

# Bird's-Eye View

April  
May  
2001

## 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



## Sanctuary Fundraiser a big success...

On March 14, Peoria Audubon held its first Sanctuary Fund-Raising Auction. The evening was extremely successful — you can mark your calendars for the second annual auction next March.

Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang organized the event, lined up donations, and coordinated last minute details. The evening featured live bidding, numerous silent auctions, and opportunities to bid on smaller items using \$1 tickets. A dessert table, coordinated by LuAnn Elwood, provided a sweet counterpart to the heated activity on the auction floor.

The auctions raised over \$1350 for the Peoria Audubon Sanctuary Fund. An anonymous donor graciously pledged to match all funds raised up to \$2000. With the matching donation, the Sanctuary Fund gained \$2700 from the event. The generosity of many donors made this possible.

Numerous books, tapes, and other items boosted sales of the \$1 tickets used to bid on these items. Excellent condition hardback books, hand-crafted bird and owl boxes, magnificent geodes, bird song CDs, and more kept the silent auctions active until close. Auctioneer Mike Miller's showmanship, combined with the appealing variety of items in the live auction, ignited several bidding wars. New and used binoculars, state-of-the-art bird feeders, an Audubon print and a beautiful watercolor, collector-quality books, and a private field trip led by local birding expert Bert Princen all raised money for the cause.

The evening's fun was underscored by an important message. Bird habitat is dwindling in Central Illinois and it's time for Peoria Audubon to become actively engaged in safeguarding what's left. The auction was a start, but there's still much work to be done. Proceeds from this year's BirdATHon will go, in part, to support the Sanctuary Fund and donations are always welcome. For more information, contact Sanctuary Committee co-chair Rick Fox (309-579-3264 rickfox@mtco.com) or visit the web site at [www.peoriaaudubon.org](http://www.peoriaaudubon.org).

## Conservation Notes

submitted by Tracy Fox

### Drop a Line to Brent Manning...

A campaign is underway to demonstrate public support for the purchase of Duck Island, an excellent birding area near Rice Lake. The Journal Star also announced a Cook County developer's plans to build an extensive resort on Plum Island near Starved Rock State Park. Local Audubon members oppose the development citing Plum Island as critical habitat for eagles overwintering in the Starved Rock area. Because the developer needs access through Starved Rock State Park to make the resort a reality, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources can stop the project cold. Send your comments to Director Brent Manning:

Director Brent Manning  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
524 S. Second Street  
Springfield, IL 62701

### Drop a line to Senator Fitzgerald....

Illinois Senator Peter Fitzgerald is among a handful of Republicans opposed to drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Take the time to let Senator Fitzgerald know that you support his stand and believe the Arctic NWR should be preserved for wildlife.

The Honorable Peter Fitzgerald  
555 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

For more information on these and other conservation issues, contact Tracy Fox (309-579-3264 or [tracyfox@mtco.com](mailto:tracyfox@mtco.com)) or visit the [www.peoriaaudubon.org](http://www.peoriaaudubon.org) web site.

**Early Worm Bird Walks** at Forest Park Nature Center on Sunday Mornings @ 6:00 AM will start on April 22 and run through May 13.

**A Birding Breakfast** will take place at Camp Wokanda on Saturday, April 28. Bird hike: 7-9 AM, Breakfast; 9-10 AM, Bird Hike; 10-12 noon. Cost is \$8.00 per person. Call Wokanda (309)579-2157 for more details.

## Upcoming

Wed, April 11  
7:00 PM

**Forest Park Nature Center**  
*Costa Rica: A Birding Paradise* A videologue presentation by Dr. L.H. and Greet Princen

Wed, May 9  
7:00 PM

**Forest Park Nature Center**  
*Restoration Efforts for Peoria Lakes*, presented by the Heartland Water Resources Council and Review of the Annual Spring Bird Census.

All Meetings are free and open to the public. For directions and information, call Forest Park Nature Center at (309)686-3360

There will be no meetings in June, July or August. Monthly meetings will resume in September

**Spring Count Date**  
Saturday, May 5

County Coordinators:  
Peoria, Mike Miller  
Fulton, Helen Gasdorf  
Mason, Dick Bjorklund  
Tazwell, Tracy Fox  
Woodford, Brenda Garman

**Birdathon Date**  
Saturday, May 12

Join or sponsor a team of Birders (or both) to increase our Sanctuary Fund and donate to the Partners in Flight Program. Call Mike Miller (309)686-3360 for more info.

**Fourth of July Butterfly Count**

Saturday, July 14, 2001  
To volunteer, contact Tracy Fox (309-579-3264 or [tracyfox@mtco.com](mailto:tracyfox@mtco.com)).

## The Prez's Ramblings

by Mike Miller

Recently, I have spent a couple of weekends going up and down the shores of the Illinois River watching the birds, I am always amazed at the spring waterfowl migration. Last week at Woodford County Conservation Area, a group of over 300 ducks comprised of Canvasbacks, Redheads, and Lesser Scaup took to the wing in one glorious leap for the sky. It was a sight that made me regret that I don't visit the river often enough.

This trip wasn't just a sight-seeing expedition. It was a fact finding mission. The Peoria Audubon Society has started a project to document the birds that use the Upper and Lower Peoria Lakes. Every week, birders will visit the 16 designated monitoring sites and document all birds visible with a scope for a ten minute period. The Upper and Lower Lakes Survey is a crucial piece in understanding the Illinois River and its bird populations, especially in light of the fact that there will be many new projects taking place in the Upper and Lower Lakes. This year will give us important baseline data prior to any habitat improvement projects. With this information, we can gauge the success or failures of the proposed projects in the future.

Any survey needs willing participants to succeed. This weekly survey is totally done by the Peoria Audubon Society. If you are interested in assisting in this important project. Contact Rick Fox (309) 579-3264.

This survey has also highlighted the need for local protection of our river floodplain habitats. There are very few places along the Upper and Lower Lakes that offer suitable habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds. It is our hope that in the process of completing the survey, areas and habitat types that are productive will help us focus our efforts in creating a Peoria Audubon Bird Sanctuary.

I encourage anyone who is interested in becoming involved in any of the outstanding projects that we have going to BECOME INVOLVED!

## PAS Involved in Museum Plan

by Rick Fox

On March 5th and 6th I had the privilege to visit community museums in Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids Michigan with a group of Peoria area residents interested in a regional museum complex on the Peoria riverfront. I was asked to represent Peoria Audubon in a diverse group of organizations including the Peoria Historical Society, Lakeview Museum, The Nature Conservancy, Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the African-American Hall of Fame Museum, and others.

This trip was an opportunity to visit two successful community museums in cities comparable to the Peoria metropolitan area. The most important part of the trip, however, was the bus ride and evening program where the representatives from all the Peoria groups were able to share their visions of what a Peoria museum complex should be. My interest, representing Peoria Audubon, was to stress the importance of the Illinois River ecosystem and focus on ways to make a local museum a place that gives people a chance to understand the unique role that the river has played in the history of the area, and the great importance of protecting, preserving, and restoring this Illinois treasure.

The Nature Conservancy and Heartland Water Resources Council have proposed the concept of an "Illinois River Discovery Center" as a part of the museum complex. At this point the details of this "Discovery Center" and the other museum components are still conceptual. If you have ideas that you think would help educate visitors to the proposed museum on bird and ecosystem conservation in the Illinois River valley, please let us know. We still have time to influence the outcome

## Thanks for donations!

The following donated items to the Peoria Audubon Sanctuary Fundraiser Auction and Desert Social. Thank You!

- Anonymous
- Les & Mary Bodell
- Maury Brucker & Emiko Yang
- LuAnn Elwood
- Forest Park Nature Center
- Rick & Tracy Fox
- Helen Gasdorff
- Illinois Audubon Society
- Kelly Seed
- Lacon Garden Supply
- Gary & Brenda Garman
- David Manning
- Mike Miller
- Bert & Greet Princen
- Eunice Tjaden
- Rick & Diane Boschulte
- Dan Wichmann
- Wild Birds Unlimited (Jim & Deb Parrott)

Additional thanks to the numerous Audubon cooks who donated cakes, pies, and more for the dessert tables.

## Eagle Count Sets New Record!

The PAS conducted the Midwinter Bald Eagle Count on Saturday, January 27, 2001. Marj Tattersall coordinated the count. There were 4 land teams and two boat teams. Thanks go out to all of the volunteers involved in making this the highest count recorded on this section of the Illinois River!

**Adults: 317**  
**Immatures: 368**  
**Total Seen: 685**

**We are now on the Web! Thanks go to Tracy Fox for getting us there! Visit us at:**

**<http://www.peoriaaudubon.org>**

**Peoria Audubon Society**  
**677 E High Point Terr**  
**Peoria IL 61614**

### Peoria Audubon Board

#### Officers

Mike Miller – President  
Gary Garman – Vice President  
Greg Brown – Secretary  
Greet Princen – Treasurer  
Tracy Fox – Conservation

#### Board

Jim Parrott 01/02  
Maury Brucker 01/02  
Luann Elwood 01/02  
Emiko Yang 00/01  
Brenda Garman 00/01  
Rick Fox 00/01



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