

Peoria Audubon Society

Newsletter

No. 3

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

June 1987

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Although we are not meeting officially until September, please let us not lose contact. Field trip plans are noted elsewhere in the newsletter. But, what is more important, is our need for additional people to conduct the surveys for the Illinois Bird Breeding Atlas. We are supposed to do 8 designated blocks in Mason County and 14 blocks in Fulton County. So far we have 3 blocks filled in Mason and 4 in Fulton County. That is a rather meager showing. We do still have some choice blocks open around Canton. It is still not too late to join us.

I am sorry to say that I am still waiting to receive the detailed maps for these counties, that are needed to carry out a good study. However, I have received the work and reporting sheets and instruction booklets. So, I hope to be able to mail you all information as soon as the maps arrive. In the meantime, you can satisfy your eagerness for getting in the field by spending some more time in the blocks you did last year in Peoria and Tazewell Counties. Those need to be up-graded if at all possible.

If you are at all interested in participation we can reimburse you for up to \$30. per block for mileage and other costs upon submission of an acceptable report. Give me a call in the evening or weekend on (309) 691-1519 and I can assign you to a good territory. It is an experience totally different, but extremely enjoyable.

L. H. Princen

CALENDAR

Sunday, August 23, a field trip is planned to Mendenhall Park to hopefully see shorebirds. Meet at the park on Route 24 one mile south of Bartonville's Allied Mills at 4:00 p.m. Lacking birds there, the group may move on. Call 686-2088 if you plan to attend.

Next meeting will be September 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Lakeview Museum. A newsletter announcing fall activities will be mailed in late August.

National Audubon Society's Biennial Convention will be August 24-29 at Bellingham, Washington. "Ancient Forest...Priceless Treasure" will be the theme of the convention which will feature a variety of speakers and field trips planned before, during and after the convention. For more information, call the Editor (309) 697-0353.

Watch for airing on your Public Television Station this summer of 6 World of Audubon Specials. The programs will be on consecutive Sunday evenings, July 12 - August 16.

GRANDFATHER CLAUSE MEMBERS of the Peoria Audubon Society

If you care to continue your membership with the Peoria Audubon Society and receive the newsletter, please pay your dues made out to the Peoria Audubon Society and mail to:



Mrs. Greet Princen
677 E. High Point Terrace
Peoria, Illinois 61614

Family membership: \$8.00
Single Membership: \$5.00

PURPLE MARTIN COLONY REGISTRY

The Purple Martin Conservation Association is a newly formed international non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the Purple Martin through research, wildlife management techniques and public education. Research will include the entire range of the species.

The Colony Registry Program being currently promoted seeks to help in locating and registering Purple Martin colonies in preparation for several projects designed to help this species.

If you or someone you know is interested in information from this organization, write:

Purple Martin Conservation Association Institute
for Research and Community Services
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Edinboro, PA 16444

BIRD BREEDING ATLAS PROJECT

Again birders from Peoria Audubon, or any interested birders, are being urged to participate in the Bird Breeding survey this year in Fulton and Mason Counties. For those who may not have been involved last year, the purpose is to document the current status and distribution of the birds breeding in those counties. This is accomplished by volunteers who go into the field and find evidence of the breeding of birds within areas delineated by the maps.

Specific procedures are outlined. Within each county are certain atlas blocks 3 miles by 3 1/2 miles each. A person, or persons, is needed to bird each of these blocks finding evidence of nesting or young and keeping a record on forms provided. These forms are returned by Dr. Princen to the Illinois Department of Conservation.

FIELD NOTES

Members of Audubon birded and explored the Rock Island Trail, led by Maury Brucker from Wyoming, northwest to the Spoon River bridge on April 19. This section of the trail starts 1/2 mile north of the Wyoming Super Valu and traverses a varied terrain. Birds seen included Yellow-rumped Warblers, Vesper Sparrow, Cedar Waxwings, Kinglets, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Hermit Thrushes.

Saturday, May 16, twelve people again enjoyed Dick and Katy Collins' hospitality at a warbler walk at their farm near Lacon. Fifty species were counted including several Turkey Vultures on the ground within a hundred feet of the party, a Wood Thrush and Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-throated, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos. Warblers did not appear as readily as had been hoped. However, 7 species of warblers were listed including the Connecticut Warbler. The Yellow-throated Warbler usually found there wasn't there!

In the last two weeks of May, several good sightings were reported:

- Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Negro Lake
- Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat and Acadian Flycatcher at Jubilee Park
- 3 Black-crowned Night Heron at Mendenhall
- Laughing Gull at Duck Island Farm
- King Rail at former car dump near Mendenhall
- Black-shouldered Kite near Galesburg

BUTTERFLY COUNTERS WANTED

The Nature Conservancy is looking for people who can spend at least one morning a week this summer chasing butterflies through sunlit meadows. The project sounds like nothing but fun and frivolity, but, in fact, it is a serious undertaking, a chance to help the Conservancy check on the state of their assets, the natural areas that are in preserves.

The point of the project is to census the butterflies on key preserve areas, to record species and numbers seen on each visit. Census takers will follow a route that allows them time in each plant community, according to Field Representative Steve Packard.

By any measure, insects represent most of the animal life in land ecosystems. They account for most of the individuals, most of the species and even most of the living mass. Their effects on the ecosystem are profound. Without them, most flower plants would not produce seeds.

While butterflies account for only a small portion of the total insect population, they were selected for this project because they are relatively large, conspicuous and easy to identify. Sudden changes in insect populations can signal changes that could affect the rare plant communities that a preserve is supposed to protect.

For more information, contact the Nature Conservancy's Chicago office at 79 W. Monroe, Chicago, Illinois 60603.



ILLINOIS SPRING BIRD COUNT REPORTS

FULTON COUNTY

May 9, 1987

128 species — 12 observers — 4 parties

Highest Count - 1983 145 species, 14 observers, 5 parties

Lowest Count - 1977 116 species, 8 observers, 5 parties

Marie Welty reported their first Pileated Woodpecker in Banner Township. She was pleased to have the only Black-billed Cuckoo, Nighthawk, and Carolina Wren reported in Fulton County.

Dr. Princen reported Anderson Lake area was a great disappointment. No birds! as observed and reported by other area birders, also, in May at Anderson Lake. His total of 109 was low for his area even though he reported the only Cattle Egret, Double-crested Cormorant, Sora, Semi-palmated Plover, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Prairie Warbler and Ruby-throated Hummingbird, but also 5 Mockingbirds! Princen's water hole area near Dickson Mounds (or the Snowy Plover 5/10 area) was being plowed Saturday, which added to Fulton County's count woes also, so, few sightings of Warblers.

The Beeson family was pleased to find the only Little Blue Heron, Brown Creeper, Common Tern, Herring Gull and Cape May Warbler in Fulton County.

In Farmington, Fairview and Joshua Townships, our duck lake spots were recently fenced, some barbed wire, too! The two good "no man's land" roads were only a chasm - a big coal shovel was working. We had our worst count of 16 years, but we did see 2 Bobolinks, the only ones reported in the county.

Virginia Humphreys, Compiler

WOODFORD COUNTY

Eight birders in 3 parties in a 15 hour day produced a list of 112 species, a record number for their county on count day, reported John Todt, Compiler.

Among ducks seen were 21 Wood Ducks, 18 of which were beautiful males! The Woodford County Conservation Area netted up to 25 each of 7 species of shorebirds. Two Great-horned Owls were an unexpected sighting in early afternoon when they took flight from dense foliage of a wind-tossed Silver Maple. Three Least Flycatchers were seen in Roanoke Park, as well as many of the 16 species of warblers counted. Of particular interest, also, were an Acadian Flycatcher, a Marsh Wren, 5 Veerys and a Hermit Thrush.

On the day before and the day after the count, 4 Wild Turkeys were seen near Isaac Walton near Metamora. These were apparently released 2 years ago by the Department of Conservation.

STARK COUNTY

Stark County may be small in physical size, but it was certainly well represented "bird-wise" on May 9. Maury Brucker, in a stand of virgin timber near Bradford, sighted warblers; Tennessee, Nashville, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Cape May, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush and Common Yellow-throat.

We didn't do badly in the sparrow department either; Chipping, Field, Vesper, Savanna, Grasshopper, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, White-throated and White-crowned. Other highlights were Green-backed Heron, Lesser Golden Plover, Great-horned Owl, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird and Pine Siskin.

My personal highlight, although not an unusual species, was a female Wood Duck with 14 very young, swimming.

Total of 90 species, 5 observers.

Mary Hartley, Compiler

PEORIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

President - L. H. Princen
Editors - Chuck and Eleanor Voeste
Mailing - Jean Gebert
Art Work - Jason Hauser

Next newsletter deadline

- August 17



MASON COUNTY

Count day with 10 participants in 4 parties netted a total of 151 species! This topped previous county totals reported Dr. Richard Bjorklund, Compiler.

Species listed, which are considered unusual for the count date, require documentation. The nine Mason County species documented were 1 Bald Eagle, 1 Wild Turkey, 1 King Rail, 2 Western Sandpiper, 1 Chuck-will's-widow, 1 Olive-sided Flycatcher, 1 Sedge Wren, 2 Blue Grosbeak and 4 Red Crossbill.

Among the other 142 listings for the day were:

424 Great Blue Heron

56 Double-crested Cormorant

228 Wood Duck

1 Cooper's Hawk

1 Virginia Rail

24 Sora

11 species of shorebirds, including 42 Killdeer and 1

Short-billed Dowitcher

2 Black Tern

7 Common Tern

50 Whip-poor-will

1 Water Pipit

6 species of vireo

23 species of warblers, including 12 Prothonotary Warbler and 1 Kentucky Warbler

12 Summer Tanager

177 Dickcissel

11 species of true sparrows

2 Yellow-headed Blackbird

PEORIA COUNTY

Our twelve participants in 5 parties generally seemed to feel good about their day's listing which resulted in a county species count of 135. Of course, there are always those elusive birds which should have been there but weren't.

Thirty-three Great Blue Herons and 21 Great Egrets were in the Mendenhall Park area. This year these numbers may finally be accounted for with the discovery of the renewed heronry across the Illinois River in the Worley/Slim Lake areas. Eighty-one Canada Geese, many of them nesting, made us aware that they are now residents here.

John Marshall's group was pleased to, again, find Bank Swallows near Pottstown, 74 of them. Dale Goodner and party tallied 19 of our 23 warbler species, including a Cerulean and 2 Worm Eating Warblers, in Forest Park and other bluff locations. Most groups didn't see warblers they expected. Dense foliage and considerable wind compounded the problem.

Don Schmidt had a great day ending with 101 species. Among those found in Banner Marsh were 1 Common Moorhen, 1 American Woodcock, and 1 White-fronted Goose which seemed very comfortable with the Canada Geese.

We greatly appreciated the help of all participants. Each one helps in the real purpose of trying to census the birds in all counties of Illinois on a given day.

Eleanor Voeste, Compiler

TAZEWELL COUNTY

With a sunny 85 degree day, Tazewell's ten birders in three parties reported 99 species according to Louise Endres, Compiler.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a Purple Finch, seen only in Tazewell County, as well as the 2 documented Fox Sparrows were undoubtedly late migrants. Three Common Moorhens, 219 Purple Martins, 15 Bobolinks, 1 Willow Flycatcher and 50 Canada Geese were of particular interest. Six species of shorebirds, 4 species of vireos and 11 species of Warblers, including 1 Yellow-throated Warbler, were listed.

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