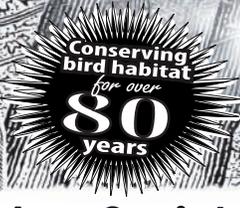


Bird's-eye View



FALL
2012

Mark your calendars!
BIRD SEED SALE
SAT. NOV. 3, 2012

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

Wed. Oct. 10, 2012, 7 PM at FPNC
Australian Bowerbird
Video Presentation

Peoria Audubon has obtained permission to show a documentary entitled, "Bowerbird - Playboy of the Australian Rainforest". The Satin Bowerbird is a bowerbird endemic to eastern Australia. This film is a fascinating glimpse into the private life of this amazing bird, which was filmed entirely in the rainforest surrounding O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse, in Queensland, Australia.

Sat. Oct. 13, 2012, 10:30 AM
Attracting Birds to Your Backyard

A short presentation at FPNC that will give you the information that you need to make your front or back yard appealing to many different kinds of birds.

Sun. Oct. 21, 2012, 1:30 PM
Fall Color Walk at FPNC

Enjoy the tapestry of fall color and other seasonal changes on naturalist-guided Fall Color Walk at the Nature Center

Fri. Oct. 26, 2012, 7PM
Creatures of the Night at FPNC

Celebrate Halloween with a visit to the Nature Center. Learn about bats, owls and many more nocturnal animals



FPNC = FOREST PARK NATURE CENTER

This Newsletter and an Archive of past newsletters are available on the website: www.peoriaaudubon.org

Sat. Nov. 3, 2012, 7:30 AM - 3 PM
MSWRD Field Trip & Bird Survey

Thad Edmonds will lead a fall birding trip to the 15,000 acre Chicago MSWRD wetlands, just southwest of Canton, IL Thad is continuing a survey, compiling data from previous counts. Goal is to gather some data and assist in the effort to determine the effect of the Gulf 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. Reservations are required. Contact Thad Edmonds at 309-243-1854.

Sat. Nov. 3, 2012 9 AM - 11 AM
Annual Bird Seed Sale at Kelly Seed

Details and order form inside this newsletter

Wed. Nov. 14, 2012 7PM
Membership Meeting at FPNC

Program to be announced.

Wed. Dec. 12, 2012 7PM
Florida Scrub Jay Behavior at FPNC

Travis Wilcoxon, Assistant Professor of Biology from Millikin University in Decatur will showcase his recent research including the behavior of birds and the Florida Scrub Jay.



Florida Scrub Jay

photo by Roe

Saturdays in December 2012
Christmas Bird Counts

The longest running wildlife census in the world. The count has become an annual tradition for citizen science volunteers in communities throughout the Americas. Peoria Audubon participates in three annual Christmas counts for Peoria, Chillicothe and Chautauqua. Watch the website for final dates. Volunteers needed.

A Note from our President

Small Victory for Migrating Birds

by Dennis Endicott

With the recent discussion in the news of communication towers, wind turbines and the effect on migrating birds, I recently came across a timely article from the American Bird Conservancy that provides a bit of hope to improve the potential outcome.

After more than a decade of persistent advocacy work by several bird conservation organizations, the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) just announced that it will be issuing new lighting standards for communication towers and other tall structures. The new standards are expected to have an immediate impact by reducing bird deaths and have lasting benefits for birds – night migrating songbirds in particular.

Research has shown that songbirds migrating at night are frequently confused by the lights and trapped in their glow. The birds collide with the tall structure, each other, or the ground, or circle until they drop from exhaustion. The recent research also showed that flashing lights are far less likely to result in bird death, but until now, the FAA has required steady-burning or slow-pulsing red side-marker lights on towers, which are particularly deadly to migrating songbirds.

In 2007, requests were made that the FAA study different options on tower lighting schemes. The FAA agreed, and in 2009, the FAA Airport Technology Research and Development Team began a series of flight evaluations to examine three lighting variations: (1) flashing the normally steady-burning side-marker lights in sync with the flashing lights on top of

the tower; (2) omitting the red side-marker lights altogether; and (3) employing new lighting technologies, such as LED, instead of conventional



Continued on page 2

Small Victory for Migrating Birds

incandescent lights.

Results showed that:

Flashing side-marker lights were an acceptable alternative to steady-burning for small towers (up to 350 feet) The side-marker lights could be omitted altogether on taller towers (over 351 feet), so long as brighter flashing lights on top were operational.

Optimal flash rate for lights was between 27 and 33 flashes per minute. Flashing slower (less than 27 fpm) did not provide the necessary visibility for pilots. Flashing at faster rates (greater than 33 fpm) meant that the lights were not off for long enough to reduce the hazard to migrating birds.

“Rapid Discharge” lights, such as flashing LEDs provide a more attention-getting signal to pilots than the traditional incandescent light fixtures.



Based on the results of this research, the FAA proposed making changes to its Obstruction Lighting Standards, including a proposal to omit or flash the steady-burning red lights from several lighting configurations.

Although this FAA study should help reduce bird mortality at towers in general, the site location of the towers, and in particular

wind turbines, could also have a major impact. Locally, the Illinois River is a major corridor for all types of migrating birds. The migrants are in addition to those species that stay by the river for their livelihood; bald eagles come to mind. The high density of bird populations along this major migration corridor is why the US Fish and Wildlife Service as well as other conservation organizations advise and advocate against locating wind turbines in a major migration corridor.

Wildlife Prairie Park Bluebird Trail

by Melissa Sauder

The 2012 bluebird season has come to an end and this year has been a big year for Wildlife Prairie State Park. In 2011, the park recorded 28 successful bluebird fledglings. This year we had 93 successfully fledge! During 2012, there were 24 boxes used by bluebirds and 35 nests were built. There was a total 130 eggs laid and 95 that hatched. Our numbers were greatly improved because of the dedication of the parks' many volunteers. They came to the park to check on the boxes, removed unwanted nests before eggs were laid, maintained the boxes, and helped raccoon proof the boxes. Raccoons were extremely clever this year and it took extra protective pipes and grease to keep them out of the eggs. This year we also had many new nest boxes thanks to Boy Scout Troop 71 out of Danville, IA. Everyone is looking forward to next year and can't wait to see if we can reach over 100 successful fledges! If you are interested in volunteering, please visit: <http://www.wildlifeprairiestatepark.org/support-volunteer.cfm>.



A beautiful vista at False Island at the conclusion of the kayak trip

September Meeting Re-Cap

by Pete Fenner

The 2012-2013 Peoria Audubon season began in great form on September 12 with an outstanding presentation by a junior from Knox College, James Fenner. This past summer, James had

traveled to southeast Alaska, to the area around Sitka, and presented a photo presentation of his trip entitled, “Alaska: Forests, Fisheries, and the Wilderness”. As part of a Knox College class, James chronicled his 110 mile kayak voyage from Sitka, AK to False Island, with some stunning photos, and also described his work with the US Forest Service in a restoration project. He described and showed photos of various wildlife and birds, plus incredible vistas and scenery. One of his most memorable moments was the vista from the mountaintop of Mount Edgecumbe, a dormant volcano, as the cloud cover parted just as he reached the pinnacle of this very challenging 14 mile round trip hike.

James also volunteered to help a doctoral student conduct research on St Lazaria Island, home to half a million nesting sea birds. This is an island that few humans get the chance to visit, because of the sensitive environment for the seabird colonies. James showed photos of Black Oystercatcher, Leach's Storm Petrel, Glaucous-winged Gull, and a variety of other species which inhabit the island. Approximately 40 Peoria Audubon members gave James and his unique presentation a very appreciative and warm reception.

Chillicothe Bottoms Bird Survey

by Maury Brucker

Peoria Audubon Society has begun a bird survey for the local group Ducks Unlimited on their new property just north of Chillicothe. They purchased 242 acres of existing wetland. Peoria Audubon offered to provide a monthly bird survey for one year at no cost to DU by utilizing a team of experienced volunteer birders. The goal is to gauge all birds' use of this high quality wetland along the Illinois River.

Ducks Unlimited accepted our offer and the team of volunteers from Peoria Audubon which have been given access to the DU property for the purpose of the survey includes the following: Rick Fox, Dennis Endicott, Pete Fenner, Joe Van Wassenhove, Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang.

The first results of the bird survey were that the number of birds species using the wetland in August and the first week in Sept. were higher than expected. Seventy-five bird species were found in August including 10 species of shorebirds (sandpipers and plovers) and 8 species of migrating wood warblers. In the first week of Sept. we have found 59 species of birds even after the river rose with the rain and little or no shorebird habitat is available at this time.

Ducks Unlimited has already restored Wightman Lake (300+ acres) of wetland habitat on Illinois Route 29 at Sparland and given the property to the Ill. Department of Natural Resources for public use. The local DU group has also announced the planned restoration to wetland of a large property near the Woodford County Fish and Wildlife Area. These projects are protecting and enhancing wetlands in the Peoria area which are vital to the bird populations in our area.

Bird Seed Sale Fundraiser

Sat., Nov. 3, 2012, 9:00 AM - 11 AM

The Peoria Audubon Society will again be partnering with Kelly Seed & Co. and the Friends of the Rock Island Trail to offer our annual bird seed sale. Orders can be submitted using the form enclosed in the newsletter or by downloading the form from the Peoria Audubon Society website <http://peoriaaudubon.org/>. Please note the deadline of October 31 and the pick-up date of Saturday, November 3. This is the only fundraiser we hold each year and the proceeds support our bringing in speakers each month as well as our school outreach program Audubon Adventures. Your order will support two great organizations and the birds will definitely appreciate your thoughtfulness through the winter.



Bower bird arranging objects by its bower.

Bowerbird - Playboy of Australian Rainforest

**Wed., Oct. 10, 2012, 7 PM
at Forest Park Nature Center**

Peoria Audubon will show a documentary entitled, "Bowerbird - Playboy of the Australian Rainforest." The Satin Bowerbird is a bowerbird endemic to eastern Australia. This film is a fascinating glimpse into the private life of this amazing bird, which was filmed entirely in the rainforest surrounding O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse, in Queensland, Australia.

Other wildlife from Queensland's Lamington National Park are also featured, such as the Scrub Turkey and the Spiny Echidna. But, the male Satin Bowerbird is perhaps the best known and well documented of all the bowerbirds in Australia. This fame originates from its practice of building and decorating a bower to attract females.

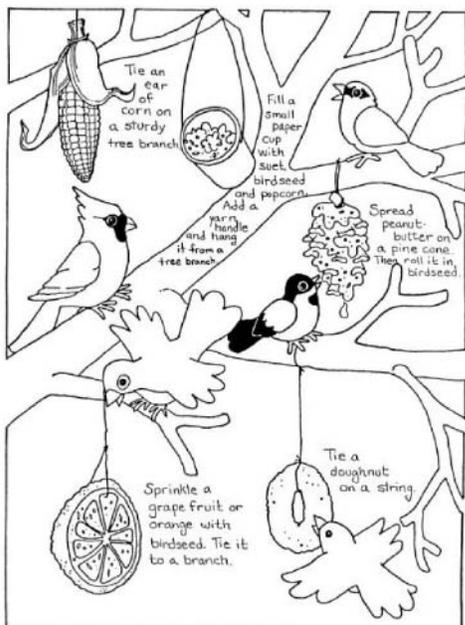
A bower consists of two parallel walls of sticks, is built on the ground, and is used as a courtship arena during the breeding season. The male decorates it with bright blue objects that it has collected; blue clothes pins, drinking straws and bottle tops are among the favorite stolen items, while bright blue parrot feathers, flowers and brown snail shells make up the majority of decorations away from human habitation.

Peoria Audubon Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at Forest Park Nature Center. Everyone is welcome. And, the meetings are FREE!

Hennepin Hopper Field Trip Re-cap

By Maury Brucker

On September 8th, the Peoria Audubon trip to Hennepin Hopper was made by five participants. The weather was great. We saw lots of brightly blooming wetland flowers from the new board walk. There were some hummingbirds utilizing the numerous Impatiens. Also, the local Bald Eagles and eaglets were evident. Although the lake had been drained down again in an attempt to control the carp, and there were mudflats but there were not many shorebirds. Some Pectoral Sandpipers and a few Yellowlegs were present. The small ducks were mainly small teal and a few mallards. I say probably because at this time of year most of the ducks were young or in eclipse plumage. We ended the morning there by climbing the large tower overlooking the area. After a little excitement about a large white bird almost beyond spotting scope range, we concluded the white bird with black wingtips was a lone White Pelican standing on the far shore.



Field Trip Re-cap

By Mike Miller

Peoria Audubon and Forest Park Nature Center hosted its annual Birding the Illinois River- Shorebird Trip on Saturday, August 18. We had 22 participants who went south along the eastern shore of the Illinois River through Spring Lake State Fish and Wildlife Area, Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge.

Chautauqua's north pool, which was drained last season, was holding water in spite of the severe drought. Large groups of American White Pelican were evident with a circling kettle numbering over 700 giving a good show. Also seen at Chautauqua were several Black-necked Stilts. The south pool was in the summer draw-down this year and full of lush green growth which was producing seeds. It will be a waterfowl haven this fall as the south pool is flooded during migration.

After a brief stop at Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery we ventured to Havana for a lunch stop at Grandpa's Restaurant and then across the river to USFWS Emiquon Refuge and Dickson Mounds Museum. Here we spied an immature Black-crowned Night Heron in the wetlands along the road to the museum. We then spent time at The Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Preserve, where several peeps (including a sighting of a Western Sandpiper) kept everyone busy looking through the scopes.

This was definitely a season for "white birds." At TNC's Emiquon, we got close sightings of Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Heron (white phase) and Cattle Egrets. It was a good opportunity to learn how to discern these species from one another. We saw a total of 69 species for the day, and our only regret is that the day wasn't longer. We didn't have a chance to stop by Rice Lake or Banner Marsh before we had to make the return trip home. Nice to know that there's more habitat than one can cover in a daylong trip. To learn more about these and other birding destinations, check out the Illinois River Road Birding Guide at: <http://www.illinoisriverroad.org/birding.cfm>

Inside: FUNDRAISER: BIRD SEED SALE

When does your annual membership expire?
Check the date on your mailing label

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Conservation

★ Victory on Horizon for Teshekpuk Lake

On August 13, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced the "preferred alternative" for management of one of Audubon's long-standing priority landscapes, the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (Reserve). The first-ever comprehensive management plan for the nearly 23-million acre Reserve on Alaska's North Slope would help safeguard key areas that Audubon has been working to protect for more than twenty years.

Under the preferred alternative, commonly referred to as "B-2," nearly half of the Reserve would be designated as unavailable for oil and gas leasing to protect key habitats for migratory birds, caribou, grizzly bear, wolves, wolverine, polar bear, walrus, and other wildlife. The preferred alternative protects 11 million acres, an area roughly the size of Massachusetts and Connecticut combined. Lands surrounding Teshekpuk Lake—a globally significant Important Bird Area (IBA) that has been a special focus of Audubon for many years—would be protected and off-limits to oil leasing, drilling, and industry infrastructure development. Teshekpuk Lake provides a unique and internationally-important molting area where geese retreat annually to lose and regrow their feathers, leaving them temporarily flightless and extremely vulnerable to disturbance.

Secretary Salazar's announcement is a major milestone in Audubon's decades-long effort to protect the migratory birds and other iconic Arctic wildlife in the Reserve. The B-2 alternative alternative would protect 96% of the priority areas Audubon has identified in our recommendations to the BLM. However, there is still important work ahead, especially in the next several months. The final plan for the Reserve will not be released until mid-November. Now is a critical time to tell the Obama Administration you support B2 as a balanced way to protect critical wildlife habitat while allowing responsible energy development in the Reserve. Your voice can help make this a solid victory for the birds, caribou, and other wildlife of America's Arctic. Read more about this special area in Audubon Magazine.



Pacific Loons are among millions of birds that nest in the reserve.