

# Bird's-Eye View May/June 1997

## 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... Northern Oriole

by Brenda Onken

The Northern Oriole is a very pretty and colorful bird that spends the summer with us. This bird migrates here from the northern part of South America, central Mexico, and the southern United States where they winter. They generally arrive during the end of April and the beginning of May.

Most migratory birds travel with the help of weather fronts. You may awaken to all sorts of bird singing and flitting about in your trees after an overnight rain.

The oriole's song is a series of different pitched whistling notes. The male has a black head, back and wings with a rich orange breast. The female is olive-brown on her back and wings and has a yellowish-orange breast.

These birds build a hanging basket for a nest. It is usually hidden in the leaves at the end of a small limb, high up in the tree. The female does most of the nest building, using stripped plant fibers that bind tightly together providing the needed strength to withstand the wind. What a ride the babies must get in the swaying breeze! I have pulled apart pieces of twine and put the strands out in my yard in hoped that the orioles would use it for nesting material. One female came and took every single strand. I was glad that I could help a little. These nests become more noticeable when the leaves fall in autumn.

There are oriole feeders available that hold nectar, just like hummingbird feeders do, except that the feeders are orange. Kelly seed and hardware sold several last year and heard that people were having success at attracting orioles to them. Mounting orange halves on a wooden peg will also work in bringing these birds in for a great viewing experience. As soon as young are born, the birds switch more to an insect diet. I'm going to buy an oriole feeder and try my luck this year. After a long migration, maybe a few orioles will find my feeder and we will both be happy.

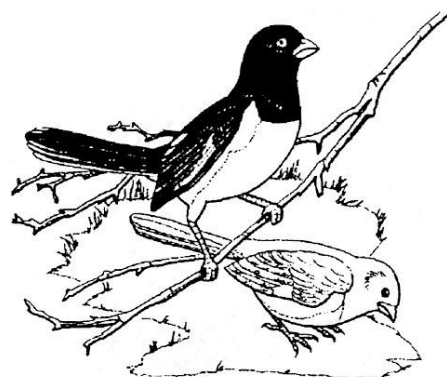
# Field Trip Results...

Eleven Participants on the field trip of March 15, from the powerton Cooling Lake to Havana and return to Peoria on the other side of the river, under leadership of Brenda Onken saw the following 61 bird species:

Pied-billed Grebe	Herring Gull
Double-crested Cormorant	Rock Dove
Great Blue Heron	Mourning Dove
Mute Swan	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker
Wood Duck	Northern Flicker
Mallard	Horned Lark
Northern Pintail	Blue Jay
Northern Shoveler	American Crow
Gadwall	Black-capped Chickadee
American Wigeon	Tufted Titmouse
Canvasback	White Breasted Nuthatch
Redhead	Brown Creeper
Ring-necked Duck	Carolina Wren
Lesser Scaup	Eastern Bluebird
Common Goldeneye	American Robin
Bufflehead	European Starling
Hooded Merganser	Northern Cardinal
Common Merganser	American Tree Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	Song Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Dark-eyed Junco
Turkey Vulture	Red-winged Blackbird
Bald Eagle	Eastern Meadowlark
Northern Harrier	Rusty Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Common Grackle
American Kestrel	Brown-headed Cowbird
Ring-necked Pheasant	Purple Finch
American Coot	American Goldfinch
Killdeer	House Sparrow
Common Snipe	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Ring-billed Gull	

Eleven participants on the field trip of March 29 to MWCD at Canton, Rice Lake and Banner Marsh, under the leadership of Bert Princen, saw 73 species. Species not seen on the March 15 trip were:

Eared Grebe  
Green-winged Teal  
Blue-winged Teal  
Osprey  
Wild Turkey  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Bonaparte's Gull  
Belted Kingfisher  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Eastern Phoebe  
Tree Swallow  
Rufous-sided Towhee  
Fox Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
Western Meadowlark



## Recent Sightings...

**Pine Warbler-** April 8 at Mitzi & Gary Furst's House in Washington, a regular at their feeder

**Brown Thrasher-** April 11 at Brenda Onken's House

**Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler-** April 18 at F.P. Nature Center

**News From Chautauqua...** submitted by Dr. Richard Bjorklund and Sigured Bjorklund

Over easter weekend over 80 species were seen, here are some of the highlights; 16 different duck species, a record 601 White Pelicans, 240 Double-crested Cormoraunts, 708 Ruddy Ducks, 1092 Ring-necked Ducks. While observing from the tower at Chautauqua, a third year Bald Eagle flew below the top of the tower carrying a 3-4 foot stick in its talons. Last year's eagle nest is down, but we have spotted a new one.

## Conservation Report...

by Les Bodell, Conservation Chair

Wow! There is something new on the horizon for Audubon members in the Great Lakes region...

### Great Lakes States Healthy Habitat Project

The Healthy Habitats Project will:

- Invest in and assist Audubon's grassroots efforts
- Achieve significant conservation benefits
- Establish state offices in the Great Lakes Region

The project will be tailored by individual state teams to the specific circumstances and needs of their state through a strategic implementation plan. One of the main goals will be to improve bird habitat in general and this can be done by getting local chapters involved in the following:

1. Encourage chapters to develop stewardship projects in partnership with others.
2. Promote the use of native plants in home and public landscapes such as the state highways and parks.
3. Get involved in public policy decision making where biological diversity and conservation issues are involved.
4. Initiate state and local level policy changes that will improve the conservation of biodiversity.
5. Improve public awareness of Audubon's involvement in Healthy Habitats Projects and how this will benefit people and wildlife.

I feel honored having been asked to serve on our state committee and will keep you informed on our progress.

## Birdathon... Saturday, May 17

Peoria Audubon will have several teams in the Birdathon. This event has the potential for becoming the premier environmental organization fundraiser in the Central Illinois area. Our teams will be searching Peoria County for our fine feathered friends. You can become a donor by pledging an amount per species. A portion of the profits (25%) will go to The Partners in Flight Project— an international organization dedicating to the protection of neo-tropical migrants. We hope to see close to 140 species on this year's birdathon. The competition is getting pretty fierce! To make your pledge, fill out the enclosed form and mail it to Greet Princen.

### Here's my Pledge for the Birdathon:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Here's my pledge per species and team chosen: (note... if no team is chosen, pledge will be evenly divided among the teams)

<u>Team</u>	<u>pledge per species</u>
Mike Miller, Dale Goodner, Maury Brucker	_____
Bert & Greet Princen, Brenda Onken	_____
Rick & Tracy Fox	_____

Mail this pledge to:  
Greet Princen  
677 E High Point Terr  
Peoria, IL 61614

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FAX (309) 686-8820

## Field Trips...

**Saturday, June 28**

Sand Ridge State Forest, featuring Whip-poor-wills and Chuck-will-widdows.  
Meet at the Pine Campground (main campground) at 6:00 PM.  
Bring your Supper!

## Events and Meetings...

**Sunday, May 4**

**Wetland Appreciation Day**

12:00 noon - 4:00 PM at Cooper Park and other sites along the Illinois River. Dr. Gerould Wilhelm will speak on the "Importance of Wetlands," and Brenda Onken will lead a bird walk at 2:00 PM at Cooper Park. Bring your binoculars.

**Tuesday, May 6; Board Meeting, 7:00 PM at Forest Park Nature Center**

**Saturday, May 10; Annual Spring Bird Count**

**Wednesday, May 14; Membership Meeting, 7:00 PM at Forest Park Nature Center.** We will discuss results from the spring bird count, so bring your data!

**Saturday, May 17; Peoria Audubon Society's Birdathon.** See pledge sheet in this issue!!

**\*\* NOTE \*\***

Monthly Membership Meetings are not held in June, July and August.

**Peoria Audubon Society**  
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Peoria IL 61614



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Vice President - Rick Fox  
Secretary - Mike Miller  
Treasurer - Greet Princen  
Conservation - Les Bodell

### **Board Members**

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Gary Garman - 97/98  
Helen Gasdorf - 97/98  
John Ruggles - 97  
Virginia Humphreys - 97  
Luann Elwood - 97

**Newsletter editor**  
Mike Miller