

# Bird's-Eye View

May  
June  
1998



## 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

### Critical Bird Habitat

#### Third in the Series

by Maury Brucker

Oak wooded river bluffs provide welcome relief for central Illinois birders in several ways. Beside adding variety to the overall flat terrain, this north-south, nearly continuous corridor attracts millions of migrating birds of a wonderful variety in both the spring and in the fall. From early spring movements of hawks and vultures, to an increasing numbers of smaller birds and finally to the brief May appearances of many dazzling jewels called wood warblers, the bluff woodlands are the places to find the most variety of birds. Research has proven that not only do the migrants benefit from food and rest, but also the oak trees are healthier from the twice a year cleaning of insects.

Most of the rarer breeding birds of these woodlands are the forest interior birds such as Veery, Wood Thrush and Ovenbirds. Because of the fragmented nature of Illinois' woodlands and also the expanded numbers of parasitic Brown-headed Cowbirds that cause nesting failure, it appears that this habitat cannot currently sustain stable populations of forest interior birds.

The woodlands and particularly their edges do provide necessary habitat to other groups of breeding birds such as 6 species of woodpeckers, flycatchers, thrushes, thrashers, Cardinals, nuthatches and chickadees. Many of these as well as winter finches, juncos and American sparrows, we also enjoy at our feeders in the winter. So although the woodlands serve only in a limited way as habitat to rare species in the area, they are very important for our enjoyment of the variety of birds during migration and during the rest of the year.

### Bird Sightings...

Spring migration has started! Following is a list of species seen in Central Illinois by Peoria Audubon Members on **April 18, 1998**. Most of these came from Dr. Princen's Peoria to Henry Field Trip.

Pied-billed Grebe  
Double-crested Cormorant  
Great Blue Heron  
Great Egret  
Cattle Egret  
Mute Swan  
Canada Goose  
Wood Duck  
Green-winged Teal  
Mallard  
Northern Pintail  
Blue-winged Teal  
Northern Shoveler  
Gadwall  
American Wigeon  
Lesser Scaup  
Turkey Vulture  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
American Kestrel  
Ring-necked Pheasant  
Wild Turkey  
Northern Bobwhite  
Sora  
American Coot  
Killdeer  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
American Woodcock  
Bonaparte's Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Rock Dove  
Mourning Dove  
Eastern Screech Owl  
Great Horned Owl  
Barred Owl  
Belted Kingfisher  
Red-headed Woodpecker  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Pileated Woodpecker  
Eastern Phoebe

Horned Lark  
Purple Martin  
Tree Swallow  
No. Rough-winged Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Black-capped Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Carolina Wren  
House Wren  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher  
Eastern Bluebird  
Hermit Thrush  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
Cedar Waxwing  
European Starling  
Northern Parula  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Louisiana Waterthrush  
Northern Cardinal  
Eastern Towhee  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Common Grackle  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
House Finch  
Pine Siskin  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

#### Winter Stragglers

Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Bald Eagle  
White Pelican



### Thoughts for Louise...

Fellow birders and friends of Louise Augustine are hoping and praying for her safe return from Columbia. I admire her dedication and knowledge of birds. Let's keep Louise in our thoughts for a safe release, so she can continue her work for the birds which she loves.

-submitted by Brenda Onken

### Species Spotlight...The Northern Mockingbird

by Brenda Onken

I am enjoying Spring. Everyday it seems to get greener and greener. Spring spurs me to look for "firsts." The first wildflowers, the first butterflies, and of course, the first migrating birds

Birders are delighted when their ears pick up the song from their favorite birds. The Northern Mockingbird is quite a songster. It was his song that first alerted me of his presence on a recent walk through the woods.

As his name indicates, this bird mocks, or mimics, other bird songs or

calls. It's fun to listen attentively, for you can identify several notes and calls that he has borrowed from other species. The one I was recently listening to included the songs of a Robin, Cardinal, Killdeer, Flicker, Titmouse and even a Nuthatch in his repertoire. With his loud and continual song, he was trying his best to attract a female.

This bird also does an interesting courtship display. He will fly off of an exposed limb, do a loop in the air, and fly back to the limb. It appears that the bird is doing a midair somersault while singing

all the while. All of this singing and somersaulting must take a lot of energy.

The Northern Mockingbird is a pretty gray with white outer tail feathers and white wing patches which become evident when the bird is in flight. Mockingbirds can be found in open woods, shrubby hillsides, parks and thickets. They nest in shrubs and low trees and are very territorial. They eat insects, fruit and berries. The later of which is eaten in the fall and winter.



# Upcoming Meetings...

Wednesday, May 13, 7:00 PM, Forest Park Nature Center  
**Membership Meeting** – Dr. Jeff Brawn, Biologist from The Illinois Natural History Survey, has recently completed an extensive study of Birds in Illinois savannas and open oak-hickory woodlands. He will share the results and enlighten us on the plight of bird species found in Illinois Natural Areas.

No Meetings in June, July and August. See you in September!

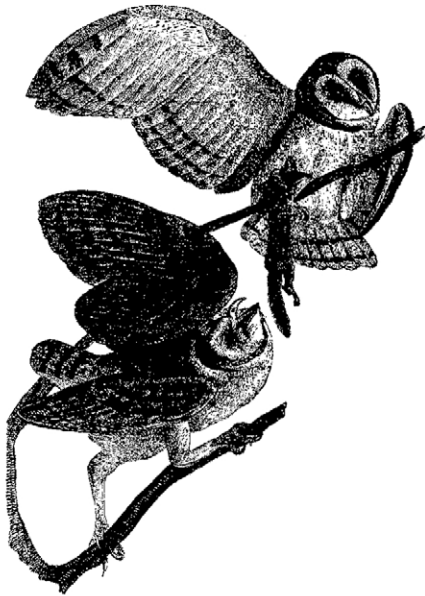
# Upcoming Outings...

Saturday, May 2, Birdathon  
Saturday, May 9, Spring Count Date  
Steingraber/de Castro Event at Art Guild

Poet and biologist Sandra Steingraber, the author of internationally acclaimed Living Downstream, an ecologist looks at cancer and the environment, and her husband, Boston Sculptor and installation artist Jeff de Castro, will speak at the Peoria Art Guild on Sunday, May 24 at 6:30 PM. Sandra will read several of her poems and talk about her book. Jeff will show slides and talk about his latest projects. The event is free, dress is casual, and the presentation will take less than an hour. Sandra's book will be available for purchase. For information, call the Art Guild at (309)685-7522.

## Early Worm Bird Walks

Forest Park Nature Center will host free birdwalks every Sunday morning through May 24 at 6:00 AM. The early worm catches the bird! Call (309)686-3360 for info.



# Birdathon, Saturday, May 2

Two teams are going at it like hens on june-bugs! They will be out to see how many species they can find within the boundaries of Peoria County all in the name of raising money to support Peoria Audubon. We will also be donating 25% of the proceeds to the Partners in Flight Project– an international organization dedicated to the protection of neotropical migrating bird species.

We hope to see a total of 140 species between the two teams 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# \_\_\_\_\_

I will pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species for the following team: (Check one):

I will Pledge a flat amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the following team (Check one):

<b>TEAM 1</b> Mike Miller Maury Brucker Ray Pierce
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<b>TEAM 2</b> Brenda Onken Gary Garman Sharon Flexanar
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Mail pledge form to Greet Princen, 677 E High Point Terr, Peoria, IL, 61614.

You will be contacted after the Birdathon and notified of the number of species seen and the total of your pledge donation..

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