

Peoria Audubon Society

Newsletter

NO. 6

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

MARCH 1988

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Something happened on the way to the future. After two years of serving as President of our Chapter, I had fully intended to retire and assist in some way a new leader who would come in with new ideas for the benefit of all of us. Elas, after much searching by the Nominating Committee, there were no volunteers for either the President or the Vice-President, although excellent candidates were found and elected for all other office positions. At the January meeting, Maury Brucker told me and the audience that he would take on the Vice-President position if I were willing to stay on another year. How could I refuse an offer like that? So, here we are again.

In the process we had also lost our long-time and fantastic newsletter editors, Charles and Eleanor Voeste, who decided to take life a little easier. And although the past winter was not bad overall, it managed to snow out a Board meeting and a regular monthly meeting, which back us up quite abit in our untracking scheme. As you can see, we have our newsletter finally on track again, thanks to Linda Nicot's offer to do the typing work and Eleanor Voeste's offer of some technology transfer to Linda. We are also able to offer again an exciting number of field trips to welcome the birds back from the South. And our Program Chairman, Maury Brucker, has some excellent plans for our monthly meetings. Now we can go back to the business at hand and continue to do the good things that Audubon Societies are supposed to do. Come join us and do them with us.

Bert Princen

APRIL 13, 1988 - AUDUBON PROGRAM

SPEAKER: Professor James Dinsmore of the Animal Ecology Department of Iowa State University

TOPIC: "Rail and Sora Habitat and Conservation Issues"

VOLUNTEER BIRDERS NEEDED BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT

The Illinois Breeding Atlas survey will start its work in Woodford and Marshall Counties, which are the last two in the Peoria area to be studied. I have offered my services again as coordinator, but I have not received any maps yet and I do not know how the blocks are going to be set up. However, I expect from the size of the counties that there will be about 16 to 18 blocks to be surveyed. I would appreciate to hear of your interest in participating in this state-wide effort. Of course, the old blocks in Peoria, Tazewell, Fulton and Mason counties can and should be upgraded between now and the end of the 1990 breeding season. Please, give me a call if you are interested in participating.

Bert Princen
691-0519 (home)

1988 FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1988 - CHAUTAUQUA FIELD TRIP

Dr. Richard Bjorklund will lead a caravan down the Illinois River including stops at Spring Lake, Clear Lake, Sand Ridge State Forest, Chautauqua Lake, and other areas up the west side of the river from Havana to Rice Lake. The group should meet at the Powerton Plant parking lot at 7:30 a.m. sharp on the Manito blacktop off Route 29, South of Pekin. Call Dr. Bjorklund if you plan to attend at 677-3012.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 1988 - METROPOLITAN SANITARY DISTRICT

Dr. L.H. Princen will lead a car-hike thru the MSD grounds (located south of Canton), meeting either in downtown Farmington at the 116-78 junction at 8:00 a.m. or at the entrance to the MSD at 8:30 a.m. Call Dr. Princen if you plan to attend at 691-0519.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 1988 - JOHN MARSHALL

will lead an entourage up the Illinois River north of Peoria, meeting at the Galena Marina by Detweiller Park at 7:00 a.m. Call John at 685-6212 if you plan to attend.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 1988 - LOUISE ENDRES

plans to see large numbers of warblers at Johnson Sauk Trail State Park, about 6 miles north of Kewanee on Highway 78. The group should meet in Peoria at the Landmark Center parking lot at 7:00 a.m. with plans to carpool from there. Call Louise at 682-8500 (evenings) if you plan to attend.

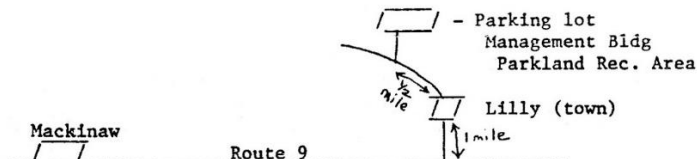
SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1988 - SPRING BIRD COUNT

SATURDAY MAY 14, 1988 - SPRING WARBLER WALK AT THE COLLINS FARM

Meet at 8:00 a.m. or anytime after dawn at the Collin's, Route 26 Spring Bay Road, 3 miles south of Lacon, 3.6 miles north of the Santa Fe tracks. Call Dick Collins if you plan to attend at 246-8677.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 1988 - PARKLANDS RECREATION AREA, TAZEWELL COUNTY,

under the direction of Dr. Dale Birkenholz, Professor of Biological Sciences at ISU. This is a new area under development by the DOC and amidst some dispute as to its ultimate uses. This trip will highlight nesting species and unusual flora of an important natural area in Central Illinois and is a new area to our group. The group should meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot. Call Mike Shekleton if you plan to attend at 686-2088.



An article reprinted from the St. Petersburg Times Newspaper on 1/22/88

Everglades nesting grounds drying up

By DAVID BALLINGRUD
Times Staff Writer

KEY LARGO — The birds in the Everglades are telling us something, Peter A. A. Berle said Thursday. They're dying.

It's a message the birds have sent since the 1930s, said Berle, president of the National Audubon Society. In those days they darkened the skies by the millions.

About 10 percent of those millions remain, Berle said, and the message is unchanged: The Everglades are drying up, disappearing.

Understand this, Berle told a meeting of the Everglades Coalition, a group of two dozen state and national environmental organizations working to save the Everglades.

"Future generations will curse us. They will curse our ignorance and our arrogance, if we leave them with only faded photographs of the magnificent plumed birds that graced the Everglades."

And there's more at stake than birds.

"If we damage (the Everglades) beyond repair, the list of losers is a lot longer than the wood stork and the panther," said Cynthia Lenhart,

coalition chairman. "Also on that list are people, because the Everglades ensures a reliable supply of clean water for South Florida."

In a speech opening the coalition's third annual conference, Berle said Audubon research shows three Everglades wading birds are particularly affected by declining water quality and loss of habitat and food.

■ The roseate spoonbill is failing to raise its young. During the 1986-87 breeding season, Berle said, scientists found that of 615 spoonbill nests, fewer than 15 successfully produced young.

■ The great white heron, once common in Florida Bay and the Florida Keys, is having similar troubles. Young birds are dying before reaching adulthood, he said.

■ In 1983, Berle said, there were 2,800 nesting pairs of wood storks at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples. In 1986 there were 250 nesting pairs, he said.

Some evidence indicates the wood stork may have moved its nests north, Berle acknowledged.

Nonetheless, he said, "the birds are disappearing at an alarming rate."

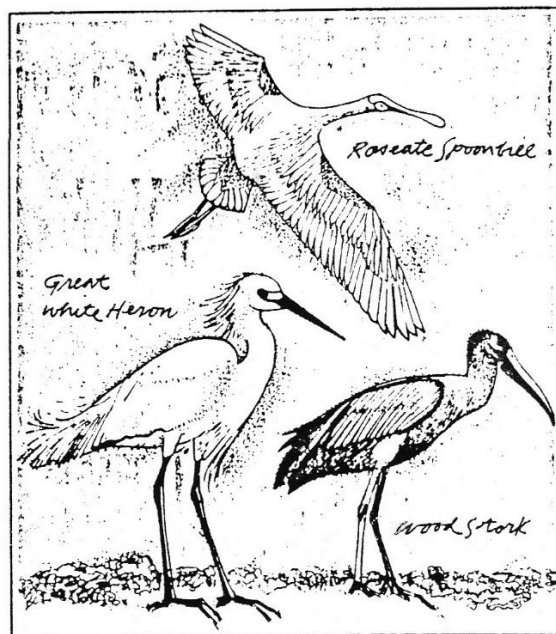
Berle said he supports a plan recently embraced by Gov. Bob Martinez, who suddenly has become active on state environmental matters.

The governor and others want the state or the regional water authority to acquire about 75,000 acres of privately held land west of Miami.

Estus Whitfield of the governor's staff has called the acquisition of this area, called the East Everglades, "the single most important thing that can be done to save the Everglades."

Today, a huge levee runs along much of the eastern boundary of the 75,000 acres. If the levee were to be removed, water once again would rise and fall in the marsh with the rains, and feeding and nesting conditions would improve dramatically for wading birds and other forms of wildlife.

Landowner plans to develop the land have been thwarted over the years, and the state anticipates they will happily consider selling.



Times art — JACK BARRETT

Many thanks to all participants and to the compilers of the counts:

R. Collins, Chillicothe (C)
 R. Bjorklund, Chautauqua (CHA)
 L. Endres, Peoria (P)

	12/19(C)	12/23(CHA)	1/2(P)
Pied-billed Grebe	-	4	--
Great Blue Heron	4	13	-
Tundra Swan	-	1	-
Canada Goose	663	4891	325
Wood Duck	6	19	-
Green-winged Teal	7	-	1
American Black Duck	171	178	-
Mallard	16442	6874	468
Northern Pintail	1	89	-
Blue-winged Teal	5	-	-
Northern Shoveler	-	33	-
Gadwall	21	23	-
American Wigeon	4	2	-
Canvasback	2	5	-
Redhead	3	2	-
Ring-necked Duck	1	9	2
Greater Scaup	8	-	-
Lesser Scaup	-	35	-
Common Goldeneye	5	217	24
Bufflehead	-	10	-
Hooded Merganser	-	8	-
Common Merganser	3	568	1
Red-breasted Merganser	-	2	-
Ruddy Duck	-	27	-
Bald Eagle	12	51	13
(C) a-7, i-5			
(CHA) a-26, i-25			
(P) a-8, i-5			
Northern Harrier	3	10	-
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	2	-
Cooper's Hawk	-	1	-
Red-tailed Hawk	37	34	38
Rough-legged Hawk	8	19	3
American Kestrel	31	22	26
(C) m-16, f-8, unk-7			
(CHA) m-8, f-4, unk-10			
Merlin	1	-	-
Large accipiter, species	-	1	-
Ring-necked Pheasant	23	48	-
Northern Bobwhite	120	32	14
American Coot	-	208	-
Killdeer	20	2	2
Common Snipe	62	4	2
Bonaparte's Gull	-	5	-
Ring-billed Gull	59	1283	1527
Herring Gull	110	156	206
Gull, species	-	6	-
Rock Dove	137	41	523
Mourning Dove	274	28	120
Eastern Screech-owl	8	10	2
Great Horned Owl	4	6	2
Barred Owl	3	6	1
Belted Kingfisher	16	11	14

Birdathon Means Money and Prizes

Plans are well under way for the 1988 Audubon Birdathon, which is scheduled for April 1 to May 15. The Birdathon is Audubon's way of raising money while doing what we enjoy most—watching birds. Participants seek pledges from contributors for every bird species they can find in a 24-hour period. For example, if you had promises from 20 people to contribute a quarter per species, and you sighted 64 species, you would raise a total of \$320, which would be used to support Audubon programs.

Participating chapters that raise the most money can win terrific prizes. This year there are more prizes than ever. Chapters will be divided into three categories based on membership size (300 and under; 301-999; 1,000 and over) and prizes will be awarded on the state, regional, and national levels. Chapters that win a prize may designate the recipient on whatever criteria they deem appropriate. Here are just some of the prizes that will be awarded to the best Birdathoners:

- Audubon videoguides to Birds of North America from MASTERVISION
 - Outdoor boots from TIMBERLAND
 - Audubon computer software from ADVANCED IDEAS, INC.
 - Binoculars from MINOLTA, NIKON, SWAROVSKI, SWIFT, and ZEISS.
 - Outdoor gloves from GATES
 - Comforters from PACIFIC COAST FEATHER
 - Hanging bird feeders from the BROWN COMPANY
 - Baby Elephant Folios from ABBEVILLE PRESS
 - Cameras from CANON, MINOLTA, and POLAROID
 - Audubon bird seed from SEABOARD SEED
 - Travel from TRAVEL DYNAMICS
 - Birding tour from WINGS, INC.
 - Scholarships to AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMP
 - Vacation packages to AUDUBON SANCTUARIES
 - Classroom subscriptions to AUDUBON ADVENTURES
 - Leather-bound sets of Roger Tory Peterson's *Field Guide to Birds of North America* from EASTON PRESS
 - Luggage from ORVIS
 - Cruises from SPECIAL EXPEDITIONS, INC.
 - Binocular mounts from INNOVATIVE ENERGIES, INC.
- For the complete list of prizes and information on how to get involved in the Audubon Birdathon, contact your Audubon chapter or call 1-800-832-7246.

	12/19(C)	12/23(CHA)	1/2(P)
Red-headed Woodpecker	26	22	11
Red-bellied Woodpecker	74	68	63
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	-	5
Downy Woodpecker	101	90	83
Hairy Woodpecker	17	13	11
Northern Flicker	18	41	16
Pileated Woodpecker	1	11	1
Horned Lark	735	69	7
Blue Jay	185	409	202
American Crow	351	884	254
Black-capped Chickadee	407	295	327
Tufted Titmouse	169	69	146
Red-breasted Nuthatch	-	6	-
White-breasted Nuthatch	153	66	119
Brown Creeper	13	20	16
Carolina Wren	3	3	9
Winter Wren	2	4	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	29	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	1	-
Eastern Bluebird	6	-	1
American Robin	4	5	6
Northern Mockingbird	-	1	-
Cedar Waxwing	4	3	30
Northern Shrike	1	-	-
European Starling	1291	1083	4959
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	-	1
Northern Cardinal	525	252	329
American Tree Sparrow	439	285	612
Field Sparrow	-	7	1
Vesper Sparrow	-	1	-
Fox Sparrow	3	-	-
Song Sparrow	97	56	67
Swamp Sparrow	20	30	5
White-throated Sparrow	10	4	12
White-crowned Sparrow	4	2	2
Dark-eyed Junco	1888	1077	745
Red-winged Blackbird	57	6	37
Eastern Meadowlark	15	-	-
Rusty Blackbird	25	3	2
Common Grackle	2	8	203
Brown-headed Cowbird	36	2	15
Blackbird, species	-	3	-
Purple Finch	3	12	10
Pine Siskin	15	15	56
American Goldfinch	278	489	225
Evening Grosbeak	-	2	-
House Sparrow	2168	1260	1220
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	1	49	-
American Bittern	-	1	-
Total Species	75	84	59
Total Birds	27429	21757	13127

Auduboners Flock Together at Biennial Regional Conferences

Become a part of a National Audubon Society tradition this year by attending the biennial regional conference in your area. Join National Audubon staff and board members, chapter leaders, and fellow conservation activists in workshops on important local and national environmental topics, including NAS high-priority issues. Other workshops will focus on environmental education; developing activist skills (including publicity and newsletter editing); and citizen involvement in monitoring the environment. As always, the agenda includes socializing, entertainment, and educational field outings.

Dates and locations are listed below. For registration information contact: National Audubon Society Regional Activities, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

Western/Rocky Mtn.	March 26-29	Asilomar, Calif.
Northeast/Mid-Atlantic	June 16-19	East Stroudsburg, Pa.
Southwest	Aug. 5-6	Santa Fe, N.M.
Great Lakes	Sept. 23-25	to be determined
Southeast	Nov. 11-13	Florida
...		
River Conference	March 25-27	Kearney, Neb.
Prairie Conference	June 11-12	Pawhuska, Okla.

Audubon Ecology Camps

Spend a week or two at an Audubon ecology camp in Maine, Connecticut, or Wyoming this summer and take home a new awareness of how nature works. Explore the maritime environment at the camp on Hog Island in Maine, an Audubon tradition for more than 50 years. Get an introduction to field ecology while hiking the woods and meadows of the Audubon Center in Greenwich, Connecticut. Or learn about the geology and wildlife of the remote Wind River Mountains in Wyoming at Audubon's Camp in the West.

Camp sessions, for adults 18 and older, run one or two weeks. College credit is available. The Maine camp also has a field ornithology camp and a session for children ages 10 to 15; the Wyoming camp has special photography and wilderness research sessions. The Connecticut program includes introductory field ecology workshops especially for educators.

For a brochure, write: Registrar, Audubon Ecology Camps & Workshops, National Audubon Society, 613 Riversville Rd., Greenwich, Conn. 06831.

AUDUBON OFFERS SERIOUS FUN

Peter A.A. Berle
President, National Audubon Society

There are outstanding people and programs throughout the National Audubon Society, and it is our ability to tie these strengths together that makes us such an effective conservation organization. The 504 local chapters are a key component of this network. Your Audubon chapter gives you an opportunity to meet with others in your community who share your interest in wildlife and your concern about the environment.

Can you devote an hour a month to the Audubon Cause? An hour a week? Or some part of every day? Chapters are flexible and welcome any level of commitment. Audubon also adapts to many different kinds of involvement. Would you like to help arrange field trips? Write for the newsletter? Analyze forest management plans? Survey local wetlands? Lobby in the state capital? Or participate in the Birdathon?

The Audubon chapter that sends you this newsletter will appreciate whatever time, interests, and skills you have to offer. Your contribution will be amplified by the entire National Audubon Society. And, while you are helping protect wildlife, you will enjoy the high-spirited camaraderie that characterizes Audubon chapters.

The Audubon Activist

From the outside, conservation issues often seem complicated and impregnable. Many Audubon members want to help stop pollution and the destruction of wildlife habitat, but do not know where to begin. Whether you are new to the environmental front lines or a savvy veteran, the *Audubon Activist* is your ticket to greater effectiveness. This bimonthly newspaper, published by National Audubon Society, gives you background information on important conservation issues, the latest legislative picture, and advice from other Auduboners who are fighting the same battles.

As a member of Audubon's Activist Team, you will also receive occasional "Action Alerts," which are one-page summaries of issues that need your urgent attention. This system works: your voice will be heard.

For a free sample issue of the "Activist" (subscriptions are \$9 a year), write: *Audubon Activist*, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. □

A Bird for the Books

When a Cox's sandpiper was identified in Duxbury, Massachusetts, on September 15, 1987, it caused a sensation among birders that has not yet subsided. According to Susan Roney Drennan, editor of *American Birds*, Audubon's ornithological field journal, "This was the first New World occurrence of this bird, and it was seen in juvenal plumage, which is not yet even described in the literature." The magazine will carry the first—and exclusive—details of this historic sighting in its forthcoming Winter Issue, along with all-new color photographs and a painting of the bird.

The little-known gray and brown bird, similar in appearance to several more common shorebirds among which it was found, was first described in 1982, from only two specimens of adult birds found in Australia. "That the Cox's sandpiper showed up in America so recently after having been discovered is amazing," says Drennan.

Rarities (even if not once-in-a-lifetime rarities like the Cox's sandpiper) add spice to a birder's endeavors. Rarities are the reason a birder carefully looks over every bird in a flock, meticulously contemplating every detail...until, one day, he or she spots the one with the slightly longer bill, some extra shading here, a telltale mark there.

Consider the Cox's: It took people who have looked at hundreds of thousands of shorebirds to be able to pick out the bonus bird, according to Drennan. But such abilities are not beyond the amateur who is willing to dedicate time to working on identification skills. And, Drennan advises, "always take notes and pictures in the field."

Reporting rarities is an important function of *American Birds*, the only journal that lists contributors' sightings each season along with their names. The magazine's regional reports provide a continent-wide picture of trends in bird populations, and give birders an excellent idea of what to look for, when, and where. With the upcoming Winter Issue, birders everywhere will be on the lookout for the birding world's latest "mega-rarity."

A sample issue and subscription blank can be obtained by writing: *American Birds*, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

Arctic Issue Heats Up

The oil industry, with the full support of the Reagan Administration and the Department of Interior, is making every effort to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. Conservationists are equally determined to keep the industry out of this large and most northerly refuge.

Congress must decide whether the Arctic refuge will remain our last great unspoiled wilderness or become another Prudhoe Bay. Since the oil industry knows that their best shot is while Reagan is still in office, its high-dollar lobbyists are turning up the heat on representatives and senators.

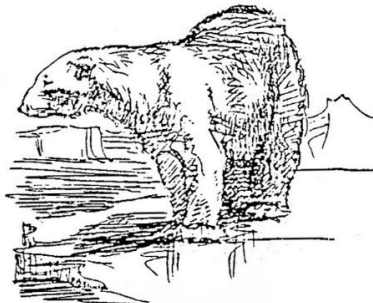
Many of you have been following this issue—one of National Audubon Society's high priority campaigns—in the pages of *Audubon Activist* and in this newsletter. Now is the time to take action.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee has delayed consideration of pro-development legislation THREE times, thanks to the letters and phone calls from Auduboners around the country asking that the committee look for alternatives to opening up the refuge.

But now, the oil and gas industry is redoubling its efforts to move legislation forward. This is a crucial time for the refuge in the Senate, and more letters to your senators are needed—particularly if your senator sits on the Energy Committee. Key votes on that committee include Weicker (Conn.), Ford (Ky.), Bumpers (Ark.), Melcher (Mont.), Bingham (N.M.), and Conrad (N.D.).

Even if your senator is not on this list, let him or her know that you oppose oil and gas development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It's important that we tell our side of the story now, as the oil and gas lobbyists make the rounds. Write your representative in the House as well.

If you would like more information on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge or other issues, please call Connie Mahan at Audubon's Washington, D.C., office, (202) 547-9009.



Transplanted Puffins Return to Maine's Seal Island

by Dr. Stephen Kress, Audubon ornithologist

The effort to restore Atlantic puffins to Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge off the coast of Maine had its first important success this summer with the sighting of two three-year-old puffins that had been transplanted as chicks to the island in 1984. Until the 1850s, Seal Island was the largest puffin colony off mid-coast Maine. But by 1887, fishermen who captured adult puffins for food had wiped out the colony.

The Seal Island Project began in 1984 as a cooperative program of the National Audubon Society, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Modeled after the successful earlier effort to restore puffins to Eastern Egg Rock in Muscongus Bay, the Seal Island Project has taken on the ambitious task of rearing and releasing 1,000 transplanted puffin chicks over the six-year period 1984-89. Scientists want to learn more about puffin survival and growth rates and the behavior associated with the formation and growth of colonies.

In 1984, 100 ten- to twenty-eight-day-old puffin chicks from Great Island, Newfoundland, were transplanted to Seal Island. They were reared in artificial burrows and fed a diet of silversides, placed in the burrows by research assistants. After fledging from their nesting island, puffins spend the next two or three years at sea. The restoration project is based on the assumption that transplanted birds that survive will return to the Maine coast rather than their natal home in Newfoundland.

Every year since then, additional chicks have been reared and released at Seal Island. To date, the project has



Songbook and Bird Posters New from Audubon Adventures

Audubon Adventures has recently produced several colorful posters and a songbook that can be used to supplement school programs and for chapter educational activities.

Two color bird charts—one for eastern and one for western North America—each illustrate 20 different birds representing some of the variety in bird adaptations for that region.

The 1988 Audubon Month poster, portraying the animals and plants of the Arctic tundra, has just been published. Last year's tropical forest poster is still available.

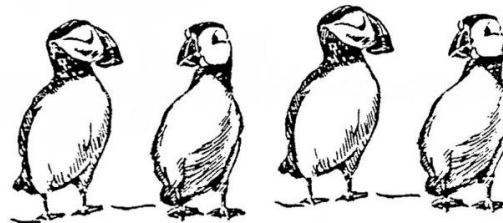
The *Audubon Adventures Songbook*, produced by Texas songwriter Bill Oliver and the Audubon Education staff, includes the lyrics for 16 folk songs with environmental themes. The booklet also has suggestions for classroom activities based on the songs. Bill Oliver performs the songs on the accompanying cassette. The songbook and cassette were developed as a package but are available separately.

Although we have a very modest budget for printing, we plan to build on these support materials and offer more high-quality educational items. Your help in getting them out through our youth, teacher, and chapter member network is most appreciated.

Prices to Audubon chapter members (including postage and handling) are listed below. Quantity discounts are also available on the tropical rainforest and arctic tundra posters.

- Birds of Eastern North America poster (folded) \$ 4.06
- Birds of Western North America poster (folded) 4.06
- Tropical rainforest poster (rolled) 8.00
- Arctic tundra poster (rolled) 8.00
- Audubon Adventures Songbook 4.51
- Audubon Adventures Cassette 10.51

Orders should be sent to: Patricia Bulson, National Audubon Society, Education Division, Route 1, Box 171, Sharon, Conn. 06069. Make checks payable to NAS.



successfully fledged 534 of 549 transplanted chicks, a success rate of 97 percent. The project will transplant 200 chicks each year in 1988 and 1989.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned at the previous restoration project at Eastern Egg Rock is that there is likely to be great variation from year to year in the number of puffins that return. After leaving their nesting islands, young puffins must find food on their own. Even in a natural colony, fledgling puffins are not fed by their parents and must rely on a mix of instinctive feeding behavior and learned fishing skills. It takes a great deal of luck for a young puffin to avoid predators and raging North Atlantic storms, as well as human-created hazards such as oil slicks and fishing nets. Most young puffins probably die at sea their first winter.

Apparently, once every several years sea conditions favor the survival of transplanted puffin fledglings. Because the odds for survival fluctuate so greatly, transplants must continue for many years.

Although the return visits of transplanted puffins to Seal Island are encouraging, establishment of a new colony is far from assured. The success of the project will ultimately depend on one or more years when 50 percent or more of the young return, providing the "critical mass" necessary for puffins to stay and breed.

Acid Rain Monitors Deluge Media

Audubon's Citizens Acid Rain Monitoring Network is making headlines and newscasts all around the country, thanks to volunteers participating in the project. In more than 39 states, activists are testing the pH of each rain and snowfall, and reporting the results to news media in their communities.

The project is newsworthy because Audubon has linked a national story—acid rain pollution—with a local story: the monitors in each community. A news conference announcing the program generated a lot of publicity, but much of the credit goes to Audubon volunteers.

Several acid rain monitors contacted local television stations and demonstrated their testing equipment on evening newscasts. Dozens of newspapers have interviewed volunteers for stories about the project, and many have run photographs. Every time it rains or snows, some monitors

are reporting pH readings to TV weather forecasters who are using the information regularly. Audubon's message has also been heard on hundreds of radio stations in the United States and Canada.

For years, acid rain has been viewed as a regional problem, affecting only the Northeast. But Audubon volunteers are helping to change that perception. Data from the Citizens Network show that many parts of the country are experiencing extremely acidic rainfalls, which means the environment is being stressed. Through the widespread media coverage of Audubon's network, millions of Americans know more about acid rain pollution. Members of Congress are also aware of the Citizens Network and this will help our efforts to pass strong, effective acid rain legislation.

Pair of eagles settles into nest near condominiums

By BILL MOSS
Times Staff Writer

Two eagles that nest in middle Pinellas County are back in their \$1.7-million waterfront home.

The habitat, surrounded by high-rise condominiums, a busy highway, a bayou and a creek, was purchased last month by Pinellas County with money from a special tax to preserve endangered lands.

"That's a classic looking territory," said Greg Holder, a wildlife biologist with the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. "It obviously has the right ingredients or they (the eagles) wouldn't be there."

The habitat is considered ideal because it has a tall pine tree for a nest, small animals in the dense ground vegetation and plenty of fish in the nearby waters of Cross Bayou and Boca Ciega Bay.

Wildlife officials don't know whether the eagles remained in the area all year. They check this time of year to see if nests are occupied.

In a December flight over Pinellas County, Holder spotted 10 active eagle territories, one more than last year. The new one was discovered near the Largo Narrows. Holder does not identify site locations precisely because bird watchers and curiosity seekers inadvertently could endanger the eagles and their young.

A nervous eagle could leave the nest when people

get too close and neglect the eggs that need to stay warm.

Pinellas County commissioners bought the 87-acre eagle habitat on Park Street for \$1.68-million from MeritCare Inc., a condominium developer. The company donated 72 acres of wetlands on the west side of Park Street.

The nest has produced 16 eaglets since 1979, making it the most productive in Pinellas County. The nest is known to Holder as Pi-16 or the Five Towns nest, for the condominium complex next to it. He keeps track of about 130 eagle territories in 13 counties. "We don't have any pet names for them," he said.

The eagles now are incubating the eggs. Once the eggs hatch, the eagles will fly to the nest with fish or small animals to feed the young, Holder said.

Jeannette Fox, a Five Towns eagle watcher, said the birds did not leave the area this year, as they have in the past. Condominium residents already have begun lobbying efforts to persuade the county to buy an adjoining piece of property from Farrell Development Corp.

A non-profit conservation group, the Trust for Public Land, has an option on the 48-acre Farrell property northeast of the eagle habitat. Five Town residents and the conservation trust are urging the county to buy that property as well.

Evening grosbecks were seen near a feeder in Mason County in March by Brenda Onken, Vicki Keefer and Dave Williams. They were also seen by Louise Augustine at Sandridge State Park Headquarters on March 7th.

Red crossbills were spotted again at Sandridge March 7th after 32 were seen March 6th at "The Forest" by Louise Augustine. Brenda Onken and pary also saw the red crossbills at Sandridge.

Two fox sparrows were heard and seen by Louise Augustine near a brush pile and a parking lot in Sandridge on March 7th. A turkey vulture and a golden eagle were also seen at Sandridge.

Red-breasted nuthatches and golden-crowned kinglets were reported in the forest at Sandridge.

White fronted geese were still seen at Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge on March 6th and 19 were sighted at Sanganois Conservation Area in Mason County.

Large skeins of Canada geese were reported going north from many sources.

Over one hundred Great blue herons were reported at the rookery by Clear Lake, Mason County, by Louise Augustine on March 6th.

Wood ducks were reported by two parties, one at Chautauqua and two at Worley Lake.

A greater scaup seen by Louise Augustine at a sand pit at Duck Island Farm was an early sighting!

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FROM THE EDITOR: The deadline for any articles to be included in the next newsletter is May 11th which is the date of our May meeting. Please mail any items to me or give them to me at this meeting.