

Birds-eye View



Conserving
bird habitat
for over
75
years

Spring
2007

Mark your calendars!
April 13-15
Stoney Creek Inn
East Peoria
Illinois Audubon Spring Gathering

Newsletter of The Peoria Audubon Society . . . Chapter of National Audubon since 1981
Chapter of The Peoria Academy of Science since 1930

www.peoriaaudubon.org

Contact the Peoria Audubon Society at audubon@peoriaaudubon.org

Audubon Calendar...

Peoria Audubon meets at 7:00 on the second Wednesday of every month, September through May. It's a relaxed, friendly evening with an interesting presentation followed by refreshments. Free and open to the public.

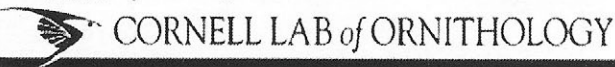
April 11, 7:00 PM@ FPNC

Conservation Status of the American Burying Beetle: An Endangered Species

Tom Haner, Ph.D., will discuss the natural history of this fascinating and ecologically-important insect.

May 9, 7:00 PM@ FPNC

A very special guest! **Scott Sutcliffe** from



Birders and citizen scientists: Meet Scott Sutcliffe as he presents the history, the resources, and recent projects at **The Lab**. Based in Ithaca, New York, Cornell Lab of Ornithology is recognized world-wide for its accessible education, citizen science, research, conservation efforts and facilities.

Nearly 100,000 people each year visit the Johnson Center for Birds and Biodiversity



The Lab partners with **Audubon** with this revolutionary real-time, online checklist program. See what it's all about! www.ebird.org

cornell Lab -- continued on page 8

Hosted by Peoria & Emiquon Audubon Societies

Exploring the Illinois River Valley

Illinois Audubon's Spring Gathering April 13-15

@Stoney Creek Inn, East Peoria

Whether you are a beginner or experienced observer of wildlife in nature, there is something for everyone. All events are open to the public, so be sure to extend the invitation.

Information, a member slide show, special guest speakers, a banquet, and a dozen different field trips are scheduled. Plan to spend the entire weekend enjoying the camaraderie of fellow nature enthusiasts!

The Agenda and Registration forms and field trip information can be downloaded in pdf form. Go to www.illinoisaudubon.org and click on Calendar.

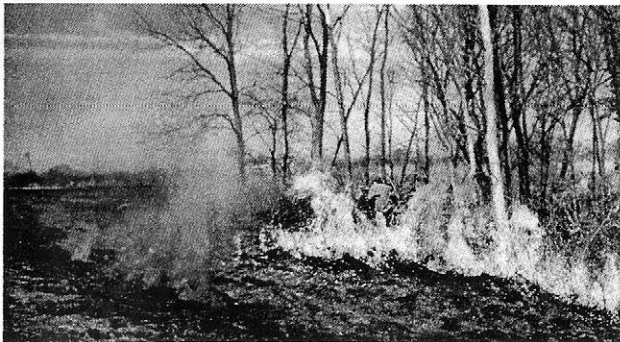
Here's a sampling of **Saturday's Field Trips:**

- Archaeology & Natural History of the Peoria Area
- Tours of the Illinois River (North Loop in the morning & South Loop in the afternoon)

Spring Gathering -- continued on page 8

Oak Bluff Savanna - \$11,000 Bird Habitat Project - Is now Complete!

Peoria Audubon improved 10 acres of habitat for savanna birds (Eastern Towhees, Field Sparrows and Eastern Wood Pewees) at Oak Bluff Savanna over 2005-06. The work was financed entirely by a \$5500 grant from the Midwest Forester's Partnership and volunteer matching work by Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang on their property near Henry.



The slash and undergrowth were burned in the fall of 2006 by volunteers John Mullen, Tom Lerczak, Mike Ingram, Maury Brucker, Emiko Yang and the Jubilee Prairie Dawgs.

The habitat project changed the structure of the plant community on the site by opening up the overgrown woodland to create a scattered-tree area. A forestry contractor was used for the small tree cutting and stump treatment. Non-native and invasive shrubs were also removed.

Scientific pretreatment bird and plant surveys were conducted, then repeated after the cutting was completed. A small increase in the numbers of target savanna birds were found after the first year. Before the restoration, Partners in Flight (PIF) estimated Field Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers and Eastern Wood Pewees were decreasing by 3.2%, 2.0% and 1.1% annually. These three species are listed as priority birds in the PIF conservation plans for savanna in this area.

Completing this project is important for Peoria Audubon as it demonstrates our capacity to manage projects and grants. This experience will be integral for Audubon's plans for a wetlands sanctuary.

Peoria Audubon members are invited to tour the project. Contact Maury at conservation@peoriaaudubon.org.

Peoria Audubon's Sanctuary Initiative Takes its Next Step toward Realization!

In 2000, Peoria Audubon initiated a Sanctuary Fund as the first step toward its goal of establishing a sanctuary for birding in Central Illinois. Thanks to generous contributors and six annual fundraisers, the Sanctuary Fund has exceeded \$30,000. This of course is not enough to entirely finance such a large project, but it is enough to be considered seed money for grant proposals.

The Peoria Audubon board has established a sub-committee with the responsibility for this initiative. The sanctuary committee has begun the process of evaluating potential wetland sites. Nine sites are currently under consideration. The committee should have more information in the near future, and it will be reported at www.peoriaaudubon.org

Remember that donations to the Sanctuary Fund are tax-deductible, and that several employers, including Caterpillar and State Farm will match donations. Caterpillar matching gift forms can be found at : www.cat.com/cda/layout?m=41980&x=7

Log onto
www.audubonathome.org



Sponsor this award-winning curriculum in a local classroom.

Contact Peoria Audubon for more information.

Audubon

ADVENTURES



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www.audubon.org/educate/aa

Meet Peoria Audubon's new President...



Pete and Sally Fenner

Pete Fenner is a native of central New York State, and developed an interest in birding while growing up and while at Colgate University. After

he completed his biology degree, he began a business career which ultimately brought him to Caterpillar and Peoria.

Along the way, Pete was the founder and past president of the Wapiti Audubon Society in DuBois, PA where he was awarded the William Dutcher award for his service while there. Birding took a pause while he and his wife Sally focused on raising the family and developing careers. Sally and Pete and their 3 sons live in Germantown Hills.

Pete considers himself an average birder, and has a **life list** of 405 species, 101 of which have also been seen from his home in Germantown. Among his **favorite bird sightings**: the Whooping Crane, seen at the Aransas Refuge in Texas, and then again at the Jasper-Pulaski refuge in Indiana. The call of the common loon on a northern lake at dusk or dawn is a **favorite bird vocalization** – and an unforgettable experience. One of his **favorite birding hotspots**: Point Pelee, Ontario – an awesome spot for warblers and other migrants, especially during spring.

Pete also participates on the board of The Nature Conservancy Great Rivers Partnership, and on the finance committee of the Heart of Illinois United Way. He and Sally are active in the First Federated Church in Peoria.

Pete was elected president of Peoria Audubon this past December. Pete previously served as vice president and program chairperson. Audubon's previous president, John Mullen served his full term, and still serves on the Audubon Board. John's hard work and dedication are very much appreciated!

Peoria Audubon's officers & Board

Dennis Endicott is Peoria Audubon's new Vice President. He also serves as the Web Master for www.peoriaaudubon.org. Dennis can be contacted at webmaster@peoriaaudubon.org

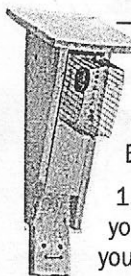
The membership reelected Karen Solomon Dunn as secretary /newsletter editor. Contact Karen at k.dunn@peoriaaudubon.org

Greet Princen was reelected treasurer and Bert Princen was reelected Membership Chair. Questions about membership can be directed to Dr. Princen at l.princen@peoriaaudubon.org

The membership also reelected Maury Brucker as Conservation Chair. In this role, Maury researches and then presents matters of concern regarding local conservation to the Peoria Audubon Board. The Board then votes on whether and how to take a stand on these issues. The Board's stand on these issues is then reported to the membership via this newsletter and also the Web Site.

If **members** want to discuss a local conservation issue and Peoria Audubon's role, they are invited to contact Maury Brucker. He will research the issue and present his findings to the Board. Maury can be reached at conservation@peoriaaudubon.org

AUDUBON ADVENTURES is an award-winning hands-on environmental education program for grades 3 - 5. Find out more at www.audubon.org/educate/aa. Our education chair, LuAnn Elwood, has information on how teachers can order this curriculum, or how individuals or organizations can sponsor a classroom. Contact LuAnn at education@peoriaaudubon.org



Bluebird House Protocol

Here is some advice from Herb Unkrich, the District Coordinator & Director for the East Central Illinois Bluebird Society

1. Place bluebird nest boxes at least 100 yards apart. If you put them closer, one of the boxes won't be occupied – you're wasting the box and effort.
2. Don't face the hole toward the northwest or north. Prevailing colder winds come from that direction. Also, late afternoon sunshine from the west/northwest is not favorable.
3. Placing boxes where the grass is mowed can actually be a benefit to bluebird production. Herb says that cemeteries and golf courses are "good" places for bluebird boxes.

For more information and specifications on bluebird nest boxes, visit the North American Bluebird Society Web Site at

www.nabluebirdsociety.org

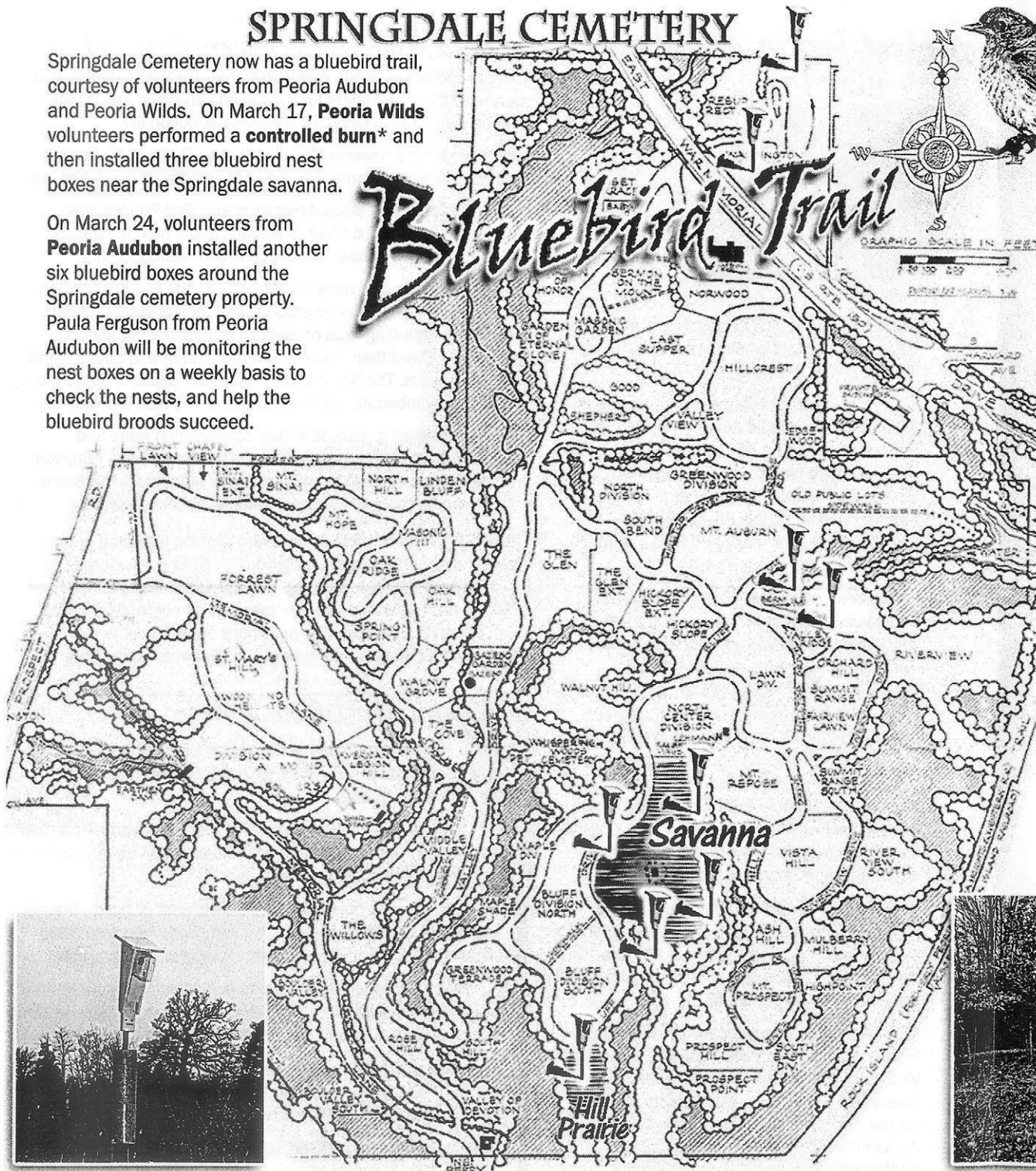


SPRINGDALE CEMETERY

Springdale Cemetery now has a bluebird trail, courtesy of volunteers from Peoria Audubon and Peoria Wilds. On March 17, **Peoria Wilds** volunteers performed a **controlled burn*** and then installed three bluebird nest boxes near the Springdale savanna.

On March 24, volunteers from **Peoria Audubon** installed another six bluebird boxes around the Springdale cemetery property. Paula Ferguson from Peoria Audubon will be monitoring the nest boxes on a weekly basis to check the nests, and help the bluebird broods succeed.

Bluebird Trail



Nature enthusiasts – and birders in particular – might enjoy walking along the miles of paved roads within historical Springdale Cemetery. The quiet valleys and bluffs provide habitat for numerous bird species.

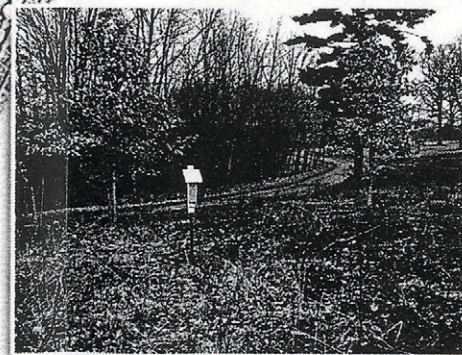
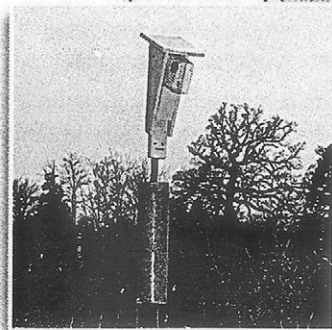
Visit www.springdalecemetery.com



Peoria Audubon's Dick Barthel and Paula Ferguson were two of the volunteers who completed installation of the bluebird nest boxes.



*Controlled burns are important to the life cycle of tallgrass prairies and savannas. Native plants have adapted to withstand natural wildfires that regularly swept through this area in centuries past. Today, prescribed burns serve that purpose. Invasive plants are killed by these burns – while native species are renewed and dead plant matter is cleared.



A nest box was installed at this hill prairie on Springdale's river bluffs.

Spring Activities for Nature Enthusiasts...

This event was described on the previous page -- here are a few additional details:

Friday-Sunday, April 13-15 @ Stoney Creek Inn & Conference Center in East Peoria

Exploring the Illinois River Valley

Presentations, field trips, good food and camaraderie as Illinois Audubon joins Peoria Audubon and Emiquon Audubon in hosting this unique statewide event. **The general public is invited!** Participants welcome to take part in either one or multiple programs throughout the weekend. The two presentations below do not require registration. All others (field trips, banquet, etc.) do require registration. Please register by April 5.

The event will feature two presentations, free of charge. On Friday, April 13 at 7:00 P.M., Dr. Michael Wiant, Director of Dickson Mounds Museum, will be presenting **22,000 Years in the Life of a River Valley**. Dr. Wiant will explore the current Illinois River landscape and the evidence it holds of Ice Age floods, lives of prehistoric animals, the development of Native American cultures, the arrival of the first Europeans and more.

On Saturday, April 14 at 8:00 P.M., Brent Manning, Director of the DuPage County Forest Preserve District will lead a discussion of the similarities and differences between various conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited and Illinois Audubon Society. Manning will highlight the ways these organizations can attain their goals and enhance the natural environment of Illinois.

On both days there are a number of field trips (see the brief list on pages 1 and 8) More information and registration forms for the field trips, Saturday's banquet, and other associated events are available at www.illinoisaudubon.org or www.peoriaaudubon.org

Registration forms also available at Forest Park Nature Center. Call John Mullen at (309) 686-3360.

Saturday, April 21 @ 11 am-4 pm

Earth Day Festival

Forest Park Nature Center will hold its 3rd annual Earth Day Festival on April 21. This Earth Day Festival will encompass the Nature Center's entire parking lot, which will be filled with eco-friendly and informational booths.

Peoria Audubon's booth will be presenting information about birding and creating a backyard habitat for birds.

(Audubon volunteers are needed – if you can help for an hour, email k.dunn@peoriaaudubon.org)

Bring your family, bring your grandchildren, invite your friends and neighbors! Peruse the booths and exhibits, locate local resources, and learn what you can do to make a difference. Enjoy great local food from One World Café, Spotted Cow ice cream, educational materials, hands-on demos, and much more.

The celebration will kick off at 11 am with the LR Band, performing an eclectic range of music from blues and American Folk to acoustic classic rock. At 12 pm, the duo Omnibus performs "Stories and Songs for the Planet". At 2 p.m., enjoy a drum session performed by Earth Beat Drums.

The Celebration will also feature crafts, face and mural painting for the kids, native plants and trees. Don't miss this opportunity to "think globally and act locally." For more information, contact FPNC at 686-3360.

Thursday, April 26 @ 7 PM, Forest Park Nature Center

Acting on The Truth: How You Can Help Reset the Global Thermostat & Save the Planet

With Jim Sweitzer, PhD.
Astronomer/Astrophysicist

A 60-minute interactive presentation featuring highlights from Al Gore's Oscar-winning **An Inconvenient Truth** and featuring a discussion on how everyone can help moderate global climate change. Dr. Sweitzer has trained with Mr. Gore and will answer your questions about climate change.



More Activities for Nature Enthusiasts...

Saturday, April 28 @ 7:30 AM, Forest Park Nature Center

Migratory Bird Hike

Search for spring migrants and resident birds on these casual morning walks with a naturalist from Forest Park. Please bring your own binoculars or you may borrow ours. Beginners are ALWAYS welcome, ages 12 and up.


Additional Forest Park Nature Center events are listed at: www.peoriaparks.org/fpnc/fpncfree.html 



Saturday, April 28 @ 8 AM-12 PM

Singing Wood Restoration Workday

Join these restoration workdays and meet new people, learn about the native (and non-native) flora and fauna, have some fun, and **get some exercise!** Bring gloves and water and dress appropriately for an outdoor experience. Check out Peoria Wilds web site:

www.geocities.com/peoriawilds 

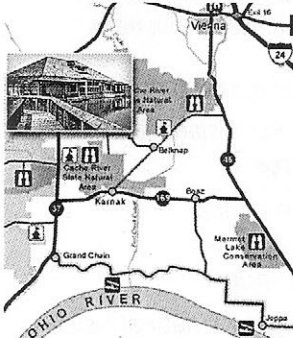
Singing Woods workday volunteers meet at Forest Park Nature Center. Call steward Bill Allen at 685-3188 for further information.


BIRDING FEST 2007 of Southernmost Illinois

Friday-Sunday, April 27-29

Take a trip to southern Illinois. This festival has something for everyone, from the casual wildlife watcher to seasoned birders.

Program information and registration is located at the **Cache River Wetland Center** near Belknap.



For more information, call the Center at 618-657-2064 or log onto www.birdingblitz.org 

Saturday, May 5 - All Day

State-wide Spring Bird Count

Annual statewide Spring Bird Count assists in determining population trends. Contact Bert Princen at 691-0519 to help in this worthwhile event. And, it's fun!

Armchair Birding Warblers

By John Mori

Warbler season is almost here.



I would like to review two excellent resources that can help you in the field this year.

The first is a DVD called **Watching Warblers** by Michael Male and Judy Fieth, copyright 2004. It contains profiles of the warbler species, a section on range maps, and a section on warbler songs. One can watch the DVD from the start or one can choose a species from a menu. The range map and song sections do not allow you to choose your species however. The habitat of each bird is described as it is being shown, excellent footage of the bird is presented, including some nesting scenes. Field marks are often described.

A second resource is a **Field Guide to Warblers** by Donald and Lillian Stokes. It is a slim book that will fit easily in your pack or larger pocket. The warblers are coded in sections by their primary colors.

Each species is given two pages. The left page provides identification "clues", a small diagram of the undertail coloring pattern, comments about its song as well as behavior and habitat.

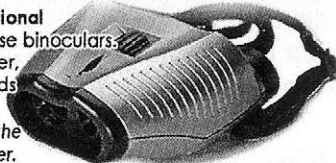
One unique feature of the book is that the bottom of the left page contains maps showing Spring and Fall migration patterns and the various times of the year when the warblers pass through the various states. The right side of the page contains photos showing male vs female or adult vs immature plumage. A brief section at the end of the guide discusses the conservation status of some of the major species. An index makes it easy to turn to any given species.

Purchase both at: www.birdwatching.com 

www.joinaudubon.org
FREE Audubon Binoculars!

For a limited time, join **National Audubon** and receive these binoculars. If you're already a member, be sure and tell your friends about this special offer.

NOTE: You must sign up on the Web Site to receive this offer.



Peoria Audubon Society
677 E. High Point Terrace
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Inside: State-wide Convention
in East Peoria!

Springdale's
Bluebird Trail Spring
Events

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Dennis Endicott - Vice President/Programs Chair
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Karen Solomon Dunn - Secretary/Newsletter Editor
Greet Princen - Treasurer
Maury Brucker - Conservation
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Board

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 CORNELL LAB of ORNITHOLOGY
more recommended websites

-- continued from Page 1

The Birdhouse Network

Witness the drama of nesting season
in real time with Nest Box Cams!

The Lab currently has six live cams at
www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse



All About Birds

Recognized as the most comprehensive online guide to birds, this multimedia site includes video clips, large photos, sounds, descriptions, conservation status, and cool facts on most north American species. **Birding 123** gives novice birders tips for identifying birds, where to bird, and how to report your observations. **Gear Guide** gives tips on choosing binoculars, spotting scopes, and digiscopes.

www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 9!

Spring Gathering -- from Page 1

Saturday's Field Trips (continued)

- Birding: Water Reclamation District near Canton
- Wildlife Prairie Park Behind the Scenes
- Birding by Bike on the Rock Island Trail
- Beginning Birding @ FPNC
- Backyard Habitat Planning Trip

And Sunday's Field Trips:

- Nature Photo Shoot @ FPNC
- Cooper Park: hiking, birding & natural history
- McNaughton/Dirksen Land and Water Reserve
- The Illinois River Bluffs: Migrant Havens

Since some trips are limited in attendance, reservations will be honored on a first-come-first-served basis. Box lunches are available and need to be pre-ordered on the registration form. **Registration deadline for meals will be April 5.**

For more information call: 217.544.2473 or
email jskoglund@illinoisaudubon.org