

Bird's-eye View



OCT. 2010

Mark your calendars!
SAT., OCTOBER 30, 2010
BIRD SEED SALE

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

Peoria Audubon meets at 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May at the Forest Park Nature Center (FPNC). It's a relaxed, friendly evening with an interesting presentation followed by refreshments. Free and open to the public.

These are just a few of the upcoming events listed at www.peoriaaudubon.org/calendar

Sun., Oct. 10th, 2010 2 PM - 4PM

Lakeview Museum Special Event for Audubon Members

Personal guided tour of the John James Audubon Exhibit at Lakeview Museum. Audubon members invited through the mail, pre-registration required.

Wed., Oct. 13, 2010, 7 PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Marilyn Campbell, President of Middlefork Audubon Society, Danville, IL, will be our guest speaker to discuss ecotourism in Costa Rica. The presentation will include numerous photos of birds and other wildlife, as well as scenery from various locations in the country. In addition, Marilyn will provide a short narrative about the country, its culture and biodiversity.

Sat., Oct. 30, 2010, 9AM - 11 AM

Bird Seed Sale

Pick-up for the Bird Seed Sale at Kelly Seed. Advanced orders preferred, but not necessary. See insert for more information.



Sat., Nov. 6, 2010, 7:30 AM - 3 PM

Birding Field Trip - MSWRD Wetlands

Thad Edmonds will lead a fall birding trip to the 15,000-acre Chicago MSWRD wetlands, just southwest of Canton, IL. Goal is to gather some data and assist in the effort to determine the effect of the oil spill on wintering grounds of waterfowl by assessing the impact on this very important migration flyway stop. Should be an enjoyable trip as we will provide radios to stay in communications. Bring your lunch. Call ASAP as advanced reservations are required. Contact Thad Edmonds at 309-243-1854.

Wed., Nov. 10, 2010, 7 PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Angelo Capparella, Curator of Birds for the John Wesley Powell-Dale Birkenholz Natural History Collections in the School of Biological Sciences at Illinois State University, will be presenting "Bird Collections in the 21st Century: Past and Future Value." This program will review the ways in which bird collections are still providing information that cannot be gained by any other methods and how the public can support such efforts.

Wed., Dec. 8, 2010, 7PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Angella Moorehouse, of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, will be providing a photo journey of her experiences in birding the Prairie Pothole region of the Dakotas. The prairie potholes of the Dakotas are shallow wetland basins formed during the advance of the last glacier 12,000 to 14,000 years ago. These "potholes" provide diverse habitat for wildlife and great birding.

Christmas Bird Counts

Peoria Audubon Society conducts three annual Christmas Bird Counts. This year's dates and coordinators are as follows:

Sat., Dec. 18, Peoria: To volunteer, contact Thad Edmonds at 309-243-1854

Thu., Dec. 23, Chautauqua: To volunteer, contact Dick Bjorkland at 309-968-6502

Sat. Jan. 2, 2011, Chillicothe: To volunteer, contact Tracy Fox at 309-369-5331.

Wed., Jan. 12, 2010, 6:30 PM

Pot Luck Dinner & Member slide show

Bring your CD of jpgs, videos, or slide carousel, table service and a covered dish to share. Members present photo/video highlights from the year. Christmas Bird Count results will be presented. Note the earlier starting time. As always, guests are welcome!

Wed., Feb. 7, 2010, 7:00 PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Michael Reuter, Executive Director of the Great Rivers Partnership for The Nature Conservancy, will present "Thinking Like A Great River: From Sites to Systems on the Mississippi River". Michael will discuss developing a systems approach to sustainable management of the Mississippi River, and sharing expertise globally to support sustainable management of other great rivers.

A Note from our President

Brimfield Railroad Prairie Nature Preserve

by Dennis Endicott

I feel very humbled to announce that the Peoria Audubon Society is now the owner of a small nature preserve in Peoria County. In documents filed with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, the property is known as the Brimfield Railroad Prairie Nature Preserve.



The 6.20 acre property was donated to Peoria Audubon by Dr. Harold "Hal" Gardner and Cheryl Pauli with the understanding and commitment that prairie management and restoration would be through the volunteer group known as the Jubilee Prairie Dawgs. The parcel was once a half-mile long strip of railroad right-of-way. The 6.20 acres calculates out to a strip that is only 104 feet wide for the half-mile length.

The rails and ties were removed years ago, and since the 1990s, the Prairie Dawgs have been working to restore the prairie to promote greater biodiversity while protecting and preserving a native mesic (i.e., relating or adapted to a moderately moist habitat) prairie community.

Much of the credit for the growth and biodiversity of prairie species goes to the Prairie Dawgs, of which Hal was one of the founding members. The Dawgs' careful planning, hard work, diligence, and perseverance with prairie restoration have paid off. Over 100 species of native plants have been documented on the property by the Nature Preserves Commission. One of the notable species is that the site contains 4 reintroduced populations of the state endangered Queen of the Prairie (*Filipendula rubra*), taken from plants established in Peoria County by the historic botanist, Irene Cull.

So, how did Peoria Audubon get involved in a prairie? As Peoria Audubon continues to work toward procuring a local wetland sanctuary for birds, our written land acquisition policy states: "The area should have significant

FPNC = Forest Park Nature Center, 5809 N. Forest Park Drive, Peoria Heights

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ecological value and provide habitat for native species of fauna and/or flora. Smaller parcels must have documented significant native plant communities or be documented migrant bird stopover areas. The stewardship of the area must be determined as part of the acquisition decision."



Ownership of this small prairie fulfills the requirements of the policy. Additionally, ownership of the prairie helps establish the credibility of our organization as we move forward to acquire and develop a local shorebird sanctuary. The economic downturn has slowed progress on the shorebird sanctuary, but we will continue to move forward with our goal of establishing wetland habitat.

The prairie preserve is not developed to handle large numbers of visitors. All inquiries and questions on the prairie should be sent to the Peoria Audubon Board email: audubon@peoriaaudubon.org

More information is online at: <http://www.peoriaaudubon.org/prairie>



Jubilee Prairie Dawgs

by Dennis Endicott

Who are the Jubilee Prairie Dawgs?

The Prairie Dawgs are a small volunteer group that started clearing brush north of the Jubilee State Park near Brimfield, IL in the 1970s for the Peoria Astronomical Society. Today, the Prairie Dawgs are still informal and dedicated to promoting biodiversity in native prairie landscapes. The Dawgs have a "regular" work schedule of the first and third Saturday of the months between April and September. The Prairie Dawgs manage small plots of prairie in several locations - not just the Brimfield Railroad Preserve.

What can I learn from the Prairie Dawgs?

One can learn all about native prairie. According to Doug, "This is a specialized way of gardening. You can't learn this from books alone. You need the hands on experience." This is a great opportunity for people with interests in native plants.



Our Latest Birding Adventure – Emiquon!

by Susie Grana

Peoria Audubon's most recent birding trip this past August was a full house – we took 3 vans to the Emiquon wetland restoration area, which is a project by the Nature Conservancy. Not only is Emiquon one of the largest floodplain restoration projects in North America, it also is usually full of great water-loving birds! We also stopped at a few other sites on our way to and from Emiquon.

Just a few of the birds seen on this trip include Mute Swans, Black-necked Stilts, Great and Cattle Egrets, Lesser Yellowlegs, White Pelicans, and several types of swallows. We counted over 40 species in total for the day. Because of the high water levels and fair (if not a little warm) weather this summer, a wide variety of butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies were present as well!

Our twice-yearly bird trips take place during peak migration times, so we can give our participants the opportunity to see some birds one wouldn't normally get to view in central Illinois. A few of the birds we saw were brand new to me, and quite a few of our participants were thrilled to see something they hadn't anticipated. For those of us who live in town, shorebirds simply are not a sight we get to enjoy very often. Fortunately, we have great places along and near the Illinois River to spot them during these migration periods. We were also lucky to have some great guides on our trip – particularly Maury Brucker of Illinois Audubon and Dennis Endicott and Mike Miller of our own Peoria Audubon – to share with us their knowledge of these birds and the best places and times to spot them. Thanks to all who participated, and we look forward to our spring trip!



How are controlled burns conducted?

At the Railroad Prairie, 1/2 of the property is burned this year, then the other 1/2 of the property is burned the next year. The purpose of the burn rotation is to preserve the insect population on the property.

There can be issues with farmers on both sides of the property. "We cannot burn when corn stubble is present," according to Doug. Since the property is surrounded by corn fields on three sides, herbicide drift is sometimes a problem.

Do the Prairie Dawgs ever show off their prairie restorations?

The Prairie Dawgs conduct a tour of select local properties, once a year, on the 4th Saturday in July. The tour allows the Dawgs to show off the restoration progress. The tour starts at 9:00 AM at the Observatory on Jubilee-Brimfield Road in Peoria County. Contact Doug Franks (309-691-7993) for more information.

BIRD FEEDING BASICS

Did you know that over 100 North American bird species supplement their natural diets with bird seed, suet, fruit and nectar obtained from feeders?

Bird feeding can benefit birds and also provides great bird watching from your own backyard. The obvious time to feed birds is in winter when natural food supplies are scarce; however, additional species visit feeders during the spring and fall migrations, and also during summer while nesting.

To keep birds coming back to your feeders in any season provide them with the following three essential elements:

- * Variety of quality seed.
- * Fresh water for drinking and bathing.
- * Ample cover, preferably provided by native plants. Native plants also provide potential nesting sites and a source of natural food.

Keep in mind bird feeders also present potential risks, such as window collisions, predation, and exposure to disease. Following are some topics and tips for safely attracting and feeding birds.

There are a variety of different types of feeders to accommodate specific types of birds and their diets. Choosing more than one will help attract more species and avoid feeder congestion.

Location, Location, Location!

There are a few key points to consider when deciding where to put your feeder. It's not as simple as hanging it from the nearest tree. You want to think about things like avoiding competition and accommodating various feeding styles and preferences. You also want to think of possible hazards to the birds, such as window collisions, prowling cats, and thieving squirrels. Follow these tips to provide an ideal environment in your backyard.

Locate feeders at different levels. Sparrows, juncos, and towhees usually feed on the ground, while finches and cardinals feed in shrubs, and chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers feed in trees. To avoid crowding and attract the greatest variety of species, provide table-like feeders for ground feeding birds, hopper or tube feeders for shrub and treetop feeders, and suet feeders well off the ground for woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees.

Protect birds from collisions by placing feeders within three feet of windows, if possible. Mobiles and opaque decorations hanging outside windows help to prevent bird strikes, or attach fruit tree netting outside windows to deflect birds from the glass.

Keep cats indoors. The location of your feline friends is important, too. Cats kill hundreds of millions of birds annually in the United States, often pouncing on ground-feeding birds and those dazed by window collisions. Responsible and caring cat owners keep their cats indoors, where they are also safer from traffic, disease, and fights with other animals. Outdoor cats are especially dangerous to birds in the spring when fledglings are on the ground. Bells on cat collars are usually ineffective for deterring predation.

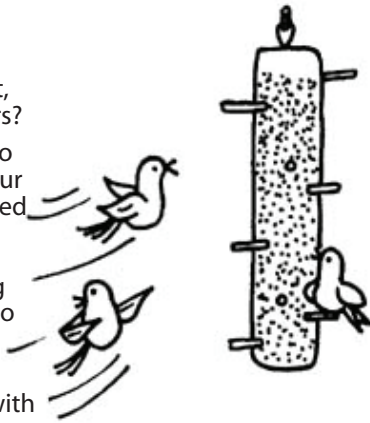
Different birds are attracted by different kinds of seed, so try offering a variety in separate feeders. Just make sure that the seed is compatible with both the feeder and the birds you hope to attract.

Sunflower seed

Black-oil seed is the preferred seed of many small feeder birds, especially in northern latitudes. Striped sunflower seed is also readily eaten, especially by large-beaked birds. Hulled sunflower seed is consumed by the greatest variety of birds; it attracts jays, red-bellied woodpeckers, finches, goldfinches, northern cardinals, evening grosbeaks, pine grosbeaks, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and grackles.

Millet

White millet is the favorite food of most small-beaked ground-feeding birds; red millet is also readily eaten. Millet attracts quail, doves, juncos, sparrows, towhees, cowbirds, and red-winged black-birds.



Cracked corn

Medium cracked corn is about as popular with ground-feeding birds as millet, but it is vulnerable to rot, since the interior of the kernel readily soaks up moisture. Feed small amounts, mixed with millet, on feeding tables or from watertight hopper feeders. Avoid fine cracked corn, since it quickly turns to mush; coarse cracked corn is too large for small-beaked birds. Cracked corn attracts pheasants, quail, doves, crows, jays, sparrows, juncos, and towhees.

Milo, wheat, oats

These agricultural products are frequently mixed into low-priced birdseed blends. Most birds discard them in favor of other food, which leaves them to accumulate under feeders, where they may attract rodents. Milo is more often eaten by ground-feeding birds in the Southwest. It attracts pheasants, quail, and doves.

Thistle (nyjer)

A preferred food of American goldfinches, lesser goldfinches, house finches, and common redpolls, nyjer is sometimes called "black gold," because it costs about \$1.50 per pound. Do not confuse it with prickly thistle, a pink-flowered weed used by goldfinches to line their nests.

Suet and bird puddings (beef fat and seed)

This mixture attracts insect-eating birds such as woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice. Place the suet in special feeders or net onion bags at least five feet from the ground to keep it out of the reach of dogs. Do not put out suet during hot weather as it can turn rancid; also, dripping fat can damage natural waterproofing on bird feathers. Peanut butter is a good substitute for suet in the summer.

Cleaning birdfeeders and birdbaths is a crucial practice in preventing the spread of disease between birds.

You can tell if you have a disease problem at your feeders because diseased birds are less alert and less active, they feed less and may cower on a feeder, they may be reluctant to fly, and their feathers do not appear to be in good shape. Birds afflicted with Trichomoniasis typically develop sores in their mouths and throats. Unable to swallow, they drop food or water contaminated with Trichomonads that other birds then consume, thus spreading the disease.

With the concern over this and other diseases, including Salmonellosis, Aspergillosis, and Avian Pox, which are easily transmitted at birdfeeders and birdbaths, Audubon recommends paying diligent attention to cleanliness in pursuit of responsible and rewarding bird feeding practices. Birds with disease are more likely to die from starvation, dehydration, predation, and severe weather, so protect them by following these tips.

- * Disinfect your feeder and birdbath: To keep pathogens at bay, immerse your seed feeder or birdbath in a nine to one water-bleach solution, rinsing it thoroughly, one to two times per month. In the presence of outbreaks, disinfect twice as often.
- * Empty water from your birdbath every day: Brush or wipe it clean and rinse, then refill the birdbath with fresh water.
- * Discard old seed and hulls: When you clean your feeder, get rid of the old seed. Rake or sweep up any uneaten hulls on the ground. The disease-causing Trichomonad protozoan, for example, can live for up to five days in food and several hours in water.
- * Avoid overcrowding: If possible, provide more than one feeder and spread them out. Crowding only expedites the spread of disease, so give the birds variety and plenty of room.

There is more information on the web about types of feeders, recipes and squirrel advice at: <http://birds.audubon.org/bird-feeding-basics>



BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORMS

Inside:

When does your annual membership expire?

Check the date on your mailing label

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NUMBER 875
PEORIA IL

Peoria Audubon Board

- Dennis Endicott - President / Web Development
- John Mullen - Vice President/Program Chair
- Greet Princen - Treasurer
- Holli Cook - Secretary
- Jason Beverlin - "Acting" Conservation Chair
- Joe Van Wassenhove - Membership Chair / Board Member
- Carol Borders - Education Chair
- Pete Fenner - Board Member
- Deb Roe - Board Member / Newsletter Editor
- Jim Miller - Board Member
- Mike Miller - Board Member
- Susie Grana - Board Member

Conservation

Christmas Bird Count

From December 14 through January 5 tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually braves snow, wind, or rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action. This year's count will help help scientists understand the impact of the Gulf oil spill on vulnerable species.

Prior to the turn of the century, people engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt": They would choose sides and go afield with their guns; whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages around the turn of the 20th century, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition-a "Christmas Bird Census"-that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them.

So began the Christmas Bird Count. Thanks to the inspiration of Frank M. Chapman and the enthusiasm of twenty-seven dedicated birders, twenty-five Christmas Bird Counts were held that day. The locations ranged from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California with most counts in or near the population centers of northeastern North America. Those original 27 Christmas Bird Counters tallied around 90 species on all the counts combined.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

The annual summary of the Christmas Bird Count, American Birds, is published each fall and contains the regional summaries for all of the counts conducted, as well as feature articles on a range of topics unique to the CBC. Features include coverage of the history of some long-running CBC circles, shifts in ranges uncovered by the CBC data and the challenges and fun encountered by individuals participating on the Christmas Bird Count.

For more information about the Christmas Bird Count, check the internet at:
<http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

To volunteer for the Peoria Christmas Bird Count, contact Thad Edmunds at 309-243-1854.



2010 BIRD SEED SALE

PEORIA AUDUBON SOCIETY and FRIENDS OF THE ROCK ISLAND TRAIL

Support your local environmental organizations by ordering your bird seed now. Our seed is the same high quality seed sold by Kelly Seed & Hardware Company, who provides the seed to us at a reduced price and tax-free. Order plenty to last!

Please pre-order -- we don't want to run out! For more information, please call 309-278-5251.

IMPORTANT DATES: Order deadline is **October 27, 2010**

Pick-up Day: Saturday, October 30, 9:00-11:00 am

PICK-UP LOCATION: Kelly Seed & Hardware Parking Lot

Washington Street and Hamilton Blvd. in Peoria

PERSONAL REMINDER: I ordered seed and will pick it up on Saturday morning, October 30:

_____ bags of _____	_____ bags of _____
_____ bags of _____	_____ bags of _____
_____ bags of _____	_____ bags of _____

----- cut here ----- mail bottom portion with check ----- save top -----

ORDER FORM

<u>TYPE OF SEED</u>	<u>SIZE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>	<u>NO. OF BAGS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Sunflower (black oil)	25 lbs.	\$ 10.50	_____	\$ _____
	50 lbs.	\$ 19.50	_____	\$ _____
Sunflower (striped)	25 lbs.	\$ 14.75	_____	\$ _____
	50 lbs.	\$ 26.00	_____	\$ _____
Sunflower Hearts	10 lbs.	\$ 11.00	_____	\$ _____
	25 lbs.	\$ 25.25	_____	\$ _____
Safflower	10 lbs.	\$ 7.90	_____	\$ _____
	50 lbs.	\$ 29.50	_____	\$ _____
Thistle (Niger) Seed	10 lbs.	\$ 10.50	_____	\$ _____
	25 lbs.	\$ 23.75	_____	\$ _____
Wild Bird (Premium) Mix <small>(Cracked corn, oil sunflower, white Proso millet, milo)</small>	25 lbs.	\$ 9.00	_____	\$ _____
	50 lbs.	\$ 15.75	_____	\$ _____
Songbird Mix <small>(Oil & striped sunflower, white Proso millet, safflower)</small>	35 lbs.	\$ 16.75	_____	\$ _____
White Millet	10 lbs.	\$ 4.15	_____	\$ _____
Peanuts (no shell)	10 lbs.	\$ 10.50	_____	\$ _____
Peanuts (in the shell)	25 lbs.	\$ 31.50	_____	\$ _____
Cracked Corn	25 lbs.	\$ 6.25	_____	\$ _____
Ear Corn for Squirrels	25 lbs.	\$ 9.40	_____	\$ _____
Suet Cakes (12 cakes)	Case	\$ 15.75	_____	\$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE \$ _____ Good news -- No sales tax!

**Make check out to
Peoria Audubon Society**

*By October 27th, mail order form
and check for amount due to*

**Peoria Audubon Society
9712 N. Cherry Bark Ct.
Peoria, IL 61615**

YOUR NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY, ZIP	
TELEPHONE	

Thank you for your support!