

Bird's-eye View

Mark your Calendars
for February 23 & 26:
Arctic Awareness Week

Spring
2005

The Newsletter of The Peoria Audubon Society . . . Chapter of National Audubon since 1981
www.peoriaaudubon.org Chapter of The Peoria Academy of Science for 75 Years – since 1930

Audubon Calendar...

The Annual Fundraiser for the Peoria Audubon Society Sanctuary Initiative is 6:30 pm on Wednesday, March 9 @ Forest Park Nature Center.



PLEASE note the earlier time!

Audubon members: invite your friends to join us for an evening of fun and some great bargains on nature books, artwork,

binoculars, plants, and other surprises, along with home-baked desserts.

The event features a combination of live bidding, silent auctions, and cup and winner's choice drawings. All auction proceeds benefit Peoria Audubon's Sanctuary Fund. Our goal is to establish a sanctuary to permanently protect bird habitat.

5 Ways You Can Help Make the Event a Success!

1. Go to www.peoriaaudubon.org, print some invitations and ask your friends to come and support the cause, or print a poster from the Website, and put it up somewhere to help publicize the event.
2. Look around and see if you have any field guides, bird books, bird art, binoculars, feeders, nest boxes, or other bird-related items to donate. You can leave items for the auction at the Nature Center or contact Rick Fox at 309-579-3264 to arrange for a pickup.
3. Use your contacts with local businesses to solicit donations for the auction. Peoria Audubon is a 501(c)3 organization so donations are tax-deductible.
4. Donate a cake, pie, or other treat for the dessert social portion of the auction.
5. Bring some extra cash and spend big on March 9!

We're looking forward to seeing you there!

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Thursday, February 24, 7:30 pm in the Michel Student Center ballroom @ Bradley University.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. will present a lecture titled, "Crimes Against Nature: The Government's Failure to Protect the Environment". The lecture is free and open to the public. Kennedy serves as senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, chief attorney for the Hudson Riverkeeper, president of Waterkeeper Alliance, and is co-host of "Ring of Fire" on Air America Radio.

Friday, February 19 and Sunday, February 20 --
Environmental Book Fair @ Forest Park Nature Center Drop by and pick up some good nature-oriented reading at the annual used book fair. Your purchases help Forest Park Nature Center raise much-needed cash for displays and the like. You can also drop off good condition used books prior to the sale. **Sunday is 1/2 price day!**



Arctic Awareness Week @ Forest Park Nature Center

Wednesday, February 23 at 7 pm:

- Screening of newly released documentary **Being Caribou**.
- Amazing story of a couple that tracks a Caribou herd for 100 days on foot across the Wildlife Refuge.

Saturday, February 26th from 11-4 pm:

- 11 am screening of recently released **Oil On Ice**, a powerful film connecting the fate of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to critical decisions America makes about energy policy.
- 1 pm screening of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Slideshow
- Drilling Impact Q & A with local expert
- Viewing of hit comedy Northern Exposure
- Anecdotes from local residents who've been to the Arctic

Snacks, beverages, and other refreshments provided...so spend the day!

Sponsored by Alaska Wilderness League, Alaska Coalition, and Forest Park Nature Center. For more information call John Mullen at 686-3360.

Log onto www.audubon.org and join the fight to save the Arctic Wilderness!

Monday, March 21 from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm @ Peoria Civic Center:

The **Clean Water Celebration** – a free Sun Foundation program that encourages the community to learn to improve water quality, to think critically and creatively about adequate and safe water supplies, and to promote the wise use of natural resources.

Saturday, April 2. Join us for a waterfowl-watching field trip to the Metropolitan Sanitary District near Canton. Meet in downtown Farmington at 8:00. Call Bert Princen, 691-0519 for details. This is an excellent chance to view and photograph a variety of waterfowl in a wetland environment.



Saturday, April 16, 8:00am
And also, May 14 and June 11 @ Forest Park Nature Center
Migratory Bird Walks

Join a guide from Peoria Audubon on a search for spring migrants and resident birds of Forest Park. Bring your own binoculars or borrow ours. **Beginners are ALWAYS welcome**, but please no young children.

Saturday, May 7 - **Statewide Spring Bird Count**. Contacts for the individual county counts are:

Fulton - Helen Gasdorf (309-676-3384)
Mason - Dick Bjorklund (309-968-6502)
Peoria - Mike Miller (309-686-3360)
Tazewell - Tracy Fox (309-579-3264)
Woodford - Brenda Garman (309-565-1369)

Two more Audubon Membership Meetings this year:

Wednesday, April 13, 7pm @ Forest Park Nature Center. Join us for a presentation on the **Illinois River Country Nature Trail Project** by Vickie Clark of the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Wednesday, May 11, 7pm @ Forest Park Nature Center. **Birding with a Passion** presented by Bob and Kathy Andriani of Kane County Audubon.

(Continued on the back page)

Conservation Notes...



Act Now! Help Restore IDNR and Conservation Funding

Dear Peoria Audubon Members,

Recently, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) eliminated 87 staff positions, affecting state parks such as Illinois Beach, Volo Bog, Starved Rock, and Trail of Tears State Forest, and others.

All state agencies are feeling pressure from the state's budget problems, but the IDNR is bearing a disproportionate share of the burden. As a result, IDNR is losing many career employees who helped the Department earn a national reputation for natural resources management. These losses cannot be easily restored when the budget crisis passes—once these positions are cut, they are likely gone forever.

Representative Mike Boland has introduced HB0214, which "appropriates \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2005 as a lump sum from the Wildlife and Fish Fund to the Department of Natural Resources ... and provides that these amounts must be expended to immediately reinstate the 89 employees laid off by the Department due to a budgetary shortfall." As of February 4, the Illinois General Assembly web site (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/>) the bill was assigned to the Appropriations-General Services Committee and gaining co-sponsors.

Contact Governor Blagojevich, Budget Director Filan, and your local representatives in support of HB0214! You can contact them electronically through the Illinois Action Project web site

www.illinoisactionproject.org/showalert.asp?aid=612.

For information and contacts for your state elected officials:
www.elections.state.il.us/dls/pages/DLSAddresscrit.asp

In related news, Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn announced an **Illinois Conservation Initiative** to restore funds to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and provide additional funding for conservation programs. The initiative would provide approximately \$25 million to IDNR and conservation programs by closing a 20 year-old tax loophole that is unnecessary and redundant. The initiative will raise \$5 million to maintain IDNR staffing levels, \$10 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP, which could pay farmers to restore approximately 20,000 acres of land for wildlife) and \$10 million for the Conservation 2000 program which has funded numerous local projects ranging from Peoria Wilds restoration to the Forest Parks' K-5 educational curriculum, the Prairie School Project.

The landfill gas subsidy stems from the 1980s Retail Rate Law. The law requires utility companies to purchase energy from landfill gas collection systems at rates above retail and then gives them a tax credit to offset the price difference. The state subsidy is *in addition* to a federal tax credit. Today, **Illinois is the only state that still subsidizes landfill gas projects**, giving tax credits totaling \$32.2 million in FY 2002. Landfill gas collection technology has matured in the past twenty years and, for most landfills, creates a revenue stream *that more than offsets the cost of the technology*.

To support the Illinois Conservation Initiative, visit the web site at www.Conservation2005.il.gov to learn more, sign an on-line petition, and join the mailing list to keep abreast of ways you can continue to support the effort. Also, be sure to mention your support for the initiative when you write your legislators regarding HB0214

Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn
Illinois Conservation Initiative

Illinois Conservation Initiative

Yes, I support Lt. Governor Quinn's Illinois Conservation Initiative to provide additional funding for conservation programs, and to restore funds to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to meet its mission to manage, protect, and sustain Illinois' natural resources for present and future generations.

The Conservation Initiative will fund programs like Conservation 2000 and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program that:

- Invest in restoration to improve water quality, wildlife habitat and populations, and reduce problems from sediment and other pollutants; and,
- Provide adequate funding for staff and other programs so Illinois residents and visitors can enjoy Illinois' beautiful natural areas with healthy outdoor activities.

Over 20,000 acres of Illinois land will be conserved with funding from the Illinois Conservation Initiative. The Illinois Conservation Initiative funding will leverage an additional \$40 million in federal funding.

Invite a friend to join us . . .

Why join?

Learn about birds, their natural habitats, and related conservation issues through monthly programs and special events

Sharpen your bird identification skills through field trips and networking with other local bird enthusiasts
Contribute to the collective knowledge of Central Illinois birds by participating in bird counts and censuses

Pass your knowledge along by assisting in public education programs

Voice your concern for birds

and central Illinois' wild places by participating in conservation efforts

You have a choice!

Join Peoria Audubon only for \$15.00

or join or renew with National Audubon (includes Peoria Audubon membership) for \$35.00.

The only privileges lost to those who choose to join local Peoria Audubon only is National's quarterly magazine.

Local-only members will still receive the local newsletter and also *Peoria Academy of Science's newsletter.

- Get involved with the *Sanctuary Initiative* to support the long-range goal of acquiring a local bird sanctuary for public wildlife observation.

- Peoria Audubon is affiliated with both **National Audubon** and **Illinois Audubon Societies**.
- Peoria Audubon membership includes membership in the **Peoria Academy of Science**.*
- Peoria Audubon partners with local and state organizations to further bird and habitat conservation.

Peoria Audubon Society Membership Form

G66-7XCH

☐ **Local Only** (Peoria Audubon) . . \$15

☐ **Dual** (National Audubon & Peoria Audubon)
Regular/Renewal \$35

☐ Local Program Donation \$ _____

☐ Sanctuary Fund Donation \$ _____

Total enclosed \$ _____

**Make all checks payable to
Peoria Audubon Society.**

Peoria Audubon is incorporated in the State of Illinois with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, making all charitable contributions tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone and/or email _____

Send your membership form to: Peoria Audubon Society • c/o Greet Princen • 677 East High Point Terrace • Peoria, Illinois 61614

Peoria Audubon Awarded a Grant by John Mullen

A grant of \$5,500 for savanna bird habitat improvement has been awarded to Peoria Audubon Society. This Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership grant will be used to thin overstocked trees and remove invasive exotic shrubs on 12 acres at Oak Bluff Savanna, part of the Illinois River Bluffs north of Sparland. This will increase the suitable habitat for such declining open woodland and savanna bird species such as the great crested flycatcher, eastern kingbird, and red-headed woodpecker. The grant project is required to be on private land and this property is owned by Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang. Maury, a member of the Peoria Audubon Board, will be the project manager. A match of resources of volunteer time for such things as bird and plant surveys, erosion sampling and exotic plant removal will make this an \$11,000 project. This savanna bird habitat improvement work is similar to several projects already completed or underway on Peoria Park District bluff properties. These include two C2000 grants covering some 750 acres. One of these, completed this year, covers 250 acres in south Robinson Park and Detweiller Park. Another is currently being worked on in Singing Woods Nature Preserve and will eventually cover approximately 500 acres. Both of these projects consisted of thinning understory trees either manually or with controlled burns. Furthermore, a United States Forest Service Forestry Stewardship grant has provided funding for a demonstration project at Camp Wokanda, where various restoration techniques are practiced and the results compared over time to identify cost versus benefit and success of each restoration methodology. All this restoration activity is in addition to years of restoration effort by volunteers and others on Peoria Park District land which has had a profound effect on reducing erosion and increasing the level of biological diversity in the local bluff lands. Furthermore, three of the programs at the Peoria Audubon meetings over the last two years have been on savanna birds and their habitat requirements. These efforts at savanna and open woodland habitat improvements are important to maintaining a rich diversity of birds in the Peoria area.

Reports from the Christmas Bird Counts

Log onto www.peoriaaudubon.org for a complete list of species and counts

Chillicothe Christmas Count

67 species

Sunday, January 2, 2005

Reported by Tracy Fox

Thanks to all who helped with this year's Chillicothe Count—especially new participants Don Kyle and Kevin Jury. A total of 67 species and 15,230 birds were seen, including count week sightings of Ring-necked Pheasant, Rough-legged Hawk, and Purple Finch.

Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang counted the first ever Cackling Geese (a new species split from Canada Goose) near Lacon and Marj Tattersall and Louise Endres found the first Mute Swan and an unexpected Bohemian Waxwing. The Bohemian Waxwing was found in Chillicothe's Moffett Park,

keeping company with a large flock of Cedar Waxwings. It was not relocated after the count. Other notable count highs were 9 Cooper's Hawks and record numbers of Hairy Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Carolina Wrens, and Northern Cardinals—perhaps reflecting an increase in bird-feeding in the count area?

Numbers of overwintering Northern Mockingbirds also continue to increase with a record count of 6 this year. Overall waterfowl numbers and diversity were down from previous years, the Sun Foundation Sandhill Cranes were not sighted, and there were no Red-headed Woodpeckers. Red-headed Woodpecker numbers seem to be almost non-existent on counts throughout the state, indicating this beautiful oak savanna inhabitant may be in serious trouble.

Peoria Christmas Count

Species: 63 + 2 in count week

Saturday, December 13, 2004

Participants: 28 in 8 parties

Reported by Bert Princen

Weather went from good to bad during the day. There were few ducks, both in species and total numbers.

Also, few raptors and owls. No Horned Larks at all. Six Pileated Woodpeckers and three Mockingbirds was good, and so were the two Red-breasted Nuthatches and the Winter Wren. There were few true sparrows of all species.

We had high counts for Bald Eagle, and Mourning Dove, compared to all previous years.

Lake Chautauqua Christmas Count

80 Species

Thursday, December 23, 2004

Reported by Dick Bjorklund

The Chautauqua count was successful despite the terrible cold and wind that day. We counted four

species of goose and two of swan. We also counted six species of hawk.

We counted a record 8 Cooper's Hawks, 72 Wild Turkeys, 74 Eastern Bluebirds, and 78 Northern Cardinals. We counted 78 Bald Eagles.

Illinois Audubon Society Field Trips

March 11-12: **I.A.S. annual trip to Prairie Ridge State Natural Area**, the booming ground of Illinois' only remaining prairie chickens. View the courting prairie chickens, woodcock, the short-eared owls, harriers, and migrating waterfowl. For information on registration fees and travel arrangements, contact Vern Kleen at 217-787-3515 or kleen@quixnet.net

May 20-22 **I.A.S. annual trip to Southern Illinois**. For information on registration fees contact Vern Kleen.

Log onto www.IllinoisAudubon.org to learn about many additional activities and travel opportunities!

P.A.S. Banquet is April 22

The Peoria Academy of Science Annual Banquet is at 6:00 P.M., at Barrack's Cater Inn. Mark your calendars for this special event.

To contact Board President John Mullen, call 686-3360, or email jwmullen@juno.com

For membership, call Bert Princen at 691-0519 or email l.princen@worldnet.att.net

Don't miss these spring programs at *Forest Park Nature Center*:

Saturday, April 30, 7:00 am-1:00 pm

Birding the Illinois River Bluffs

An extended tour of the high quality bird areas of the Illinois River Bluffs. This tour starts at Forest Park Nature Preserve, then proceeds to the warbler haven of Camp Wokanda, and continues up to the interior of the 800 acre Singing Woods Nature Preserve. This will be a great tour to hone your birding skills as well as see some wonderful forest, woodlands, and hill prairies. A special prize for the first verified hooded warbler sighting! Transportation, snacks, and beverages provided. Space is limited so register early. Sturdy walking shoes advised. Fee: \$10/person, \$5 for members of Forest Park

Earth Day Festival

Here's your opportunity to show your love for the earth. This celebration will feature the musical talents of Tom and Chris Kastle, as well as a performance of Dr. Seuss' The Lorax. Join us for food, crafts, an array of interactive booths, and a whole lot of family fun! Free

Illinois Central College Funshops

Forest Park Nature Center and Illinois Central College have teamed up to present the following "Funshops".

Register through Illinois Central College, 999-4545. Registration is ongoing until a day before the class. Fee: \$14 per Funshop/person.

River Bluff Ecology & Restoration

Saturday, March 5, 10 am-12 pm

Instructor: John Mullen

Learn about the Illinois River Bluffs' history and ecological significance and discover what makes the bluffs such a unique natural area. We'll explore some of the problems occurring throughout the bluffs and what is being done to help alleviate these problems. This class will include an outdoor excursion to some areas of interest.

Bird Identification

Saturday, April 2, 10 am-12 pm

Instructor: Mike Miller

Learn the birding basics during this workshop. Emphasis will be on identification of birds by coloration, shape, behavior, vocalizations, and other characteristics. Field guides and binoculars will also be discussed. Participants will have the opportunity to practice what they've learned during the hands-on, outdoor portion of this workshop.

Mark your Calendars for March 9: The Peoria Audubon Sanctuary Initiative Auction & Dessert Social Fundraiser

Peoria Audubon Society
677 E High Point Terrace
Peoria, IL 61614

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