Canada Protects Boreal Forest

In July, Premier Dalton McGuinty of Canada’s Ontario Province announced that the provincial government would extend permanent protection to at least 86,872 square miles (225,000 square kilometers) of the Far North boreal region. Equal in size to Minnesota, this represents half of the boreal forest of the province. The northern boreal region makes up 43 percent of Ontario’s land mass, but it is home to just 24,000 people living in 36 communities. The boreal forest area of Ontario and Manitoba constitute a large expanse of so-called “frontier” forests — places where the impact of industrial development remains relatively light. Only a few such places remain on earth — the Amazon rainforest, Russia’s taiga forest, and Canada’s boreal forest.

The northern boreal region is inhabited by more than 200 species of polar bears, wolves, woodland caribou and lake sturgeon — many of which are threatened or endangered and have been driven from the southern boreal areas due to logging and development. The boreal plays an essential role in providing clean water, storing carbon and sustaining ecosystems. The region absorbs approximately 12.5 million tons of CO2 from our atmospheres each year.

Canada’s boreal forest is THE single most important breeding ground for birds. It is estimated that 300 species and 2 BILLION individual birds breed in the boreal forest before migrating south, passing through our backyards. Thousands of lakes and wetlands are found in the northern boreal region and nearly half of the remaining undammed watersheds in North America exist south of 55 degrees latitude. The Hudson Bay Lowlands are the third largest wetlands on Earth.

Conservation

Preservation of Ontario’s Boreal Forest

Let everyone know you’re a member. These window decals are free:
- one per member
- on a first come, first serve basis.

Join us at www.borealforest.org/free
MARK YOUR CALENDARS WITH THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

CLIMATE CHANGE
How Does It Affect Peoria
Town Hall Meeting
Thursday, August 28, 6-7:30 p.m.
at Forest Park Nature Center

Find out how and what you can do about Climate Change at a special forum hosted by:

Illinois Environmental Council
Environment Illinois
Forest Park Nature Park
Heart of Illinois Sierra Club
Central Illinois Global Warming Project

Featured Speaker: Aur J. Beck
Mr. Beck is an energy efficiency and renewable energy installer who owns Advanced Energy Solutions in Carbondale. He is a founder and board member of the Illinois Renewable Energy Association and the Southern Illinois Center for a Sustainable Future.

For details, call 217-544-9544 or email gphill@ilr-invent.org

ILINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY
2008 FALL GATHERING & ANNUAL MEETING

The Illinois Audubon Society 2008 Fall Gathering and Annual Meeting will be held September 19 through 21st in Springfield, IL. The Fall Gathering is being hosted by the Springfield Audubon Society and the Central Illinois Global Warming Project.

The next Upper Midwest Audubon Conference has been scheduled for October 17-19 in Dubuque, Iowa. This year’s conference is being organized by volunteers from Audubon Chapters across Iowa and is co-sponsored by Iowa Audubon. The theme of the conference is “Partners in Conservation.” There will be a variety of programs highlighted by National Audubon President John Flicker, as well as entertainment and even a planned riverboat trip on the Mississippi River. Peoria Audubon members have attended these conferences in the past and have found them excellent. Members can receive a brochure upon request via email to co-chairs Maggie O’Connell birdlady1@ioatelecom.net or Joe Tollari at jtollari@msn.com.

OAK BLUFF SAVANNA - FIELD TRIP RECAP

On May 18th, the Peoria Audubon Society hosted a field trip to the Oak Bluff Savanna in Henry, IL. The trip was hosted by Maury Brucker and Emiko Yang. 7 participants toured the Illinois Nature Preserve managed by Brucker and Yang.

The birding was light, due to the time of day. There were Eastern Bluebirds and Field Sparrows for the field trip and nesting Green Herons were at the little pond. We mostly discussed the bird habitat improvement efforts of converting a 3 acre farm field to prairie, the shrubby fence row, the grant work and our matching sweat work opening up 12 acres of overgrown woods to a savanna structure and girdling softer wooded trees to provide woodpecker nesting habitat. We looked at some of the 300 plus native plant species on the site and talked about the transition between the prairie and the savanna plant community and the management techniques to keep the open savanna from becoming overgrown. We looked at some of the plants which were blooming in May, which included morel mushrooms. We enjoyed refreshments and had a good group discussion about conservation in general.

BOOK SALE:
The family of the late Louise Augustine, an avid local birder with a life list of over 5000 bird species, has generously donated 7 large boxes of bird books to the Peoria Audubon Society. 100% of the proceeds from the sale will go to the Peoria Audubon Bird Sanctuary Fund.

All books are in excellent condition. Prices have been established to be competitive with those given at Amazon.com for used books. All books are international field guides. The books have been available for sale on our website. The books will be sorted by region and will be made available for sale at upcoming membership meetings. The Central and South American field guides will be available for viewing and purchase at the September meeting. A complete listing of all the books will be available on the website at: www.peoriaaudubon.org

“A Birding Failure” (continued from page 1)

We hadn’t seen any activity for a couple of days. The parents seemed to have left the area, and there were only chickadees feeding on the weedworms. Something was amiss, so we checked the box. There was no evidence of a struggle, but there were no young, or parents in sight. We can only assume nest predation was the problem, and probably raccoons were the culprits.

I had read not to attach bluebird boxes to trees, but rather to use a pole with a predator (raccoon) baffle. I’m not sure why I violated those rules, but this year I paid the price. I improved the hard way and will always use a pole with a baffle in the future. So, I have learned from my failure, and perhaps by reading this you can avoid the same fate. Hopefully then, some additional or future bluebird nesting success will come from it. I know I will keep trying!

LAND ACQUISITION POLICY

The Peoria Audubon Board adopted the following land acquisition policy at the June Board Meeting:

Land Acquisition Policy of Peoria Audubon Society:

1. The Peoria Audubon Society Board must approve the acquisition of any donated or purchased real estate.
2. The area should have significant habitat for native species of fauna and/or flora.
3. Smaller parcels must have documented significant native plant communities or be documented migratory bird stopovers.
4. Title to the land must be conveyed so as to allow Peoria Audubon Society to convey title to another not-for-profit or government agency if Peoria Audubon Society Board decides to do so.
5. The area must be clear of environmental hazards (buried tanks, leaking pollutants etc.)
6. The stewardship of the area must be determined as part of the acquisition decision.
7. An endowment of at least 20% percent of the value of the property at the time of the acquisition is desirable to provide income to defray future maintenance costs.

The Peoria Audubon Society felt that a Land Acquisition Policy was needed.
The Board works on selecting potential sites for Peoria Audubon Bird Sanctuary and considering the recent donation offer, described generally below.

POSSIBLE LAND ACQUISITION

Peoria Audubon Society has received an offer for a gift of a 6 acre Illinois nature preserve. The board has discussed and passed a land acquisition policy. The main feature of the parcel offered is the unique plant community protected by the nature preserve status. The small size of the parcel precludes much bird habitat. There are no plans to open the parcel to the public; however, volunteers will need to maintain the parcel according to the management plan of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. The board is proceeding with arrangements such as securing liability insurance for garmen, the property and the real estate closing. More details will be made available in the near future.

LAND ACQUISITION POLICY
Contributed by Maury Brucker
Peoria Audubon Society
608 W. Main St.
Peoria, IL 61604
748-5010
www.peoriaaudubon.org

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Hummingbird Festival

The annual hummingbird festival will be at Forest Park Nature Center on Saturday, August 23 from 900am - Noon. At the Festival you can adopt a hummingbird, feel a hummer’s heart beat, see the birds up close, watch amazing video, learn about the birds, purchase feeders and gifts.

Its great fun; Hope to see you there!

Hummingbird Festival
Contributed by Jason Beverlin
Peoria Audubon Society
608 W. Main St.
Peoria, IL 61604
748-5010
www.peoriaaudubon.org

Hummingbird facts to prime us for the upcoming hummingbird festival:

Hummingbirds are the smallest of all birds, measuring between 2.5-8 inches (6-20 cm).

There are 112 species of hummingbirds in all of North America, with 26 species observed north of Mexico, 17 of these have bred in the United States and Canada, 12 of have been observed in California.

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the only hummingbird that breeds east of the Mississippi River.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are so lightweight that you could mail 8 of them for the price of a 42-cent postage stamp!
This tiny flyer weighs about as much as a U.S. penny (approximately 0.1 ounce) yet manages to complete a non-stop flight over the Gulf of Mexico during migration – a distance of some 500+ miles!

The Portuguese name for “hummingbird” literally translated means “flower kisser.”

Hummingbirds beat their wings at a rate of 40-80 per second and fly 30 miles per hour.

Hummingbirds are the only species of birds that can truly fly backward and upside down.

One of the most striking features of male hummingbirds is their iridescent plumage, particularly the brightly colored head and throat feathers.

While hummingbirds enjoy nectar from feeders and flowers, a large part of their diet is also made up of insects.


Hummingbird Trivia

Its great fun; Hope to see you there!

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A block of rooms has been reserved for the Audubon Society at $79 plus tax. Room rate includes continental breakfast. Mention related items for the Silent Auction and Raffle which will be held during the Fall Gathering. Items may be dropped off before the Signature Inn, 3090 Stevenson Drive, Springfield, IL 217-529-6611.

Upper Midwest Audubon Conference:
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The Fall Gathering and Annual Meeting will be at the Springfield Signature Inn, 3090 Stevenson Drive, Springfield, IL 217-529-6611. A block of rooms has been reserved for the Audubon Society at $79 plus tax. Room rate includes continental breakfast. Mention Illinois Audubon Society when making reservations.

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These are free:
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Inside:
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Birds-eye View

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

Oct. 8, 2008, 7 PM  FPNC
110 Years of Illinois Audubon Monthly Audubon meeting. Tom Clay, Executive Director of the Illinois Audubon Society will speak on "110 Years of Illinois Audubon." Tom will speak on Illinois Audubon's wildlife sanctuaries and land trust partnerships.

Nov. 12, 2008, 7 PM  FPNC
Bird Collision Monitors Monthly Audubon meeting. Annette Prince, Director of Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, will discuss the actions to rescue and salvage thousands of migratory birds that were harmed by collisions with downtown Chicago buildings.

Dec. 10, 2008, 7 PM  FPNC

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Preservation of Ontario's Boreal Forest

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Late last winter, I had decided on a new location for one of my 5 bluebird nest boxes. I was interested in a box near the house, and he seemed to be defending it. Then, some workers came to the home for a day-long project, and it never came back. That is, until this past March. Late last winter, I had decided on a new location for one of my 5 bluebird nest boxes, and using a stepladder, I nailed it to a tree. I then kept my fingers crossed that this might be the year. And indeed it was. The first bluebird in the yard was in late March (a bit later than previous years). Soon, a mate arrived and the pair were seen carrying nesting material into their new home. My wife and I were thrilled! We began buying and presenting mealworms to our new tenants. The bluebirds consumed this food so eagerly we even began trying to raise our own mealworms. I logged the nest into the Cornell University Nest Watch Network, and set up a monitoring schedule. Five tiny egges and five hatchings resulted. Everything was going great until mid-May.

(Continued on page 2)