



# Peoria Audubon Society

Newsletter



NO. EIGHT

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 1988

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

A long hot summer is behind us. The drought has not only been detrimental to farmers, but has probably left also its mark on wild plants, trees, insect populations and on our birds. However, all during August the weather had a beneficial effect on bird watching. Since most shallow lakes went totally dry, many birds congregated at Rice Lake. Both birds and watchers came from far and from all directions. White Ibis from the South, White Pelican from the West, Marbled Godwit from the North, and Ruff from the East (Europe) are just a few of the many magnificent finds.

Another year of Breeding Bird Atlas work has been completed. This year, Peoria Audubon added Woodford and Marshall Counties to its survey work. Thanks are due to all workers. The data has been tabulated and submitted. Now we will have two more years to upgrade all blocks and complete the six counties that we have covered over the past three years. So, next spring I will be back to entice you all to help out. But first it will be time soon to gear up for the Christmas Counts.

Now we are starting our indoor meetings again. I hope to see all of you again participating with renewed vigor and interest.

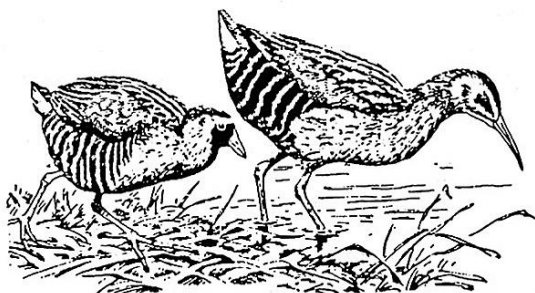
Bert Princen

## NOTE CHANGE OF MEETING PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 1988

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1988, at 7:30 p.m. at Forest Park Nature Center. We will have a short meeting and at 8:00 p.m. we will join Dale and interested people for an "Owl Prowl". Should be interesting!

6:30 p.m. - BOARD MEETING FOR THE OFFICERS

Autumn Harvest Fest Days at Jubilee Park on September 17 and 18 from 10-5 p.m.; we need volunteers to man the table.



PRAIRIE CONFERENCE AT WILDLIFE PARK

The Second Central Illinois Prairie Conference will be held September 24-25, 1988, at beautiful Wildlife Prairie Park. The conference will feature a variety of expert speakers, discussions, slide shows, and guided field trips to local areas of outstanding natural significance. Learn how the primal forces shaped Ice-Age Illinois, what plants the Indians used for medicine, and which prairie birds are doing well and those that are not. Studies show that our prairie heritage is rapidly disappearing. The conference will attempt to reverse this trend and point out both the tangible and intangible benefits that the prairie has bestowed on Illinois.

On Saturday, keynote speaker Virginia Kline of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, will discuss "The Prairie Ecosystem and Prairie Restorations." Michael Jeffords and Susan Post, photographers from the University of Illinois will narrate a slide presentation on Illinois prairies. William Rutherford, founder of Wildlife Prairie Park, will also give a guided tour of the park. Sunday's events will include guided field trips to established and proposed nature preserves, two state parks, and a privately owned restoration site.

Cost for the two-day conference is \$20 per person (\$25 after September 1) which includes Saturday lunch. Registration is limited to 300 participants. For a registration form, write to: Second Central Illinois Prairie Conference, Post Office Box 9059, Peoria, IL 61614.

## A KUDO FOR THE CLUB

Bird watchers and others interested in natural history are often at odds with sportsmen and their organizations. Seldom do we Auduboners recognize and express our appreciation for the many positive contributions private clubs make to conservation.

Many of us have enjoyed birding at the Clear Lake Outing Club in Mason County during our central Illinois field trips. Also, for more than twenty years I have, with permission, had access to the large heron colony at Clear Lake. As a result I have obtained a large amount of valuable data on herons, egrets, and their associates. Though Audubon members have individually expressed appreciation for these privileges to caretaker, Mary Van Hulan, a more corporate expression of thanks is in order for contributions the club has made, especially in recent years, to waterfowl, wading bird, and general wetland conservation.

Never was recognition more obviously in order than during the hot, dry 1988 summer. While news media portrayed cracked mud-flats during much of the critical nesting season for riverine lakes in central Illinois, wetland vegetation was abundant at all times in the Clear Lake basin. Clear water trickled into the basin from the bluff lining the east shore providing excellent conditions for invertebrate animals as well as aquatic plants. But beyond this natural blessing, the levees constructed and maintained by the club, especially those extending south from the clubhouse which impound several feet of water, were critical. This circumstance was particularly significant because a water level control at the south end of the lake (not under club control) had failed. Numerous broods of Wood Ducks, mallard, and a few Blue-winged Teal were saved by the impounded water. If this was the only result, we might dismiss impounded water as we often do the plantings of corn and other wildlife crops at Clear Lake and elsewhere as merely self-serving. But several of us privileged to enjoy the descending whinny of the Sora, the scolding voice and threat posturing of territorial Sedge Wrens, Spotted Sandpipers tipping at water's edge, numerous nesting Tree Swallows, feeding Great Blue Herons, endangered Great Egrets, and endangered Black-Crowned Night Herons, can readily appreciate that much more than waterfowl are served by wise management practices on private lands.

Two years ago I predicted that the Double-Crested Cormorant, another endangered species in Illinois would soon be nesting in the drowned timber south of the clubhouse, as 30-50 cormorants were summering in the vicinity and hundreds were using the site as a staging area during migration. On July 6th I confirmed nesting (two active nests) after observing courtship behavior earlier. Pair bonding behavior continued throughout July, and although late in the usual cormorant nesting season, incubation of eggs appeared to be occurring. Cormorants will not tolerate human intrusion or drying of their nesting sites which is in the drowned timber (now snags) within the impounded water. Unfortunately the nests were deserted in early August for reasons unknown with no sign of young. But without the management practiced at Clear Lake, nesting would almost certainly not even have been attempted.

Add to this breeding season success, the rest and feeding stop-over provided for many species of migrants, an active beaver lodge, food and water for deer (ponds went dry at nearby Sand Ridge Forest), loafing, feeding and roosting sites for wintering Bald Eagles, a corn plantation "defended" from her mate of another season by a wintering female Northern Harrier using it as her "private" mousing field and one has further reason to express a "kudo for the club."

R.G. Bjorklund

## 1988 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

PEORIA COUNT - to be held on Saturday, December 16; Louise Endres asks that anyone interested in being a participant contact her at 682-8500 (evenings only).

CHAUTAUQUA COUNT - to be held on Friday, December 23; contact Dr. Bjorklund if you are interested in participating at 677-3012.

CHILLICOTHE COUNT - date not yet available

## NEXT MEETING:

OCTOBER 12, 1988 at 7:30 p.m. at Lakeview Museum

**THE CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM - THE LONG-TERM PRO** **UNCERTAIN - The**  
primary purpose of the federal Conservation Reserve P. to return highly  
erodible agricultural lands back to permanent vegetati. a secondary purpose  
is to improve wildlife habitat through the planting of grasses, shrubs and  
trees. Considerable acreage across the U.S. has been enlisted in this program.  
Unfortunately, relatively little of this land is being planted in shrubs and  
trees. Most of it is going into grasses. The use of the word "permanent" in  
regard to these acres is questionable. The CRP contract extends only for 10  
years. After this time, the farmer can do what he wants with his land. It will  
be easy to plow up the grasses and once again resort to marginal, erosive  
farming. Also, in the wake of the current drought, there is much agitation from  
some quarters that this land be pulled back into some form of "productive use."  
The absolute necessity of preventing further erosion seems to become an  
irrelevant factor when economic pressures are involved.

**SAVING THE OZONE LAYER - EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY COOPERATION** - In an effort to help  
stop depletion of the atmosphere's ozone layer, Dupont will phase out all  
production of chlorofluorocarbons. This chemical, implicated in ozone  
depletion, is used in refrigerants, in propellants for aerosols, in foam-blowing  
agents for plastic products, and in other industrial processes. Dupont is a  
leading producer of c.f.c. Similarly, the Food Service and Packaging Institute  
announced that its member organizations will phase out the use of c.f.c. in the  
manufacture of disposable plastic foam products. (Editor's Note: it is  
ridiculous, but a sign of our ecologically careless times, that the manufacture  
of two convenience items, aerosols, and disposable foam plastic containers, can  
be threats to the stability of the earth's atmosphere).

**FIGHTING THE PESTICIDE THREAT - ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF INDUSTRY COOPERATION** - The H.  
J. Heinz Company in a letter to growers announced that food treated with any of  
13 pesticides under review by EPA as potential health hazards would not be used  
in their baby food.

**ROADBLOCKS TO RENEWAL OF THE CLEAN AIR ACT - EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY RESISTANCE** -  
The automotive industry continues to be successful in blocking release of the  
Clean Air Act renewal bill in the U.S. House of Representatives. Working  
through Congressman John Dingell (D., Mich.), who is Chairman of the House  
Energy Committee, the industry opposes the bill's pollution control  
requirements, claiming that they would be too expensive. In like manner, the  
West Virginia coal industry, working through Senator Robert Bird (D., W.VA)  
opposes acid deposition controls, and has been able to block senate renewal of  
the Clean Air Act. As Majority Leader, Senator Bird sets the scheduling of  
legislation, and will not allow this bill to be released.

#### FIELD TRIPS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1988 - LOUISE ENDRES will lead a group  
to Johnson Sauk Trail State Park, about 6 miles north of Kewanee  
on Highway 78. The group should meet in Peoria at the Landmark  
Recreation Center parking lot at 7:00 a.m. with plans to carpool  
from there. Call Louise at 682-8500 (evenings only) if you plan  
to attend.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1988 - CHAUTAUQUA FIELD TRIP  
Dr. Richard Bjorklund & Sig Bjorklund are the co-leaders. They  
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.

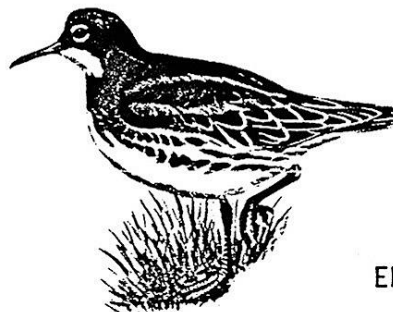
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1988 - METROPOLITAN SANITARY DISTRICT  
Dr. L.H. Princen will lead a car-hike thru the MSD grounds  
(located south of Canton), meeting either in downtown Farmington  
at the 116-73 junction at 8:00 a.m. or at the entrance to the  
MSD at 8:30 a.m. Call Dr. Princen if you plan to attend at  
691-0519.

#### 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, IL 61614

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



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