

Habitat Corner...

by Maury Brucker

Rain in July and August in Central Illinois – an iffy item that can make or break the crops. Crops that either we depend upon and/or those crops that produce seeds that the birds depend upon. Perhaps the vagaries of Central Illinois's climate is one reason that so many of our native plant communities are composed of perennials – plants that can sacrifice the biologically expensive process of seed production in exchange for partial dormancy during times of drought. Interestingly, insects seem to thrive in these hot, dry conditions. Perhaps they take advantage of the plant's moment of vulnerability that is brought on by drought. Luckily many birds can temporarily supplement their diets with insects in when seeds are scarce.

In the distant past, large wetlands and wet prairies carried populations of birds and other animals through these dry periods. Today, few of these healthy, life-giving wetlands remain and thus wetland birds account for over half of the endangered birds in Illinois. Granted, there are more lakes and little ponds today, but plant diversity has not yet adapted to these new niches. Still, if we are lucky to have a heavy rain in August, shorebirds from the arctic breeding grounds will stop to rest in shallow standing water on their migration. Check with other birders to locate these temporary habitats.



July/August 1996

Bird's-Eye View

The Newsletter of

The Peoria Audubon Society...

A Chapter of National Audubon since 1981
Ornithological-Audubon Chapter of The
Peoria Academy of Science since 1930



Species Spotlight... Eastern Wood Pee-Wee

by Brenda Onken

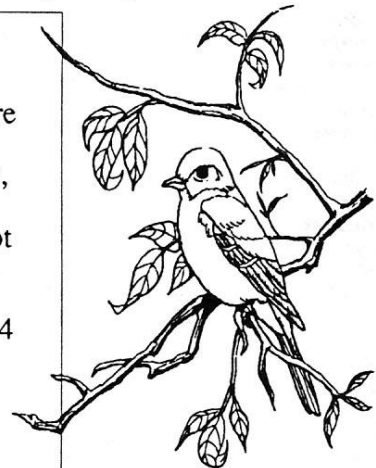
A good example of a neo-tropical migrant that nests and raises its young in Illinois is the Eastern Wood Pee-Wee. This bird is found in woodlands and groves and even in parks. Its song is fairly simple– a thin whistling “pee-a-wee.” If you go hiking in the woods, you shouldn’t have any trouble identifying this bird by song. If the bird is in the area, you will hear him sing frequently.

This bird belongs to a group of birds known as “flycatchers.” The name for this group of birds comes from the habit of perching at the end of dead limbs and flying out to catch insects. Flycatchers will then return to the limb and start the process all over again. At their name implies, a large part of any flycatcher’s diet consists on insects.

The Pee-Wee can be identified by its dark gray body with a lighter colored breast, two narrow, white wing bar, and NO eye ring. Their nest is built fairly high in the trees (6-50 feet). They use bark strips, rootlets, spider webs, grasses and lichens in construction of the nest. They tend to be territorial and will chase other birds from their nesting territory. The Pec-Wee is a delightful attraction to the summertime forest, going about their business of flycatching, raising their young, and singing their enjoyable, friendly song.

Birdathon Results...

Rumor has it that Forest Park Nature Center’s team spied 118 species of birds in Peoria County on Saturday, May 11. The Team consisted of Mike Miller and Dale Goodner. Hot on their trail was Wildlife Prairie Park’s team of Brenda Onken and Keelie Lawson. They logged in 114 species.



Illinois Spring Bird Count Data (Peoria, Woodford, Mason, and Fulton Counties) Sat. May 4, 1996

	P	W	M	F		P	W	M	F
Common Loon					Barred Owl	1		6	
Pied-billed Grebe	2	3	7	11	Common Nighthawk			1	
Double-crested Cormorant	3	16	153	207	Chuck-will's-widow				
American Bittern				1	Whip-poor-will			27	
Great Blue Heron	17	10	173	83	Chimney swift	36	20	98	58
Great Egret	10		30	82	Ruby-throated Hummingbird			2	
Little Blue Heron			1		Belted Kingfisher	3	5	3	3
Cattle Egret					Red-headed Woodpecker	6	6	74	38
Green-backed Heron	2	3	6	7	Red-bellied Woodpecker	28	8	39	24
Black-crowned Night Heron	1				Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				
Yellow-crowned Night Heron					Downy Woodpecker	18	22	25	22
Mute Swan					Hairy Woodpecker	1	1	6	1
Canada Goose	35	34	48	215	Northern Flicker	12	11	41	48
Wood Duck	20	16	117	43	Pileated Woodpecker	1		6	1
Green-winged Teal			21		Olive-sided Flycatcher			1	
American Black Duck	6				Eastern Wood-Pewee		2		2
Mallard	25	14	76	89	Acadian Flycatcher				
Northern Pintail					Willow Flycatcher				
Blue-winged Teal	15	10	277	91	Least Flycatcher		1		
Northern Shoveler	7	5	17	3	Eastern Phoebe	4	4	3	9
Gadwall			11		Great-crested Flycatcher	7	1	19	
American Wigeon				1	Eastern Kingbird	1	5	10	31
Redhead					Horned Lark	46	44	35	23
Ring-necked Duck					Purple Martin	5	46	12	21
Lesser Scaup			3	22	Tree Swallow	20	194	1866	617
Bufflehead				2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	42	160	43	61
Hooded Merganser	4			3	Bank Swallow	15	40		22
Red Breasted Merganser				2	Cliff Swallow	3	2	11	3
Ruddy Duck		2	9		Barn Swallow	56	220	381	101
Turkey Vulture	15	5	27	32	Blue Jay	52	54	324	131
Osprey					American Crow	23	38	69	72
Northern Harrier					Black-capped Chickadee	41	28	48	36
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1		Carolina Chickadee		4		
Cooper's Hawk	1		1		Tufted Titmouse	30	10	64	40
Red-shouldered Hawk					Red-breasted Nuthatch			1	
Broad-winged Hawk	2			1	White-breasted Nuthatch	17	10	24	11
Red-tailed Hawk	15	5	18	17	Brown Creeper				
American Kestrel	16	3	11	7	Carolina Wren	5	4	18	5
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	8	40	1	House Wren	5	19	33	20
Wild Turkey	3		14		Sedge Wren				
Northern Bobwhite	10		40	16	Marsh Wren		1	1	
King Rail					Ruby-crowned Kinglet	35	5	16	32
Virginia Rail					Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	8	2	11	7
Sora			4	3	Eastern Bluebird	6	6	29	35
Common Moorhen					Veery	1		3	
American Coot	112	50	501	361	Gray-cheeked Thrush			1	1
Black-bellied Plover					Swainson's Thrush	4		8	
Lesser Golden Plover					Hermit Thrush			1	
Semipalmated Plover					Wood Thrush		3	9	1
Killdeer	15	31	51	76	American Robin	360	264	375	324
Greater Yellowlegs	2		12	12	Gray Catbird	5	1	24	16
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	1	609	11	Northern Mockingbird		2	5	3
Solitary Sandpiper	1	2	3	3	Brown Thrasher	13	15	45	57
Spotted Sandpiper	1		17	23	Water Pipit			6	
Upland Sandpiper					Cedar Waxwing	10	8	21	
Semipalmated Sandpiper	3	2	119	5	Loggerhead Shrike			1	
Least Sandpiper	1		6	10	European Starling	220	210	259	172
Pectoral Sandpiper		4	317	5	White-eyed Vireo	1		2	
Dunlin					Belt's Vireo				
Short-billed Dowitcher			4		Solitary Vireo	1	3	1	
Common Snipe					Yellow-throated Vireo		1	2	
American Woodcock			2		Warbling Vireo	5	10	6	16
Wilson's Phalarope			1		Philadelphia Vireo				
Bonaparte's Gull			6	12	Red-eyed Vireo	1		2	2
Ring-billed Gull	10	7	47	166	Blue-Winged Warbler	1			
Herring Gull	38	7	15	17	Golden-winged Warbler	1		1	
Caspian Tern			5	7	Tennessee Warbler	3		5	4
Common Tern				1	Orange-crowned Warbler	2	3	5	3
Forster's Tern				4	Nashville Warbler	7		3	3
Black Tern	12				Northern Parula	2	1	5	
Rock Dove	30	7	20	83	Yellow Warbler	10	4	5	6
Mourning Dove	18	38	241	162	Chestnut-sided Warbler				
Black-billed Cuckoo					Magnolia Warbler			3	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo				1	Cape May Warbler	1			
Eastern Screech Owl					Black-throated Blue Warbler				
Great Horned Owl			1	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	50	37	161	112

Illinois Spring Bird Count Data (Continued)

	P	W	M	F
Black-throated Green Warbler	4	1	4	2
Blackburnian Warbler	1		3	
Yellow-throated Warbler				1
Pine Warbler		1	1	1
Prairie Warbler				
Palm Warbler	70	16	73	66
Bay-breasted Warbler				
Blackpoll Warbler	1		1	
Cerulean Warbler				
Black-and-white Warbler	7	1	11	1
American Redstart		3	5	2
Prothonotary Warbler		1	6	
Worm-eating Warbler				
Ovenbird	2		9	
Northern Waterthrush	3	8	5	
Louisiana Waterthrush		1		1
Kentucky Warbler			1	
Mourning Warbler				
Common Yellowthroat	3		15	15
Hooded Warbler				
Wilson's Warbler				
Canada Warbler				
Yellow-breasted Chat				
Summer Tanager				
Scarlet Tanager	2	1	7	
Northern Cardinal	37	62	172	120
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	12	7	67	20
Blue Grosbeak			1	1
Indigo Bunting	1		5	9
Dickcissel		4	10	
Rufous-sided Towhee	5	8	55	23
Chipping Sparrow	37	65	74	95
Field Sparrow	22	13	38	43
Vesper Sparrow		4	2	
Lark Sparrow			21	3
Savannah Sparrow		2	1	9
Grasshopper Sparrow	2		11	
Song Sparrow	29	22	54	55
Lincoln's Sparrow				1
Swamp Sparrow			10	22
White-throated Sparrow	185	24	198	88
White-crowned Sparrow	5	12	76	56
Bobolink				
Red-winged Blackbird	300	198	901	1508
Eastern Meadowlark	30	34	61	150
Western Meadowlark	4	1	1	13
Yellow-headed Blackbird				
Common Grackle	375	288	461	1174
Brown-headed Cowbird	43	151	187	98
Orchard Oriole				1
Northern Oriole	15	6	26	13
Purple Finch			3	3
House Finch	13	33	24	36
Pine Siskin	3		2	
American Goldfinch	30	18	103	92
House Sparrow	75	422	227	178
Eurasian Tree Sparrow			61	26
Documented Species				
Yellow Rail		1		
Canvasback			2	6
Bald Eagle			1	
Long-billed Dowitcher			17	
Golden Crowned Kinglet			3	
Henslow's Sparrow			1	
American White Pelican				1
Willet				5
Merlin				1
Junco				1
Total number of species	112	101	149	123

Conservation Report...

by Les Bodell, Conservation Chair

Once again Peoria Audubon is participating in the Illinois River Network's stream monitoring program. The Riverwatch People, as we call them, are a very caring and dedicated group. They take common folks out to creeks and turn them into Citizen Scientists! Yes, you can get your feet wet! Assessments done on creeks and streams include water appearance, temperature and odor. Also surveyed are algae growth, bottom substrate, creek depth and water velocity, surrounding habitat, bank stability and the presence of macroinvertebrates. Identifying these little creatures can be a challenge, but their presence can give important clues as to the health of the stream. Peoria Audubon recently monitored Jubilee Creek on May 23 and found a total of 160 organisms. The creek was rated as "Good." Absence or presence of certain macroinvertebrates can be an indication of pollution. The results of this monitoring is used by the Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and The Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Peoria Audubon will be monitoring Crow Creek once the river has gone down.

Peoria Audubon also participated in "Wade-Deep" the Wetlands Appreciation Day at Cooper Park in East Peoria on May 5. It was a fun day with a lot of good people spreading the word about protecting and appreciating our precious wetlands. Brenda Onken lead a bird hike and was able to show a few people some migrant warblers, sparrows and thrushes.

Illinois Central College's Earth Day Celebration featured Captain Paul Watson, head of the Sea Sheppard Society. Members from Peoria Audubon and The Heart Of Illinois Sierra Club were among the audience. The Sea Sheppard Society is fully dedicated to the preservation of our oceans and seas, especially the marine life that lives there. We were so moved by his dedication that we just had to hear more. So we invited him to dinner. Sixteen people, including students from ICC sat around two pushed together tables, hearing exciting stories from Captain Paul. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening evening. We wish Captain Paul and his Crew, good luck and Godspeed!

Recent Sightings...

Osprey - April 20, Les & Mary Bodell & Brenda Onken, Evergreen Lake

House Wren - April 24, First arrival at Brenda Onken's House

Red-tailed Hawk - April 28, Nesting Pair off of Rt 26, Les Bodell, Brenda Onken, Bob and Sybil Prager

Wilson's Phalarope - May 2, Greater Peoria Sanitary District, Mary Bodell

Blackburnian, Magnolia, Tennessee & Nashville Warblers - May 9, all at Brenda Onken's House

Harlequin Duck - May 27, Jasper National Park, Canada, Linda Nicot and Brenda Onken

Western Tanager - May 28, Same as above

Common Loon - June 9, Sylvania Wilderness, U.P. Michigan

American White Pelican - June 27, Island Project of Illinois River near Chillicothe. Several Audubon Members have viewed over 50 sitting on the Island!

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Deadline for submissions to next issue: August 15

Send submissions to:

Birds Eye View c/o Mike Miller

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Field Trips...

Saturday, August 17, 8:00 AM;
Peoria Sanitary District – Meet at
the gate at the end of Darst Street.
Specialty: Shorebirds. Leader: Greg Brown. For more information and participation, call 686-3754.

Upcoming Events...

Sunday, July 14, 1:00 pm @ Jubilee College State Park,
A Summertime "Get-together and Pot Luck"
Bring utensils and a dish to share. Drinks will be provided.
Bring the family and a few good bird sightings to share with folks!

Sat & Sun, September 14 & 15 @ Jubilee College State Park,
Autumn Harvest Festival 10:00 am - 5:00 pm each day
Peoria Audubon will be participating this year with a booth. Stop in to say "Hi" or help relieve folks at the booth.

Membership Meetings...

Membership meetings will start up again on:

Wednesday, September 11, 7:00 PM @ Forest Park Nature Center. program to be announced.

Wednesday, October 9, 7:00 PM @ Forest Park Nature Center. Program to be announced.

Wednesday, November 13, 7:00 PM @ Lakeview Museum of Arts and Science. program to be announced.

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PEORIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE
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Peoria IL 61614



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