

Peoria Audubon Society

Newsletter

No. 4

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

August 1987

CALENDAR

- Sat., Sept. 5 - Opening of Wildlife Art Exhibit
Wed., Sept. 9 - September Audubon Meeting
Fri., Sept. 19-20 - Audubon Council Workshop
Wed., Oct. 14 - October Audubon Meeting
Sat., Oct. 17 - Field trip Pekin to Havana
Sat., Oct. 24 - Field trip Canton, see below.

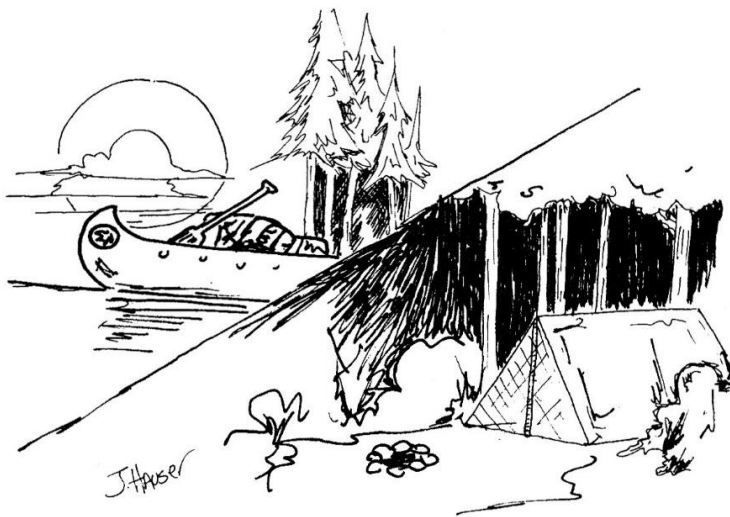
Audubon meetings are at Lakeview Museum at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 17th - Birding trip from Powerton Commonwealth Edison Plant on the Manito road south of Pekin, along the east side of the river to Havana. Return on the west side is optional. Bring lunch. Meet at the Powerton Lake parking lot 1/4 mile west of the power plant at 7:30 a.m. Call Dr. Bjorklund, leader, at 677-3012 if you plan to attend.

Saturday, October 24th - Field trip to the Metropolitan Sanitary District near Canton to see migrating waterfowl. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in downtown Farmington at junction of routes 98 and 116 or 8:30 a.m. at the Sanitary District. Call Dr. Princen, leader, at 691-0519 if you plan to attend.

WILDLIFE ART EXHIBITION

Lakeview Museum will host a wildlife art exhibit opening September 5th and remaining until October 11th. This collection of fifty of the world's best wildlife paintings features a fascinating combination of science and art. Sunday, September 20, Mr. Andrew McGivern will speak in connection with the exhibit. Peoria Audubon is helping make this program available at Lakeview.



FALL OUTING

AUDUBON WORKSHOP

The Audubon Council of Illinois will hold a workshop/seminar September 19-20 at Kennekuk Cove State Park near Danville. "Responding to the Issues: Locally and Globally" is the theme for the meeting, which will feature Professor Clark Bullard of the University of Illinois, speaking on the continuing effort to obtain federal designation to preserve the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River. Francis Spivy Weber, NAS Director of International Programs, will give the evening keynote address on "Tropical Forests: A Perch From Which to View Our Future."

Pertinent workshop sessions, guided field trips including a guided canoe trip on the Middle Fork River, and a pontoon boat excursion will be offered in the two day schedule.

The \$15. registration fee includes 3 meals. The public is invited. For registration, due September 10, or more information, write Audubon Society of Illinois, % Margaret Hollowell, 908 Arlene Avenue, Bloomington, Illinois, 61701. Phone 309/662-1808.

FALL PROGRAMS

Speaker for the first meeting of the fall season, September 9, will be Lori Bruchna of Princeville; active member of the Sierra Club and Citizens for Animal Rights. Her topic will deal with aspects of animal trapping and methods of curtailing damage to wildlife in general, and birds of prey in particular, reports Helen Gasdorf, Program Chairman.

Professor Barbara Frase of Bradley University will speak at the October 14 meeting on bird and mammal behavior; in field applications of how behavior is related to survival as well as ecological effects on animal behavior will be addressed.

THANK YOU, BOB PRAGER

Readers may miss in this fall's issue of the newsletter, announcement of the schedule for the Outdoor Adventure Films. For the last 20 years, Peoria Audubon Society, Lakeview and the Academy of Science have sponsored the film series.

During that time, Bob has organized the wildlife film program. Not only has he selected the speakers but also has organized the ticket sales, developed the publicity, hosted the speakers and announced the programs.

Now Bob, the Audubon Board and Lakeview have decided for several reasons to discontinue the programs. The Pragers deserve commendation for a job well done over a time period of many years.

The Audubon Society thanks the Pragers!

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Although Peoria Audubon has been almost non-active officially over the summer months, a lot has happened on the national scene. Several years ago, National Audubon Society developed a well-defined relationship with the local chapters which became official policy. Somehow, this policy was thrown overboard unilaterally by Headquarters. The result was a ground swell uprising that had never been experienced by the Society before. The upshot of it has been an official recall of all the intended changes, including a recall of a lot of firings of regional staff people who had proven their value over and over again in past times. Although there are still changes that need to be implemented, such as the move of our regional office from Indianapolis to Chicago, the solidarity of local officers across the nation during the past summer months prevented a lot of mistakes. Your officers in Peoria were very active in that process. Perhaps we may have been able to prevent National Audubon Society from gradually going into oblivion.

In the meantime, we completed the second year of our Illinois Bird Breeding Atlas Survey. Several of our members committed their summer months to canvass Fulton and Mason Counties. Next year Peoria Audubon will be asked to continue its participation by studying Woodford and Marshall Counties. I am sure that we will find enough members willing to participate in those counties to obtain meaningful coverage. After 1988, we will not have to participate in other counties and we will have through 1990 to upgrade our data in the 6 counties in which we have committed ourselves to participate. In the next 3 years, I would like to see a united effort by Peoria Audubon members to obtain the needed information in Marshall, Woodford, Peoria, Tazewell, Fulton and Mason Counties so that the state of Illinois can publish a breeding survey of which we can all be proud. So, next spring I would like you all to respond positively if asked to participate.

We have some excellent evening programs and field trips for the upcoming fall season, so we hope to see all of you soon at our programs or trips. Come and join us at Lakeview Museum on the second Wednesday of September at 7:30 p.m.

L. H. Princen

THE GIANTS AMONG US

Until recent years Canada geese were commonly seen only in the fall, winter and early spring as they winged their way from nesting grounds in Canada to primary wintering grounds in southern Illinois and western Kentucky.

Things have changed. Now nature enthusiasts can enjoy the sight of a brood of Canada goose goslings trailing their mother on almost any lake or pond.

Why do we see Canada geese nesting throughout the State? The answer: The "Giants" are back!

Although the giant Canada goose is nearly identical to his first cousin, the Canada goose that nests in Canada and winters in Union County and Horseshoe Lake in southern Illinois, that's where the similarities end. Giants are larger than their relatives, with Ganders weighing 12 to 15 pounds, whereas the smaller cousins will average 7 to 9 pounds. Giant Canada are referred to as resident geese because of their non-migratory nature. Many birds too young to nest display a rather remarkable northward molt migration in midsummer. Many of these birds return to Illinois to nest, but some find homes in other locations.

Giants were uncommon residents throughout the Midwest prior to the turn of the century, but their numbers dwindled until they were thought to have been extinct by 1950. The return of these birds since their rediscovery in Minnesota in 1962 is remarkable.

This is true because of several factors. First, Illinois and the Midwest is home, traditional nesting range of the breed. Their relatives nest north into the arctic. Second, these geese are extremely adaptable. Human disturbance has little affect on their daily habits. In addition, giants will nest almost anywhere, are more productive and have a higher survival rate because they are not submitted to a harsh nesting environment, migration and prolonged harvest.

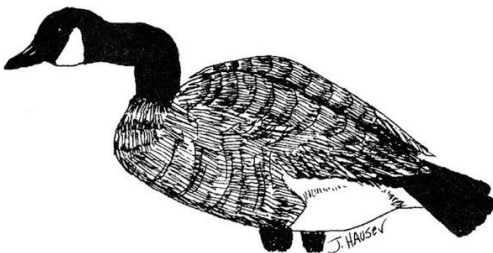
All this leads to the fact that they are doing well here. How well? Over 15,000 giants reside in the Chicago metro area and numbers are increasing. As a result, in answer to numerous complaints, DOC has initiated a transplant program which this summer alone has moved more than 1,500 geese to rural areas in 20 different location throughout the state.

High density concentrations occur in reclaimed surface-mined areas in west central Illinois. Fifteen thousand giants now reside in Fulton, Knox and Henry counties. In a mere 10 years, giant Canada geese in the 14 states of the Mississippi Flyway have increased from 35,000 to 250,000. In Illinois, there are now more than 35,000 local giants.

It is obvious what this means to Illinois sportsmen. As the size and distribution of the flock expands, hunters throughout the state will enjoy more frequent opportunities to bag a giant trophy. The growing number of the giant Canada geese provides more and more of a buffer during the hunting season for the more precarious population level of the migrating geese.

The return of the Canada goose has generated some mixed feelings. One thing is certain, Illinois will continue to be home for these big birds. To that we can only add, "Welcome back!"

Adapted from Outdoor Highlights, DOC



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BIG RIVER OF THE HEARTLAND

The big river of the heartland, the Mississippi River and its tributaries, is the subject of a new one hour PBS Channel 12 (WILL) production by Leslie Epperson and Eve Fortenbery.

This documentary emphasizes the importance of interrelationships and systemwide thinking in understanding and resolving waterway and wetland problems. While the upper Mississippi is emphasized, our Illinois River problem comprises a significant component of the story, reports Dr. Richard Bjorklund who attended the premier showing of the film.

Audubon members may recall viewing "The Birds of Illinois" and a part of the "Prairie Pathways" series produced by this same team. PBS Channel 47, WTVP Peoria, does not yet have access to this one hour river story but expects to be able to show it on the fall schedule. Consult your Channel 47 program guide for September and October.

The Audubon Council of Illinois and the Sierra Club were major underwriters for this production.

ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY FALL CAMPOUT

Lincoln Trail State Park just south of Marshall, Illinois will be the site for the IAS campout October 9-11. Mr. Scot Simpson, Department of Conservation Manager for the Prairie Chicken Sanctuary near Newton, Illinois, will be the Friday night speaker. On Saturday evening, Mr. Jim Harris of the International Crane Foundation will speak on efforts to preserve cranes worldwide. Field trips are planned. Campgrounds and motel are available. Registration of \$6.50 each. Contact Mrs. Cooky Newell, Route #2, Box 14, Flat Rock, Illinois 62427, for more information.

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



Prairie Day at Forest Park Nature Center is Sunday, September 20. The public is invited to help celebrate our prairie heritage and learn about our prairie roots. Music, games, refreshments and guided tours to the prairie are all planned, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. FREE!

PEORIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
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