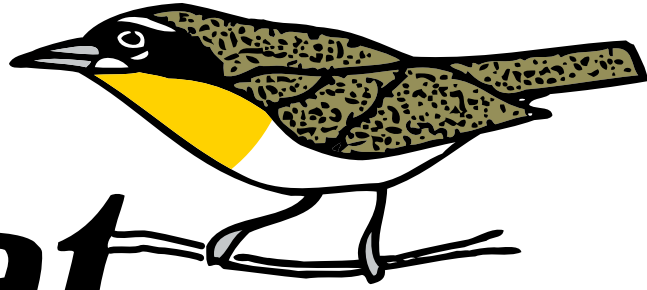


The Chat



Volume 59
Number 9

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

May 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: MIGRATORY BIRD COUNT 2017

A mouse got into one of my drawers and ate some holes in a T-shirt, so I decided to see what else was there. I found seven different beautiful T-shirts from the North American Migratory Bird Counts of 1999 to 2004. The NAMBC was created to track the numbers of different species successfully making it to the US because of poor wintering grounds and the decreasing availability of good stopping grounds. Many states were involved and in Missouri a number of counties performed county-wide counts. Columbia Audubon organized the Boone County effort into 13 areas, reliably counting each second Saturday in May and sending the data to a state-wide compiler. But the efforts waned until there were only two counties, then only Boone, and the state compiler went poof. Without someone to send data to, we just kept it in the same format each year in the belief that long-term records were important.

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Edited by
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FROM THE PRESIDENT: MBC 2017, CONTINUED

Then eBird appeared on the scene and some people began to figure out how to send their area data there, while others didn't bother. Eventually Cornell chose the second Saturday of May as International Migratory Bird Day and began collecting data. Last year, a number of our local area leaders including myself tried to find a solution to our data management without double-entering data to eBird, but didn't come up with a solution. This discussion came up again this year; it turns out that eBird doesn't know what to do with county-wide data, so they don't really want our count data even if we do.

So we will continue to collect our own data just as we always have, so that we have consistent long-term data that hopefully someone will try to evaluate. At the same time, all the leaders will figure out the best way to submit their area data to eBird consistent with their own system. This way both Columbia Audubon and Cornell will have data to use in different ways to answer the same question: how are the migratory species doing on their way through Boone County, Missouri?

This year the migratory bird count is May 13 and the leaders are ready to go. There are a few spots available on some teams for this interesting, enjoyable, and useful event. If you want to participate, call me at 442-3703. - by *Laura Hillman*

Editor's note: For more from Cornell, visit:

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/eventslist/imbd>

For individual maps of Boone County MBC areas and an overview map, visit:

<http://columbia-audubon.org/counts/>

APRIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Attendees of the CAS meeting were treated to an interesting presentation by Danielle Fox, the Community Conservationist for the City of Columbia. Danielle has drawn upon her academic background and past work with the Missouri Department of Conservation to develop a wide range of plans, programs, and partnerships intended to promote conservation within and the Columbia community. Current projects include restoring land for butterfly habitat and building the CoMo Wild Yards program, which seeks to match homeowners interested in planting and managing their lawns for better pollinator and bird habitat with volunteer advisors who can mentor those efforts.

Also, official elections were held for the 2017-2018 CAS board. The only change will be John Besser taking over for Lottie Bushmann as Vice-President, while remaining as Natural Areas chair. Please thank both Lottie and John for their service to CAS the next time you see them.

- by *Eric Reuter*

PRAIRIE COMING ALIVE AT CANS



Indian Paintbrush; photo by Allison Vaughn

The prairie restoration project at CANS is off to a robust growing season this year. After a lengthy collection process, prairie seeds were planted in winter 2015 following multiple rounds of mowing and herbicide treatment. In spring 2016, the area was awash in tickseeds (*Coreopsis tinctoria*) and black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*), as well as some undesirable species like clovers and ragweed that come part and parcel with starting a grassland from scratch. The basal rosettes of bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*), gray headed coneflowers (*Ratibida pinnata*), and many asters were prevalent but immature.

Fast-forward to April 2017, when visitors to CANS and Bonnie View are met with blooming Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja coccinea*) and golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*) and the promise of many other species that will be blooming throughout the seasons. To provide a structural heterogeneity on the grassland, volunteers organized by Bill Mees spent Earth Day planting sumacs and rough-leaved dogwood throughout the area. This multi-year effort is truly coming to fruition, providing new species of plants for pollinators and birds.

The prairie is not the only part of CANS in wonderful condition these days. Significant efforts to manage bush honeysuckle have paid off for woodland flora. Wild sweet William (*Phlox divaricata*) is dominant in the woodlands, and many other spring wildflowers along with fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) have popped up in the absence of the bush canopy. As part of the Earth Day planting, we also added hazelnut groves along the creeks in an effort to create a shrub layer, notably missing from CANS due to abundant deer.

The old-growth white oak canopy is, for the second year in a row, host to a nest of Great Horned Owls. On a recent visit, two owlets perched in stillness on a spreading branch waiting for food. Red-headed Woodpeckers and Northern Parulas are particularly nice to see in the woodlands as well. This urban nature sanctuary is fun to explore at all seasons of the year, and by the May 17th annual picnic, the prairie should be exploding in blooms. - by Allison Vaughn



Young Great Horned Owls at CANS; photo by David Bedan

SUMMER READING LIST

Once spring migration is past, summer can be a nice time to catch up on your reading. Here are three recent bird-related books that we've been enjoying; these are all available from Daniel Boone Regional Library:

The Genius of Birds - In this wide-ranging 2016 book, science writer Jennifer Ackerman summarizes a spectrum of recent research on the cognitive abilities of birds. She deftly blends anecdotal and scientific evidence to present a fascinating portrait of bird brains as thoroughly undeserving of that traditional moniker.

One Wild Bird at a Time - In comparison to the global scope of *The Genius of Birds*, this 2016 book by naturalist Bernd Heinrich presents detailed portraits of everyday life in mostly common birds observed from his rural Maine cabin and other New England locations. Heinrich's attention to detail, patience, and sometimes unorthodox methods present a rare look into quirks of bird behavior that should inspire many birders to pay closer attention to their local species.

Welcome to Subirdia - The bird biodiversity of suburbs often exceeds that of nearby less-disturbed habitats, a counter-intuitive finding with implications for (sub)urban land management. University of Washington ornithologist John M. Marzluff explores this and related topics in his 2014 book. - by Eric & Joanna Reuter

CAS ANNUAL SPRING PICNIC: Wednesday, May 17th, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary picnic shelter, 3300 Rollins Rd.



Please join us for our annual spring picnic! Plan to meet at the shelter at 4 p.m. to take a walk around the path to CANS so we can admire the prairie restoration work that has gone on this past year. Last week there was Indian Paintbrush blooming! Then from 5:30-7 p.m. we'll gather at the shelter for a potluck dinner. Please bring a dish to share. Plates, cups, napkins, and silverware will be provided as well as drinks. We look forward to seeing everyone!
- by Lottie Bushmann

For information about Bonnie View, visit:

[http://www.como.gov/ParksandRec/Parks/
Bonnie_View_Nature_Area/index.php](http://www.como.gov/ParksandRec/Parks/Bonnie_View_Nature_Area/index.php)

Indian Paintbrush; photo by Allison Vaughn

GRASSLAND WAYSIDE PANEL DEDICATION DAY ACTIVITIES



Left to right: Lori Turner, Ede Wade, Kathleen Anderson, Eric Wood, Greg Leonard, John Besser, Sandy Elbert, Laura Hillman, Allison Vaughn. Photo from DNR.

CAS members were greeted with perfect weather on Sunday, April 23, to enjoy a full day of activities at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park. They were celebrating the dedication of the state's first interactive bird checklist wayside panel, a product of the 10-year cooperative agreement between the Audubon Society of Missouri (ASM) and Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of State Parks.

ASM volunteers (many CAS members among them) work to help Missourians become more familiar with birds through the State Parks Checklist Project (SPARKS). The program makes park checklists available to the public online and at state park visitor centers. The new interactive wayside panel allows park visitors to use a QR code to download the Rock Bridge Memorial State Park bird checklist for use in the park.

The day began with a bird walk along Spring Creek and the Sinkhole Trail, led by Kathleen Anderson and Edge Wade. Among the birds seen were just-returned Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed and Red-eyed Vireo, and Blue-winged and Kentucky Warbler. Several participants satisfied well-earned appetites and shared birding lore and experiences over lunch at Buckingham's Smokehouse BBQ before returning to the park for the dedication ceremony hosted by Park Superintendent Sarah Jones, who described the habitat development and maintenance of the restored prairie traversed by the Grassland Trail. Allison Vaughn, representing DNR for SPARKS agreements, followed with additional comments about Missouri State Parks' habitat maintenance and the value of the SPARKS agreement with ASM. Edge Wade, conservation partnership coordinator, noted that the SPARKS program is the work of volunteers and that funds earned are used for formal bird monitoring work, scholarships for young people to learn about habitat needs of birds, and many other projects in partnership with a variety of organizations in Missouri.

To cap the day, Greg Leonard led an eager troop of birders and Americorps volunteers on a walk through the grasslands. Northern Bobwhite, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Yellow-breasted Chat were among the species entertaining the group.

- by Edge Wade

CAS BOARD MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 15, 2017

Present: Laura Hillman, Bill Mees, Nancy Bedan, Lottie Bushmann, Allison Vaughn, Doug Miller, Lori Turner, Eric Seaman, Kristofer Hagglund, John Besser, Eric Wood, Eric Reuter. Absent: Lori Hagglund

Laura called the meeting to order. The minutes for February, 2017 were accepted as written.

Committee Reports

Treasure's Report: Eric Seaman reported that the operating income for the year is about \$9700. Treasures report approved unanimously.

Field Trips: Eric Wood noted that the field trip for April had not yet determined. He said it may be at Big Buffalo. The "Wednesday Car" had been there successfully. Danville Glades is being considered. On April 22nd, CAS will join River Bluff Audubon Society to bird Prairie Garden Trust.

Program Report: Lottie stated that the May picnic will be at Bonnie View. She will call Parks and Recreation and reserve the shelter. Allison noted that the CANS restored prairie will be attractively in bloom. The remaining program for this year will remain as scheduled.

Properties: John said there was nothing of substance to report about the CAS properties.

New Business

1. Audubon Society of Missouri is trying to fulfill its contractual responsibility with the Missouri Department of Conservation to report bird counts on "sites of interest." eBird checklist is used. ASM has asked for support from CAS. CAS would not enter into a contract. Eric Wood suggested we could agree to report from a site and split the work with River Bluffs Audubon chapter. split up the work. The site requested is Big Buffalo Creek Conservation Area. It is about 1 1/2 hours away. The request was for quarterly bird counts and to commit for a number of years. Spring and fall bird counts would be the minimum acceptable. This CA requires walking and is impassable during high water (flooding). CAS has been a major contributor to CACHE sites in the past. A motion was made to agree to assist ASM in this way and the motion was approved unanimously. One component of the motion was to reach out to River Bluffs Audubon chapter to ask for their assistance/participation.

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CAS BOARD MEETING MINUTES, CONTINUED

2. Columbia Public Schools asked CAS to participate in their planned "Bio Blitz." Both Danielle Fox and Mike Sydlowski have communicated with CAS leaders/board members and there is lack of clarity about the nature of request. It may be that they want a program similar to Band With Nature. There was some suggestion that CPS also wanted assistance with clearing wild honeysuckle. Bill will call Mike Sydlowski to obtain clarity about the request.

3. Missouri Department of Conservation is requesting volunteers to lead bird walks/hikes at Eagle Bluffs for the Great Missouri Birding Trail celebration on May 19. It was unclear if CAS would be allowed to promote CAS and CANS. The program was reported to be MDC providing a short presentation and then local birders leading walks. Lead whoever shows up. Eric W and Lori T and John volunteered.

4. Migratory Bird Count celebration is scheduled for May 13 if the Governor proclaims it to be so. MoBCI typically obtains a proclamation from the Governor, but one has not yet been forthcoming. The event will be held at CANS if it is held. [Note: I am unsure about the following note: CAS could invite a any of the participants to provide a talk to us: presenter. Motion approved.]

5. Eric Seaman proposed providing Missouri River Relief \$400 to support one child for their summer camp/workshop with the option of providing another \$800, if two more children would be able to attend and needed financial assistance. A motion was made and unanimously approved. Eric Seaman also proposed making a donation to the Columbia Public Schools for the Grand Tetons Summer Science School to support the full tuition of two students, if needed. The donation amount identified in the motion was \$1550 and the motion was passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. MoBCI: All MoBCI grants are being held up in the Missouri legislature. It appears that awards won't be announced until April. We are partnered with the Greenbelt Land Trust of Mid-Missouri on its grant applications to restore Big Sky and Moss Waters Conservation Areas. Our role is to provide bird counts for property being restored. If awarded, the funding will be available July 1. We can establish a baseline in fall and summer and then do a post-renovation count or two. Allison will send us a copy of the grant. These are not large areas and we should be able to help without great difficulty.

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CAS BOARD MEETING MINUTES, CONTINUED

2. Attendees continued the discussion of potentially overhauling CAS communication strategy and infrastructure. Eric Reuter presents three ideas for changing the current practice, especially with regard to management of the website and the Chat.
- Option 1: Do nothing. Doug continues to manage the website as is and the Chat is provided in PDF. Eric doesn't want to continue as Chat Editor if the Board chooses this option.
 - Option 2: Keep website but find a way to put content online in HTML code and Chat becomes a webpage (i.e., with links, available for Google searches, etc). This approach is somewhat clunky and it requires more manual work. It requires coding skills but doesn't have any significant financial cost. Alternatively, the Chat starts out in HTML format and then is inserted. This still requires technical skill. Also, this approach doesn't allow for modern tools (dynamic buttons, etc.).
 - Option 3: Wordpress: online software to build website. Wordpress allows for more than one user account. It would require approximately \$3000-4000, less if CAS representatives moves all of the content. Site construction would require 2 to 3 months.

Lori T noted that ASM has a new website and it appears to work well. She suggested that we find out how their website was created. This works and what process did they go through? Doug suggested a fourth option to better meet the perceived needs of the older CAS members: install Wordpress on the existing website specifically for the Chat. He noted that we may not want to remove the current PDF Chat because it would eliminate the option for printing the Chat. Kris noted that the scheduled meeting time was nearly completed and suggested an additional meeting to discuss this issue and that of the potential change in program format. Wednesday, March 22nd was suggested with a start time of 7:00 pm at the Columbia Public Library. Addendum: the meeting was confirmed with a start time of 7:30 PM, until 8:50 PM.

3. Eric W stated an intention to plan all field trips at the beginning of the year and assign leaders as feasible. Everyone was supportive.

4. The Center for Urban Agriculture wants to partner with CAS. There is a meeting scheduled for next Tuesday (March 21) at Lucky's to explore possible partnership/collaboration. The meeting will start at 6:00 pm. Lottie and a couple of other board members are planning on attending.

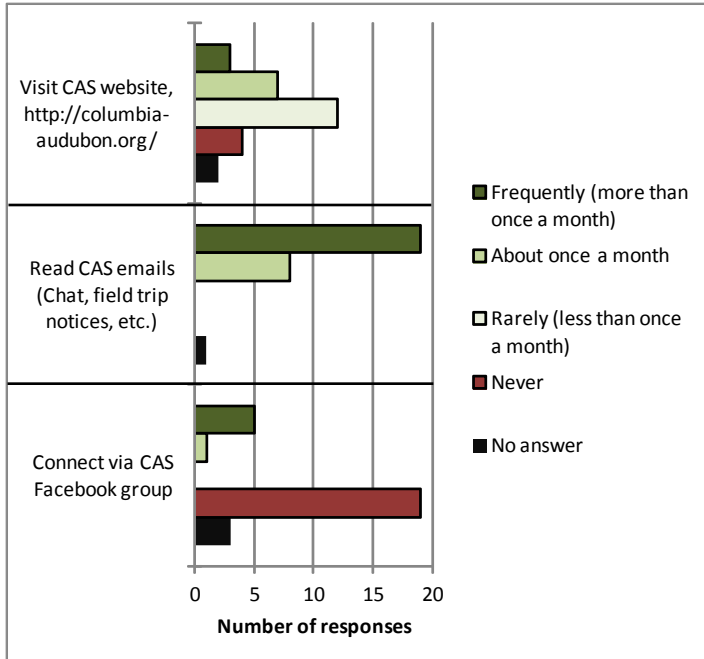
Laura adjourned the meeting. Respectfully submitted by Kris Hagglund, substituting for Lori Hagglund.

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

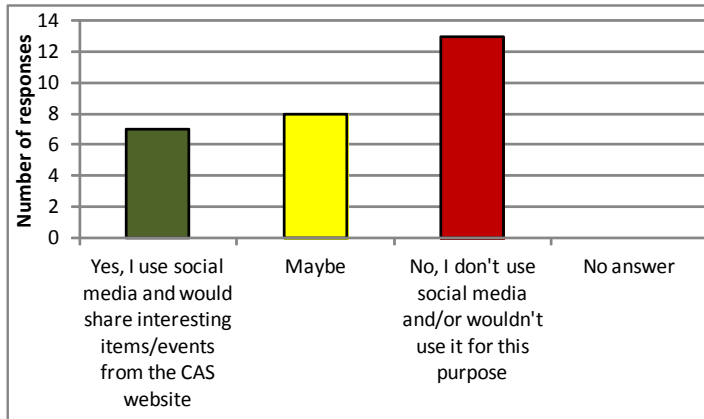
CAS WEB UPGRADE SURVEY RESULTS

A recent online survey allowed CAS members to provide feedback regarding proposed changes to the organization's web presence and communications. Twenty-eight respondents weighed in by the deadline (assigned in order for the results to be presented at the April board meeting); those results are reproduced in the next 3 pages.

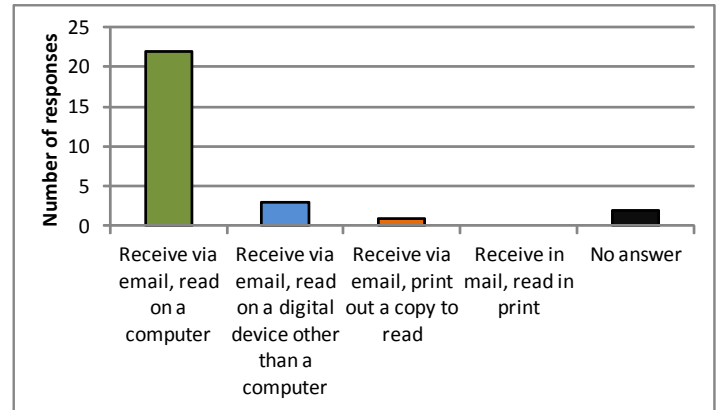
How often do you make use of the digital presence and communications of the Columbia Audubon Society?



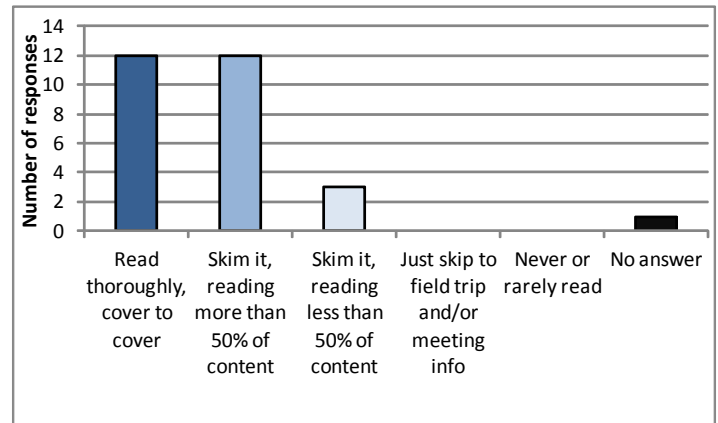
Proposed changes to the website and communications would allow for enhanced integration with social media, potentially exposing more people to the mission and activities of the Columbia Audubon Society. Do you anticipate making use of such features in a way that would spread the word about CAS?



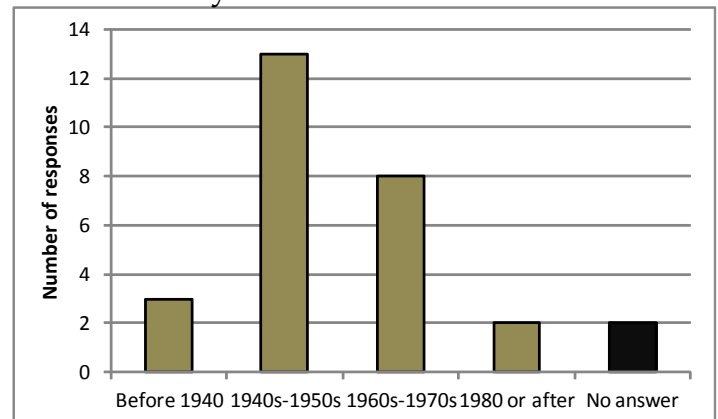
Which of these best describes how you receive and typically interact with the newsletter, The Chat?



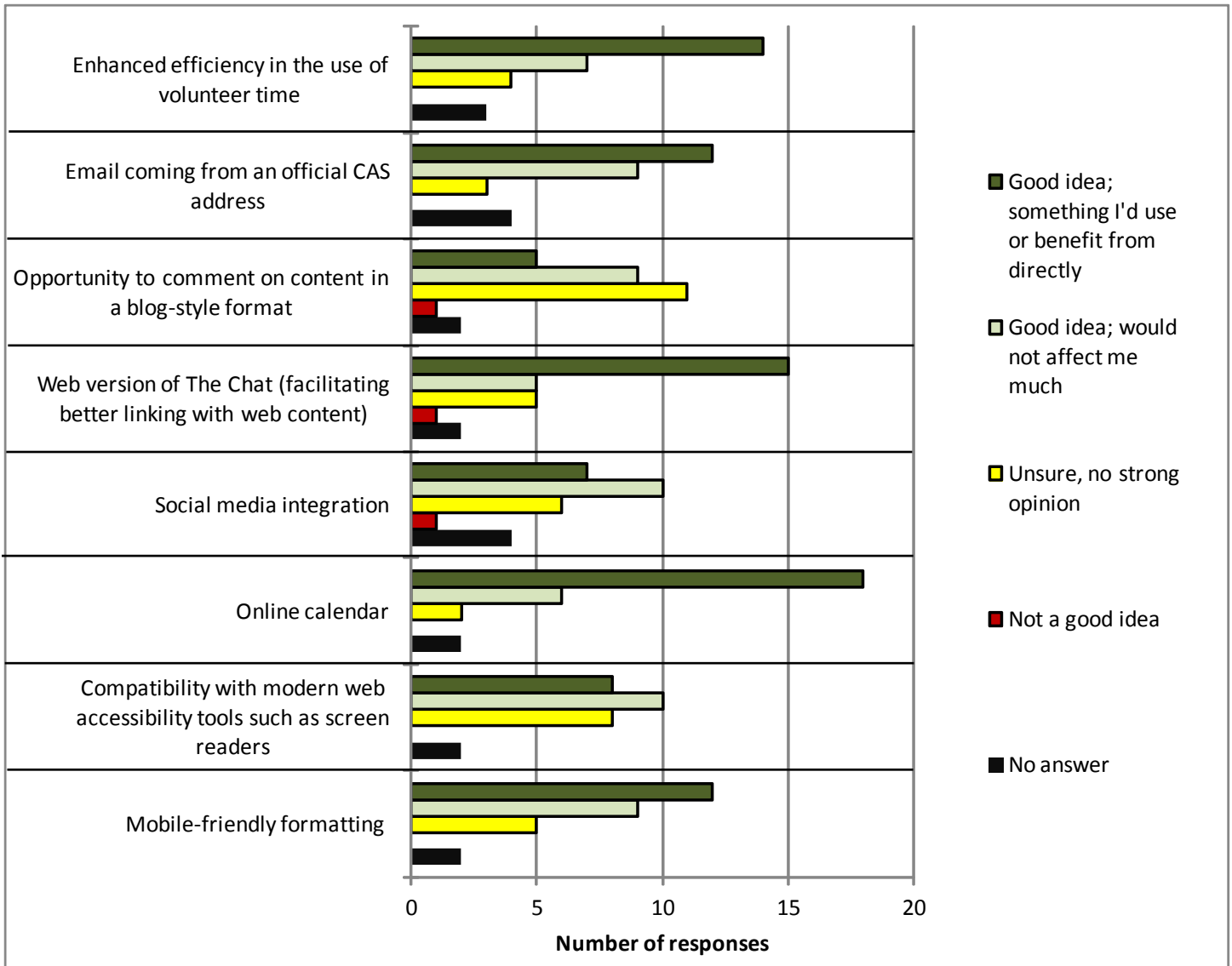
Which of these best describes your interaction with The Chat?



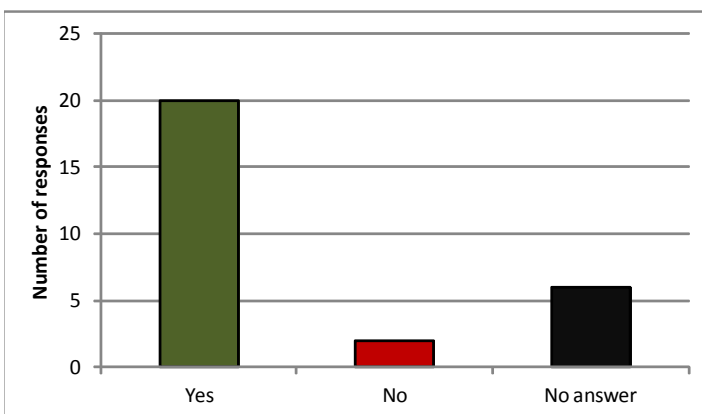
When were you born?



How do you feel about each of the following aspects of the proposal, as outlined in The Chat?



Collectively, do you feel that the proposal for an enhanced website and communications, as outlined in The Chat, is a good idea and something the organization should pursue?



Comments from those in favor of website/communications upgrades:

- Since we have so many choices for sending and receiving messages now, CAS will probably have to use multiple methods to communicate with members and potential members. This survey helps to identify the most effective channels. Thanks for asking.
- It would be great to integrate links, high-quality pictures. Furthermore, it would simply look more professional.

-comments continued on next page

Comments from those in favor of website/communications upgrades:

- Thank you all for your hard work for the organization. Upgrading is needed to keep up with modern technology. I like old ways, uncomplicated, easy to read, hate formatting glitches. But I understand the need to keep better connected to reach more people. Good luck.
- If you want to attract younger members, it is probably needed - but don't leave us "oldsters" behind - I still prefer hiking and looking at real birds then having my eyes down looking at a screen to monitor Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- I am becoming more of a user of other methods including Face Book so I think these upgrades are necessary to build membership.

Comments from those opposed to website/communications upgrades:

- I think the present site and Chat are well-designed, even exceptional in terms of clear communications, information about events, and attractive, relevant stories.
- Don't see the need.
- \$5000 could be better spent on other things such as habitat restoration.

Comments from those undecided on the question of website/communications upgrades:

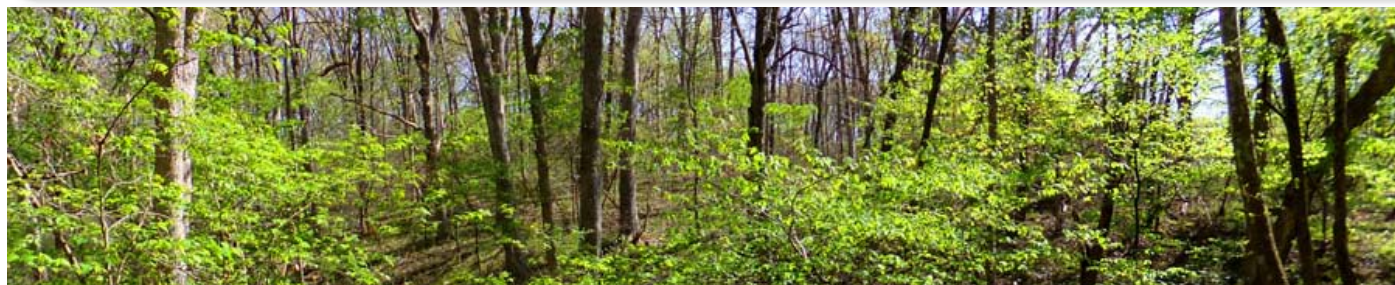
- I have not read the proposal. I do very limited e/communication so not really qualified to respond.
- I doubt I would use the web site.

If you have other ideas, concerns, or comments about proposed changes to the website and communications, please enter them here.

- \$5,000 seems like a lot of money for a website upgrade. I think a future issue of The Chat someone should explain this expenditure in more detail.
- I think the ASM and Conservation Federation websites are good examples. The National Audubon website is gorgeous. I assume that the ASM website is maintained by a volunteer. I would like to see "Home" and "Donate" buttons on our site, as well as a way to highlight upcoming meetings/speakers.
- I love all the articles as members take time to write and share. Birding tips, trips, report backs from community involvement projects, upcoming needs and events. Thank you.
- Several years ago there was a feature introducing board members and other CAS members. Also Edge had a column that was very interesting. Have articles from a variety of people - where they've been birding, interesting books having to do with birds, birding, etc.
- Please be sure to add the new CBC and NMBC maps to the web content.
- The Facebook page can't be viewed by those of us without Facebook accounts; please set it to be accessible to the public.

- survey developed and report generated by Joanna Reuter

2017 FIELD TRIPS



Wild Haven Nature Area & Albert Children's Nature Area

Date & Time: Saturday, May 20th, 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Departure Point: Wild Haven (6900 E. O'Rear Road) or Moser's Foods (900 N. Keene St.)

Leader: John Besser, cell (573) 639-2211 or jbesser1@gmail.com

The field trip will start by 7:30 a.m. at the Wild Haven picnic area. Anyone wishing to car-pool can meet at the Moser's north parking lot by 7:15 a.m. We will bird the two largest nature areas owned by CAS. Wild Haven consists of 103 acres of riparian forest, open woodlands, and savannah along Hinkson Creek north of Columbia. It's a good area to find migrating and resident warblers and other woodland birds (and wildflowers). The Albert area (80 acres), located on the Boone-Callaway county line along upper Cedar Creek, has been extensively reclaimed after a history of coal strip-mining to produce a grassland-shrubland-wetland complex that attracts open country species like Henslow's Sparrow and Bell's Vireo.

We will bird at Wild Haven until about 11:00 a.m. At that time, morning birders can either call it a day or break for a brownbag lunch before we leave for the Albert area. Late-risers can join the group at the Wild Haven picnic shelter before 11:30 a.m. Birding will be on foot, so come prepared for wet ground and varied terrain. We will leave the Albert area before 3:00 p.m.

Ha Ha Tonka – Acorn Trail

Date & Time: Saturday, May 27th, 7:30

Departure Point: AC commuter lot (on SE corner of US 63 and Grindstone/New Haven

Leader: Alison Vaughn, allisonjv@yahoo.com

We'll carpool from the AC Commuter Parking Lot at 7:30 a.m. We will take the Acorn Trail, a 1.5 mile trail in the heart of the Ha Ha Tonka Oak Woodland Natural Area that was burned in November, 2016. The woodlands have been the focus of significant bird research justifying the importance of prescribed fire for breeding birds. We will pass several glades which should have thousands of glade coneflowers in bloom, and lots of Field Sparrows and Prairie Warblers. This area has seen fire on a regular basis since 1983.

2017 FIELD TRIPS, CONTINUED

Clyde Wilson Memorial Park

Date & Time: Saturday, June 3rd, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Departure Point: Rollins Rd entrance (East end of Rollins Rd down below the Vet School)

Leader: Lori Turner, lturner@booneelectric.com

Meet at the Rollins Rd. entrance into Clyde Wilson Memorial Park at 8:00 a.m. We will spend 3 hours exploring the different riparian trails that wind around the small creeks and one that takes us along Hinkson Creek. Unfortunately, there are no loop trails so there will be backtracking. It is mostly shaded but at times steep so wear comfortable boots with good tread. I plan to be back at the parking lot by 11:00 a.m.

MONITORING NESTS: A FUN SUMMER ACTIVITY



Late spring and summer can be a great time to find and monitor nesting birds. Not only can you learn more about the life cycle of our local residents, you can contribute to citizen science projects like Cornell's Nest-Watch. Nests can be found almost anywhere: to learn more about the right methods, visit www.nestwatch.org. - by Eric Reuter



Cardinal nest in Autumn Olive; young Bluebirds in nest box. Photos by Joanna Reuter

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/>



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