

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



PEORIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SINCE 1981

ORNITHOLOGICAL - AUDUBON CHAPTER
OF THE PEORIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE SINCE 1930

MARCH/APRIL 1995

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN MARCH/APRIL - Maury Brucker

Early migrants such as Meadowlarks, Robins, Red-Winged Blackbirds, and Killdeer start pushing their way north during warmer periods. Many species of ducks and geese move north as the ice clears. Resident birds, such as Cardinals and Song Sparrows, will be singing more frequently. In April, kinglets and old world warblers are early indicators that the rush of the main migration is about to begin.

RECENT SIGHTINGS:

- + **Hooded Merganser** - 1/28 by Virginia Humphreys/Eunice Tjaden/Brenda Onken at Duck Island.
- + **Canvasback** - 1/28 - same as above.
- + **Goldeneye** - 1/28 - same as above.
- + **Oldsquaw** - 1/28 - same as above at Powerton.
- + **Barred Owl** - 2/18 by Brenda Onken/Jana Smith at Forest Park.

NOT-SO-RECENT SIGHTINGS:

On 11/19, the Princens drove to Havana along the west side of the Illinois River and returned on the east side. In addition to most of the species shown for the MSD trip, they saw:

Red-Necked Grebe	Bonaparte's Gull
Wood Duck	Rock Dove
Common Goldeneye	Belted Kingfisher
Hooded Merganser	Tufted Titmouse
Rough-Legged Hawk	Carolina Wren
Golden Eagle	Northern Mockingbird
Bald Eagle	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Sandhill Crane (5 at Lake Chautauqua, also seen by others)	Red-Winged Blackbird
Least Sandpiper	Brown-Headed Cowbird
Herring Gull	

SIGHTINGS ON MSD FIELD TRIP 10/29:

Pied-Billed Grebe	Common Snipe
Double-Crested Cormorant	Ring-Billed Gull
Mute Swan	Mourning Dove
Canada Goose	Common Flicker
Snow Goose	Red-Bellied Woodpecker
Mallard	Downy Woodpecker
American Black Duck	Horned Lark
Northern Pintail	Tree Swallow
Gadwall	Blue Jay
American Widgeon	Common Crow
Northern Shoveler	Black-Capped Chickadee
Green-Winged Teal	American Robin
Redhead	Ruby-Crowned Kinglet
Canvasback	European Starling
Ring-Necked Duck	Yellow-Rumped Warbler
Lesser Scaup	House Sparrow
Bufflehead	Eastern Meadowlark
Ruddy Duck	Common Grackle
Turkey Vulture	Northern Cardinal
Sharp-Shinned Hawk	American Goldfinch
Northern Harrier	Savannah Sparrow
Red-Tailed Hawk	Vesper Sparrow
American Kestrel	Dark-Eyed Junco
Ring-Necked Pheasant	American Tree Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Field Sparrow
Black-Crowned Night Heron	White-Crowned Sparrow
American Coot	White-Throated Sparrow
Killdeer	Fox Sparrow
Lesser Yellowlegs	Swamp Sparrow
Pectoral Sandpiper	Song Sparrow

AUDUBON CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Mar. 8 (Wed.): **Board Meeting** - 6:00 PM and **Membership Meeting** - 7:00 PM at **Lakeview Museum**. Program: **Wintering Bald Eagles Along the Illinois River** and **Factors Affecting Their Environment** by **Tom Lerczak**, aquatic ecologist at Forbes Biological Station of the Illinois Natural History Survey.

Mar. 10-11 (Fri.-Sat.): **Illinois Audubon field trip** - 4:00 PM Fri. to 12:00 noon Sat. at **Jasper County Prairie-Chicken Sanctuary** and nearby areas. Cost is a donation to I.A.S. of \$20 per person for I.A.S. members or \$30 for non-members and does not include traveling/eating/sleeping arrangements. Contact Vernon Kleen at (217) 785-8774 (days) or (217) 636-8476 (evenings) or RR 2, Box 481, Athens, IL 62613 for more information. Register in advance and receive more specific trip details, a list of places to stay (motels or camping), and other pertinent information.

Mar. 11 (Sat.): **Audubon Council of Illinois** - 10:00 AM - at the Nature Center, Kennekuk County Park, Northeast **Danville**, Vermilion County.

Mar. 25 (Sat.): **MSD Field Trip** - meet at 8:30 AM (to approx. 2:00 PM) at **Metropolitan Sanitary District, Canton** or 8:00 AM in Farmington at Jct. Rte. 116 & 78. Bring a sack lunch. Call Bert Princen at 691-9148 for more information and RSVP.

Apr. 14 (Fri.): **Bird Walk** - 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM at **Forest Park** before meeting. Some hills - might be muddy - could be canceled if it rains. Call Jana Smith at 672-6937 (days) or 382-3889 (evenings) for more information and RSVP. **Membership Meeting** (note day/location change) - 7:00 PM at **Forest Park Nature Center**. Program: to be announced.

Apr. 29 (Sat.): **Bird Conference** - 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM at **Wildlife Prairie Park**. The attached brochure contains details and a registration form. For more information, call Linda Prescott at Wildlife Prairie Park at (309) 676-0998.

May 6 (Sat.): **Spring Bird Count**. See next newsletter for more information.

May 12 (Fri.): **Bird Walk** - 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at **Forest Park** before meeting. Some hills - might be muddy - could be canceled if it rains. Call Jana Smith at 672-6937 (days) or 382-3889 (evenings) for more information and RSVP. **Membership Meeting** - 7:30 PM at **Forest Park Nature Center**. Program: **Nature's Music**, a witty, engaging program examining the sounds animals make and why they make them (held in conjunction with the Nature Center).

May 13 (Sat.): **Bird-A-Thon**. This is the second year we are working together with Wildlife Prairie Park, The Nature Conservancy, and Forest Park Nature Center, and 25% of the proceeds will again go to Partners-In-Flight. **We need people to help collect pledges!** Call Bert Princen at (309) 691-9148 for more information.

May 19-21 (Fri.-Sun.): **Illinois Audubon field trip** - 5:00 PM Fri. to 1:00 PM Sun. in **Southern Illinois and Shawnee National Forest**. Cost is a donation to the I.A.S. Adams Wildlife Sanctuary of \$50 per person for I.A.S. members and Friends of the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary or \$65 for others and does not include traveling/eating/sleeping arrangements. Contact Vernon Kleen at (217) 785-8774 (days) or (217) 636-8476 (evenings) or RR 2, Box 481, Athens, IL 62613 for more information. Register in advance and receive an itinerary, specific trip details, a list of places to stay (motels or camping), and other pertinent information.

June 10 (Sat.): **Audubon Council of Illinois** - **DuPage**.

June 16-18 (Fri.-Sun.): **Kirtland's Warbler North Woods Birding Trip** - Contact Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm, 1000 Aullwood Road, Dayton, OH 45414-1129, (513) 890-7360 for more information.

Sep. 9 (Sat.): **Audubon Council of Illinois** - **Decatur**.

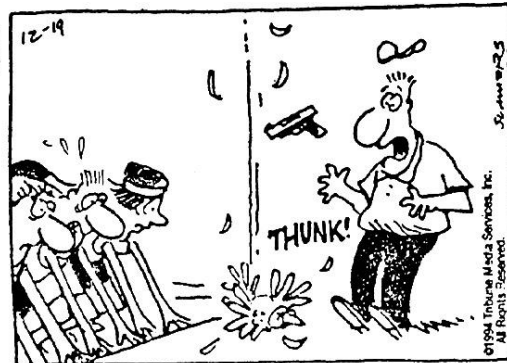
Dec. 9 (Sat.): **Audubon Council of Illinois** - **Thorn Creek**.

Dec. 16 (Sat.): **Peoria Christmas Bird Count**.

Dec. 23 (Sat.): **Chautauqua Christmas Bird Count**.

Dec. 30 (Sat.): **Chillicothe Christmas Bird Count**.

BOUND & GAGGED



BIRD "SPOTLIGHT": TREE SPARROW - Brenda Onken

One of my favorite sparrows is the American Tree Sparrow. His appearance is sparrowlike, with a rusty cap, two white wing bars, and a dark spot in the middle of his clear breast. This sparrow breeds in the Arctic and comes south to winter. He arrives here in November and stays until early spring.

In this area, American Tree Sparrows can be found in weedy fields, thickets, grain fields, and marshes. I have found the greatest population around water, such as creeks or rivers. They seem to flock together in big numbers in fields. When found, they can usually be coaxed out of the weeds by "spishing" and will sit on the tops of weeds and branches. They also come to feeders, especially when it snows. They have a sweet, musical call, which is one reason I love to find them.

PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

The following is from an article by Dean Johnston in Forest Park Nature Center's Tracks and Trails newsletter:

How would you like to turn your backyard bird feeder into an important laboratory for ornithological research? Sound intimidating? It's not - just join the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Project Feeder Watch Program.

Since 1987, thousands of bird-feeding enthusiasts have watched their feeders, systematically counting numbers and species of birds for use in the Cornell Lab's research projects. Today, Project Feeder Watch has over 11,000 participants nationwide. Data from home bird feeders is used in research that will answer questions like:

- Do bird population changes correlate with long-term climate fluctuations?
- Are flock sizes of common birds larger in colder, snowier regions?
- Are range expansions of introduced species affecting native bird populations?
- Does feeding birds affect the long-term survival of winter bird populations?
- Are cycles of winter irruptions correlated among species across North America?
- How do population trends shown by Project Feeder Watch compare with other monitoring data, such as Christmas Bird Counts?

For more information on this project, call 1-800-BIRD.

BALD EAGLE DAY - Mari Tattersall

This year's event, held on 1/21 at Forest Park Nature Center, was a big success! About 65 people attended our presentation, 10 of whom were grade school age or younger. Unfortunately, no Bald Eagles were seen afterward at the marina, but a good time was had by all. Maps pointing out good places to view eagles in the Peoria area are available at Forest Park Nature Center.

BALD EAGLE COUNT - Mari Tattersall

The count took place on 1/28 along the river between Henry and Havana, and this year's results were better than expected. The weather has been warm here and up north for the past few months; therefore, the eagles were not forced south to concentrate along our section of the Illinois River. Bald Eagles are attracted to this area because of the heavy barge traffic keeping the main channel open so that fish, their prime winter food, are more readily available. A total of 108 eagles were seen this year: 76 adult and 32 immature. The majority (75) were seen between Henry and Peoria, which indicates that our recent cold spells are starting to push the eagles down our way. Keep your eyes open for them along the Illinois River from now through March before they start to return to their northern breeding grounds.

Remember to keep your distance (use binoculars and scopes), do not make sudden noises or movements, and if they notice you, quietly leave the area. Bald Eagles are very shy of humans, and disturbing them will cause them to burn up calories that are needed to sustain them through the cold winter nights and allow them to hunt for food and to fly to and from their night roosts. Respect them, and they will continue to grace us with their presence.

1994 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS - Mari Tattersall

A special thanks to all who participated. Mark your calendars for 1995: Peoria 12/16, Chautauqua 12/23, & Chillicothe 12/30.

Chillicothe: HIGH - Mourning Dove; LOW - waterfowl, Killdeer, Kingfisher; NONE - Ring-Necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Common Snipe, Horned Lark, Red-Breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Meadowlark; GOOD SIGHTING - Rusty Blackbird.

Chautauqua: HIGH - "sweep of swans" (Tundra, Trumpeter, and Mute), 22 species of waterfowl, more immature than adult Bald Eagles; NONE - Northern Bobwhite, Red-Breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Red-Headed Woodpecker, Eastern Meadowlark, Wild Turkey; GOOD SIGHTING - 67 Eurasian Tree Sparrows, 13 Tundra Swans, 3 adult and 2 immature Trumpeter Swans (all collar-banded), Mute Swan, Loggerhead Shrike.

Peoria: LOW - Great Blue Heron, waterfowl, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Eastern Screech Owl, White-Throated Sparrow, White-Crowned Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark; GOOD SIGHTING - Merlin.

Dr. Richard Bjorklund would especially like to thank those who participated in the Chautauqua count, which included Bradley University graduates, Sigurd Bjorklund, Brett Gullett, David Johnson, and Professors Fan and Welsford, as well as personnel from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Illinois Natural History Survey, and the Illinois State Museum.

SPECIES	12/17 Chilli.	12/23 Chaut.	12/31 Peoria
Pied-Billed Grebe	3	2	---
Double Crested Cormorant	2	2	---
Great Blue Heron	19	25	9
Mute Swan	---	1	---
Great White-Fronted Goose	---	2	---
Snow Goose - combined	2	300	---
(white)	(1)	(127)	(---)
(blue)	(1)	(173)	(---)
Canada Goose	1,958	51,839	2,111
Green-Winged Teal	---	124	1
American Black Duck	34	127	2
Mallard	4,322	201,781	620
Northern Pintail	---	2,003	---
Northern Shoveler	4	20	6
Gadwall	7	1,071	---
American Wigeon	---	24	---
Canvasback	5	81	---
Redhead	---	4	---
Ring-Necked Duck	---	10	---
Lesser Scaup	---	17	---
Common Goldeneye	22	50	8
Bufflehead	---	5	17
Hooded Merganser	---	16	---
Common Merganser	136	4,071	8
Ruddy Duck	7	30	---
Turkey Vulture	---	1	---
Bald Eagle	18	78	1
(adult)	(8)	(37)	(1)
(immature)	(10)	(41)	(---)
Northern Harrier	11	10	---
Sharp-Shinned Hawk	1	2	---
Cooper's Hawk	---	1	---
Red-Tailed Hawk	60	26	32
Rough-Legged Hawk	3	3	---
American Kestrel	80	22	30
Merlin	1	---	---
Ring-Necked Pheasant	2	(27)*	---
Wild Turkey	3	---	---
American Coot	105	279	---
Killdeer	1	---	72
Common Snipe	1	---	---
Ring-Billed Gull	815	162	1,761
Herring Gull	19	24	8
Unidentified Gull Species	---	---	118
Rock Dove	84	43	472
Mourning Dove	209	53	316
Eastern Screech Owl	1	2	2
Great Horned Owl	3	5	2
Barred Owl	4	1	---
Belted Kingfisher	4	4	1
Red-Headed Woodpecker	37	---	7
Red-Bellied Woodpecker	80	47	26
Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker	---	1	---
Downy Woodpecker	101	51	92
Hairy Woodpecker	14	17	16
Northern Flicker	32	15	6
Pileated Woodpecker	---	9	3

SPECIES	12/17 Chilli.	12/23 Chaut.	12/31 Peoria
Horned Lark	34	16	---
Blue Jay	164	228	109
American Crow	371	241	630
Black-Capped Chickadee	278	115	232
Tufted Titmouse	120	44	78
Red-Breasted Nuthatch	3	---	---
White-Breasted Nuthatch	84	61	64
Brown Creeper	7	12	12
Carolina Wren	5	11	7
Winter Wren	---	1	(1)*
Golden-Crowned Kinglet	4	12	---
Ruby-Crowned Kinglet	---	1	---
Eastern Bluebird	18	---	---
American Robin	5	7	8
Northern Mockingbird	5	4	---
Cedar Waxwing	44	35	10
Loggerhead Shrike	---	1	---
European Starling	3,119	1,723	5,064
Northern Cardinal	182	214	224
American Tree Sparrow	572	457	263
Field Sparrow	---	2	2
Fox Sparrow	---	1	2
Song Sparrow	77	200	88
Lincoln's Sparrow	---	1	---
Swamp Sparrow	24	218	6
White-Throated Sparrow	1	23	20
White-Crowned Sparrow	6	24	25
Dark-Eyed Junco	401	465	559
Red-Winged Blackbird	194	226	1,016
Eastern Meadowlark	2	---	---
Rusty Blackbird	---	---	1
Common Grackle	13	4	30
Brown-Headed Cowbird	16	5	---
Purple Finch	9	12	3
House Finch	28	26	118
Pine Siskin	---	4	---
American Goldfinch	133	643	303
House Sparrow	1,532	510	1,433
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	---	67	---

*(Seen during count week)

Documented Species:

Chipping Sparrow	---	1	---
Tundra Swan	---	13	---
Trumpeter Swan	---	5	---

Total Species:

	69	85	52
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Total Birds:

	15,696	268,232	16,014
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Number Of Teams:

	?	7	10
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Number of People:

	27	18	25
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Feeder Watchers:

	---	---	5
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IN MEMORIAM

John Findlay III
1913 - 1995

When Greet and I came to Peoria in 1960, we soon caught up with some birding enthusiasts who conducted regular field trips under the leadership of Dr. John Cowan. Some of the regulars included Virginia Humphreys, Marie Welty, Esther Kaspar, Eunice Tjaden, Norma Grob, Cy and Betty Evans, Larry Lowry, Neil Taylor, Carl Rist, and John Findlay.

John loved the outdoors with all his heart, and during our hikes he would always have some good story to tell about some fact of nature or another. John loved especially the birds, and the Eastern Bluebird in particular. He was very instrumental, together with a few others, in formalizing our group more into an official club again, with officers and monthly evening meetings. Esther Kaspar chaired the organization for the first two years, but John Findlay took over soon after that.

Under his guidance and tutelage, a group of us worked several Saturdays building bluebird houses in our garages from donated lumber. One Saturday in early March, we all set out and installed 3 bluebird trails: one by the Girl Scout Camp near Metamora, one near the Peoria Airport, and one near Chillicothe. Each trail had 8 boxes. I remember driving back along the trail near the airport for a last inspection, and bluebirds were already going in and out of the first box we had installed. That first year, we raised about 50 young bluebirds, and that was in the middle 1960's when bluebirds were rare and not as easily seen as they are now.

John's first wife Alice developed multiple sclerosis and eventually passed away in 1974. Fortunately, John found an equally lovely second wife, Harriett, who also shared his enthusiasm for birds. Unfortunately for us in Peoria, upon his retirement, John and Harriett moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and our contacts since then have been sparse. However, we all knew that John kept his deep love for bluebirds and continued to build and maintain housing trails for them. He also kept educating everyone about birds; for example, he was a regular contributor of articles in *Sialia*, the quarterly journal of the North American Bluebird Society. He maintained 180 boxes, reared about 7000 bluebirds, and banded almost 4000 of them during the past 20 years.

Most of us did not know that he developed cancer about eight years ago, and it was, therefore, a tremendous shock to us when his name appeared suddenly on the obituary page of the Peoria Journal Star. The funeral service and burial were held in Morton on Saturday, February 4. Those of us who knew him lost a dear friend, fellow birdwatcher, and mentor. We hope that his family and the bluebirds will soon overcome their grief and find solace in all the wonderful memories of this sweet and kind man.

Bert Princen

IN MEMORIAM

William T. Beeson II
1929 - 1995

On February 16, Peoria Audubon lost a great member and friend when Bill Beeson passed away after a year of courageously battling cancer. He and his family, Anne, Trey, and Jamie, came to Peoria from Ohio in the mid-1960's and became our neighbors. It was at once obvious that they were a nature-loving family, and we became close friends soon after their arrival. Trey and I especially shared the same interests: birds, insects, and reptiles. In his quiet and friendly way, Bill cared for the same things but in a much more reserved way. He kept close track of what came to his feeders, and if he saw something unusual, be it a Towhee or a Turkey, he would be on the phone quickly to inform us. Of all the neighborhood bird species, the Barred and Great Horned Owls always turned him on the most. He and his family were faithful participants in Christmas Bird Counts and the Spring Bird Census. It was always a delight to spend a full day with him on a bird count because of his quiet and tender wit. Five years ago, Bill also served on the Board of Directors of the Peoria Audubon Society.

We will all miss him, and our sympathy goes out to his wife, Anne, and to his children. A memorial service was held on Monday, February 20, in Eureka and was attended by several members of our club. The family has expressed the wish that donations be made to the Peoria Audubon Society in his memory.

Bert Princen

Something New on the Horizon

Governor Jim Edgar in his State of the State Message proposed a new super Dept. of Natural Resources. This proposed department would combine the present Dept. of Conservation, most of the duties of the Dept. of Energy and Natural Resources, and the three state Scientific Surveys, which include Natural History, Geological, and Water Survey. Others to be added are the Dept. of Mines and Minerals, the Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Council, the Hazardous Waste and Information Center, and the Division of Water Resources, which is currently in the Dept. of Transportation. While this proposal will have to work its way through the State Legislature, it has a good chance of surviving. The new department would be headed by the current Dept. of Conservation director Brent Manning and three of his top assistants. Governor Edgar would like the new department to be in place by the beginning of the new fiscal year, July 1. There will be more information coming out in March.

Illinois Riverwatch Network

As you have probably heard, the Illinois Riverwatch Network, headed by Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra, was established in 1993. We may be asked to take part in this in the spring, and I will have more information in the next newsletter.

The following article appeared in the January 1995 issue of the Great Lakes Region Audubon Leader newsletter:

"There are many good landowners who are good stewards of the resources they own and wildlife benefits from their stewardship. Audubon would like to celebrate their accomplishments and recognize the public spiritedness of these private landowners who have been especially good stewards of their land."

If you of any such landowners, please send a brief description of each to: Peoria Audubon, c/o Peoria Academy of Science, 1125 W. Lake Ave., Peoria, IL 61614. As a local Audubon chapter, we would like to recognize these individuals.

INTERESTING QUOTE

From the January 1995 issue of the Great Lakes Region Audubon Leader newsletter: The Nature Conservancy quotes Ron Arnold, a prominent spokesman for the "Wise Use" movement, as saying: "Our goal is to destroy, to eradicate the environmental movement. We want to exploit the environment for private gain, absolutely. And we want people to understand that this is a noble goal."

"Bird's Eye View" is published bi-monthly by the Peoria Audubon Society. The next article due date will be April 10. Call or send items of interest to Jana Smith, Newsletter Editor, Peoria Audubon Society, 104 S. Main St., N. Pekin, IL 61554. (H) 382-3889 or (W) 672-6937 or work fax 672-6079.

PEORIA AUDUBON SOCIETY
PEORIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE
1125 West Lake Avenue
Peoria, IL 61614

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