is holding several events this spring to maintain and improve their grounds. This would be a great way for CAS members to show their appreciation for our hosts and to help improve the bird habitat in this area. The church writes:

*We plan on removing non-native plants from the NE bed in front of the church on Saturday, April 15 at 9 am. We will plant natives on Saturday May 6 at 9 am. As you attend the Columbia Audubon Society meetings at the UU Church on Shepard Blvd, you may have noticed the changes to plant beds. Over the course of time we have been converting our non-natives plant beds to natives.*

*Why natives?*

*Native plant species have co-evolved with native insect species and provide important food resources for thousands of species of invertebrates that in turn provide food for native birds and other animals. A native plant garden or large planting with a diversity of trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses provides food and shelter for insects, birds, amphibians, and mammals throughout the growing season. Leaving seed heads and plant structure throughout winter provides continuing food and shelter for many creatures and provides opportunities to observe nature up close. To underscore the importance of native plants to birds, virtually all terrestrial birds feed their young insects. Native plants provide food for insects, and insects provide food for birds. With no insects, we would have no birds.*

*We would love to have you join us for these events or to become stewards of the land with us. We typically post our events on the Columbia UU Facebook page, in our church's newsletter, the Searchlight, and on the church calendar: <https://uuchurch.net/calendar>. If you would like to be on the UU Grounds Team's event email list, please let us know. For more info contact: Patty Daus - [pdaus@mchsi.com](mailto:pdaus@mchsi.com) or Jeanne Murphy - [jmurphy1203@socket.net](mailto:jmurphy1203@socket.net).*

## LEARNING ABOUT TURKEY ECOLOGY



*Wild Turkey, photo by Eric Reuter*

Turkeys can seem ubiquitous these days, but there's a lot left to learn about these everyday birds. At the March CAS meeting, John Burk (district biologist for the National Wild Turkey Federation) gave a very interesting talk about the ecology and life cycle of Wild Turkeys, and how organizations like the NWTF coordinate with governments, non-profits, and private landowners to promote land stewardship and conservation methods that benefit turkeys and many other species both in Missouri and nationally. Having seen a flock of at least 20 turkeys on our land shortly before this meeting, I was ready to learn more. We've found a few nests in the past, but haven't given a great deal of thought to the deeper patterns of the turkey lifestyle. I avidly took notes during this interesting talk so I could share some details with those who couldn't attend.

As we're getting close to breeding season, John discussed a common concern and misconception among turkey enthusiasts: that our unusually warm winter would impact the turkey breeding cycle. He said that the onset of breeding in turkeys is primarily photo-sensitive and nutritional, driven by day length and the health of the hens more than the weather itself. Of course, the latter affects what sorts of foods are available as hens stock up for the brooding period.

In general, turkeys will start nesting around April 1 in Missouri, taking up to 14 days to lay an average clutch of 10 eggs (which can compose 25% of the hen's body weight). After a 28 day incubation, poults will hatch with a success rate of about 90%; the real challenge comes afterward. Turkeys and their poults rely on spring greenup and emerging insect life as a significant food source in the spring; John noted that spring burns can be beneficial for turkeys by encouraging this greenup.



*Turkey nest, photo by Joanna Reuter*

Vegetation is important for poult survival: too open and there's no cover from predators and not enough food, too dense and poults can't move around. One interesting factor I'd never considered is the need to stay dry: thick non-native grasses like fescue can kill poults by keeping them wet: there's not enough open space in dense fescue fields for young birds to escape dew, unlike the more open, clumped structure of native grasses and other plants.

*- continued on next page*

## LEARNING ABOUT TURKEY ECOLOGY, CONT.



*Wild Turkey, remote camera set by Eric Reuter*

I was also intrigued by John's description of his work with diverse landowners in Missouri and beyond, advising them on proper land-management methods that can improve turkey habitat while avoiding adverse impacts. For example, many landowners read about planting food plots in hunting magazines and want to emulate this, but in some landscapes (like Ozark glades) this

can be destructive and unnecessary. John recounted his success in steering such well-meaning efforts toward more ecologically sustainable approaches like timberstand improvement or the establishment of native plants.

There's far more to learn about turkeys than can fit in a short newsletter story, but this talk inspired me to pay more attention to turkeys this spring. If you want to learn more about turkeys in Missouri, consider the following sites. - *by Eric Reuter*

NWTF: <http://www.nwtf.org/about/state/missouri>

MDC: <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/wild-turkey>

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

*Meetings are held at the Unitarian-Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd, Columbia.*

**Wednesday, April 19th, 2017, 7:00 p.m.**

**Presenter:** Danielle Fox, Community Conservationist for the City of Columbia.

Danielle will speak about this exciting new position and her plans to promote conservation in Columbia. Please also note the special pre-meeting neighborhood bird walk at 6:00 p.m. (see Field Trips).

**Wednesday, May 17th, 2017, 4:00 p.m.**

**CAS annual spring picnic,** Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary, 3300 Rollins Rd.

As in past years, CAS will hold a spring picnic event in lieu of a regular May membership meeting. This year's event will take place at the Bonnie View Pavilion within Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary on the west side of Columbia. We'll take a birding walk through Bonnie View and the adjacent Columbia Audubon Nature Sanctuary starting at 4:00 p.m., then gather for a membership picnic/potluck at the shelter at 6:00 p.m. Please join us for an afternoon and evening of birding and socialization. More information about Bonnie View can be found at:

[http://www.como.gov/ParksandRec/Parks/Bonnie\\_View\\_Nature\\_Area/index.php](http://www.como.gov/ParksandRec/Parks/Bonnie_View_Nature_Area/index.php)

## CAS BOARD MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 15, 2017

In President Hillman's absence, Vice-President Bushmann called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present: Lottie Bushmann, Nancy Bedan, Lori Hagglund, Kris Hagglund, Bill Mees, Doug Miller, Lori Turner, Eric Reuter, Eric Wood

Motion by Kris H: Move that the minutes of the January 18, 2017 meeting be approved. Seconded by Doug M and carried without dissent with one minor spelling correction.

Treasurer's Report: CAS received a check from CoMo Gives. Our investments have risen with the market.

Report on Church Doors: Lottie B met with Molly from the UU Church regarding the break-in they had last month. We will be sure to lock both doors and then check each door before we leave.

Field Trips: Fourteen people came for the Rocky Forks trip, but the Missourian reporter did not show up. Four went to Riverlands. The 3M trip last weekend drew a new couple and a new student. The GBBC is this weekend. Next month will bring the Timberdoodle Trek to Forum Nature Area and a trip to the heron rookery at Gans Creek.

Properties: Bill M has ordered 200 tree seedlings to plant at CANS.

CHAT: Bill M proposed adding a line in the CHAT providing information on how to donate to CAS. After discussion, it was decided that a box outlining a variety of ways that individuals could contribute either time or treasure to CAS would be developed for potential addition to both the CHAT and the CAS website.

Membership: Doug M reported that membership numbers are slightly behind those of last year and he will be following up on those who are lapsed.

Payment to Dean Ravenscraft for mowing: Bill M reported that the area of CANS being mowed for free by Mr. Ravenscraft has increased and proposed that CAS give him a larger thank-you for his efforts.

Motion by Kris H: Move that we provide Dean Ravenscraft with a \$150 gift card to Break Time. Seconded by Lori Turner and carried without dissent.

*- continued on next page*

## CAS BOARD MEETING MINUTES, CONTINUED

Adopt-a-Trail Project Updates: CAS has been approved by the City to adopt the portion of Scott's Branch Trail that runs along the south side of CANS and the contiguous part of Bonnie View down to the boardwalk. We will work on removing the invasive plants from that area.

New Business:

MDC's Management Plans for Hinkson Woods and the Waters-Moss Wildlife Area: Doug M will ask Allison V if she will put a comment together regarding these plans and send it to the Board for approval. If so, it will be submitted on behalf of CAS by the Feb. 28th deadline.

EcoBlitz Event: Danielle Fox, City of Columbia Community Conservationist, is running this program for Columbia Public Schools students who are going on the Tetons trip this summer. She has invited CAS to participate. Bill M will obtain more details regarding the event from Mike Sydlowski and the Board will discuss it further at the next meeting.

Proposal to Reformat CAS Meetings: Kris H presented a proposal for making changes to the frequency and nature of both the Board of Directors and General Membership meetings of this Society going forward. Initial impressions were shared among the Board members and other possibilities briefly discussed. It was decided that a subcommittee would be formed to propose several different formats for change to be brought to the Board for further discussion at a future date.

Proposal to Update CAS Communications Methods: Eric R's previous proposal was briefly revisited, along with Doug M's response. It was determined that these updates will be planned in conjunction with the reformatting of CAS meetings.

General Meeting: Sixteen members enjoyed an interesting and informative presentation by Brad and Suzanne Wright, owners of Mussel Fork Legacy Marsh. They spoke about working with the Wetland Reserve Program to manage their land for hunting while benefitting all wildlife.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lori Hagglund, Secretary

*Archives of past meeting minutes may be found at <http://columbia-audubon.org/meetings.php>  
These minutes were approved at the March CAS board meeting.*



## 2017 FIELD TRIPS

### **Three Creeks Conservation Area, Columbia, MO (rescheduled due to weather)**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 1st, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or later.

**Departure Point:** AC commuter lot (on SE corner of US 63 and Grindstone/New Haven) at 8:00 a.m. or trailhead parking lot off Myers Lane (SE side of Three Creeks CA) at 8:30 a.m.

**Leader:** Eric & Joanna Reuter, [eric@cherthollowfarm.com](mailto:eric@cherthollowfarm.com) or 573-474-0989 (home)

We'll hike a loop through the southeastern part of Three Creeks CA, following Bass and Turkey Creeks while looking and listening for spring arrivals (including Louisiana Waterthrushes) in the area's diverse habitats. In addition to birding, we'll explore the area's spring wildflowers, interesting karst geology, and landscape use history. This trip will include some off-trail hiking to avoid major stream crossings. Also, some interesting features are not along the official trails.

Expect about 3 miles of hiking with elevation changes and possible wet spots; we'll take it slow. We suggest packing snacks or a lunch, as there are several excellent scenic spots for taking refreshments and this hike is worth taking enough time to do right.

---

### **Danville CA and Daniel Boone CA**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 8th, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Departure Point:** Moser's Foods, 900 N. Keene St., Columbia, MO

**Leader:** Eric Seaman, [eseaman68@yahoo.com](mailto:eseaman68@yahoo.com)

We will leave Moser's at 7:30 a.m. and arrive at Danville CA about 8:30 a.m. This is a Conservation Partnership priority area. We will be driving and walking the area. We will finish Danville about noon and at this point individuals can choose to either head back to Columbia or we will eat at Dad's Junction Café or other local dining place and then go on to Daniel Boone CA and bird it in the afternoon looking for Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Warblers. We should return by 4 p.m.

---

### **Big Buffalo Creek NA and Prairie Home CA**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 15th, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Departure Point:** Northwest corner of the Target wing of the Columbia Mall, 2400 Bernadette Dr.

**Leader:** Lottie Bushmann, (573) 808-0661

We will leave the mall parking at 7 a.m. and arrive at Big Buffalo Creek at about 9 a.m. to meet up with River Bluffs Audubon. We shall hike the trails until about noon at which point we will eat at Charley's Buffet, then drive to Prairie Home CA. We should arrive back in Columbia by about 4 p.m.

## 2017 FIELD TRIPS

### **Pre-meeting Neighborhood Bird Walk**

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, April 19, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

**Departure Point:** Parking lot, UU Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd, Columbia.

**Leader:** Joanna Reuter, [joanna@cherthollowfarm.com](mailto:joanna@cherthollowfarm.com), 573-474-0989 (home phone)

In the hour before the April membership meeting (while the board is meeting), we'll explore the local neighborhood along roads including Audubon Drive, Meadow Lark Lane, and Cardinal Drive. We'll be joined by that evening's speaker, Columbia Community Conservationist Danielle Fox, who will be talking about new programs intended to engage homeowners in managing their yards for conservation. This is a theme we'll explore on the walk: How are yards being managed, and how does that correlate with observed bird diversity? In this residential setting, we'll especially practice birding by ear along with discreet binocular use.

---

### **Prairie Garden Trust - Joint Trip with River Bluffs Audubon Society**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 22nd, 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**Departure Point:** Moser's Foods, 900 N. Keene St., Columbia, MO.

**Leader:** Eric Wood, [ewood802@yahoo.com](mailto:ewood802@yahoo.com) or 573-673-0215

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 7:30 a.m. For directions or to learn more about PGT please visit their website at <http://prairiegardentrust.org/>

---

### **Eagle Bluffs CA**

**Date & Time:** Saturday, April 29th, 9:15 a.m. to noon.

**Departure Point:** We will meet at 9:15 at the MKT parking lot at McBaine to form a carpool to reduce the number of cars.

**Leader:** Eric Wood, [ewood802@yahoo.com](mailto:ewood802@yahoo.com) or 573-673-0215

At 9:30 a.m. we will drive through Eagle Bluffs, stopping to look and set up scopes if we see something at a distance and finish around noon.



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**