

# Birds-eye View



August  
2008

Mark your calendars!  
Hummingbird Festival  
August 23rd, 2008

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

[www.peoriaaudubon.org](http://www.peoriaaudubon.org)

Contact the Peoria Audubon Society at [audubon@peoriaaudubon.org](mailto:audubon@peoriaaudubon.org)

## AUDUBON CALENDAR

Peoria Audubon meets at 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May. Its 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](http://www.peoriaaudubon.org/calendar)  
**Sat. Aug. 16, 7 AM - 3 PM**

### Guided Birding Tour of the Illinois River

**Early Fall Shorebird Migration and More**  
Catch the peak of shorebird migration at Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge and adjoining sites—some of the best places in Illinois to see the thousands of shorebirds that stop during their spectacular migration. More Details on the Web page.

**Sat., Aug. 23, 2008,  
9AM - Noon**



### Peoria Hummingbird Festival

Vernon Kleen from Springfield (one of the few licensed hummingbird banders in the U.S.) will be on hand to demonstrate hummingbird banding and discuss the fascinating world of hummingbirds.

You will have a chance to feel the heart beat of a hummingbird and "adopt" one of these beautiful flyers. This free event is a come-as-you-please activity.

Jointly sponsored by Forest Park Nature Center and Illinois Audubon Society. Fee: Event is free, but donations are greatly appreciated.

**Sept. 10, 2008, 7 PM FPNC**

### Restoration of Rivers and Streams in Illinois.

The first monthly membership meeting of the 2008-2009 Season. Brad Walker, River Restoration Coordinator, for the Prairie Rivers Network, will speak on their work of protecting the rivers and streams of Illinois to promote the lasting health and beauty of watershed communities.

**Sept. 19-21, '08, IL Audubon**

**Fall Gathering  
more information inside**

**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.

### ANNUAL SEED SALE

Peoria Audubon Society will have its annual bird seed sale this fall. Order forms available end of Oct. Order pick up at Kelly Seed on Sat. Nov. 1st.

**Sat. Nov. 8, 2008**

### MSD Field Trip

The Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago has a 20,000 acre private facility west of Canton, IL. The area contains wetlands, woodlands, grasslands and birds. Peoria Audubon gets special permission to tour this facility twice a year. The field trip size is limited and fills up fast.

Contact Bert Princen to sign up: 691-0519

**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**

### Illinois River Restoration

Monthly Audubon meeting. Marshall B. Plumley, Illinois River Basin Integrator with the US Army Corps of Engineers, will speak on the Illinois River restoration projects funded by the recent passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

**December 2008,**

### Christmas Bird Counts

Peoria: Sat, Dec. 20, 2008  
Chautauqua: Sat, Dec. 27, 2008  
Chillicothe: Sat. Jan. 3, 2009

## A Note from our President



### "A Birding Failure"

Sometimes it takes a failure to wake us up. I am no exception. Until this year, I had been unsuccessful for over 10 years in a quest to attract Eastern Bluebirds to

a nest box in my yard. I had invested considerable time, money and effort in designing, building, buying, locating and re-locating bluebird houses in my backyard. I live in a relatively wooded area (which is not ideal bluebird habitat I know) but there are open areas and fields close by. I had seen these beautiful friends in neighboring yards many times, and knew they had nested previously nearby. Several years ago, I had a bluebird get 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 the bluebird 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 eggs and five hatchlings resulted. Everything was going great until mid-May.

(Continued on page 2)

## 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 Center  
Heart of Illinois Sierra Club  
Central Illinois Global Warming Solutions Group

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 217-544-5954 or email [gphilbin@il-enviro.org](mailto:gphilbin@il-enviro.org)

## ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY 2008 FALL GATHERING & ANNUAL MEETING

The Illinois Audubon Society 2008 Fall Gathering and Annual Meeting will be held September 19 through the 21st in Springfield, IL. The Fall Gathering is being hosted by the Springfield Audubon Society. Field trips fill up fast, so register early. For registration forms or more information contact Pam Coogan 217-674-3510 after 5 pm or email [scoogan@frontiernet.net](mailto:scoogan@frontiernet.net).



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.

Springfield Audubon Society is seeking new or gently used nature-related items for the Silent Auction and Raffle which will be held during the Fall Gathering. Items may be dropped off before the event at the Illinois Audubon Society Office or may be turned in at the Gathering on Friday, September 19.

## Upper Midwest Audubon Conference:

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, field trips and even a planned riverboat trip on the Mississippi River. Peoria Audubon members have attended these conferences in the past and have found them to be excellent. Members can receive a brochure upon request via e-mail to co-chairs Maggie O'Connell [birdlady1@iowatelecom.net](mailto:birdlady1@iowatelecom.net) or Joe Tollari at [jtollari@mchsi.com](mailto:jtollari@mchsi.com).

## OAK BLUFF SAVANNA - FIELD TRIP RECAP

contributed by Maury Brucker

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



community 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. Many of the 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](http://www.peoriaaudubon.org)

## "A Birding Failure" (continued from page1)

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 mealworms. 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 culprit.

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 learned 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!

*Pete*





## 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 ecological value and provide habitat for native species of fauna and/or flora.
3. Smaller parcels must have documented significant native plant communities or be documented migrant bird stopovers.
4. Title to the real estate must be conveyed so as to allow Peoria Audubon Society Board to reconvey 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 around 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 Board felt that a Land Acquisition Policy was needed as The Society works on selecting potential sites for Peoria Audubon Bird Sanctuary and considering the recent donation offer, described generally below.

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## POSSIBLE LAND ACQUISITION

*contributed by Maury Brucker*

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 owning the property and the real estate closing. More details will be made available in the near future.



The annual hummingbird festival will be at Forest Park Nature Center on Saturday, August 23 from 9:00am - Noon. At the Festival you can adopt a humming bird, feel a hummer's heartbeat, see the birds up closely, watch amazing video, learn about the birds, purchase feeders and gifts.

Its great fun; Hope to see you there!



*contributed by Jason Beverlin*

Just one year into the initial restoration at Emiquon, The Nature Conservancy has planted 310,000 trees, 8000 pounds of prairie seed, and 35,000 prairie plugs. With abundant precipitation last winter, over 2000 acres of water returned to Thompson and Flag Lakes. Wildlife responded quickly with a peak of 69,000 ducks during the spring migration. Other sightings of note included the state endangered king rail, black tern, and northern harrier; the threatened least bittern; and the relatively rare red-necked grebe, black-necked stilt (some with chicks), common moorhen, common loon, vesper sparrow, and several river otter. Working with the Department of Natural Resources, over 1.3 million fish were stocked. Water quality and food availability are both very good--some fish species appear to be growing about twice as fast in the lake as those in the river.

In April, the Emiquon science symposium attracted nearly one hundred researchers and students. Later in the month, we celebrated the ribbon cutting and the grand opening of the University of Illinois-Springfield's Emiquon Field Station. Approximately 100 staff and guests attended the ribbon cutting and 300 participated in the open house.

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## Hummingbird Trivia



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 gorget (neck area) feathers of adults.

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

Sources: Hummer/Bird Study Group, "Peterson Field Guides: Hummingbirds of North America" by Sheri L. Williamson (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), "The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior" by David Allen Sibley (Alfred Knopf, 2001) compiled by the Kern River Preserve in Weldon, CA.



677 E.High Point Terrace  
Peoria, IL 61614

Inside:

## Information on IAS Fall Gathering

When does your annual membership expire?

Check the  
date on your  
mailing label

Peoria Audubon Board  
audubon@peoriaaudubon.org

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## Conservation

### ★ Preservation of Ontario's Boreal Forest

contributed by Joe VanWassenhove

### 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. Still wild, Ontario's northern boreal region is inhabited by more than 200 species such as polar bears, wolverines, 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 atmosphere 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, including nearly half of the remaining un-dammed watersheds in North America that exist south of 55 degrees latitude. The Hudson Bay Lowlands are the third largest wetlands on Earth.

Kerry Gillespie, in a Toronto Star article, stated the plan will not only work to protect the forest, but will also help the forest protect us from climate change:

*"The announcement is globally significant in the fight against climate change, advocates say. Nearly 100 billion tons of carbon are stored in the Northern Boreal region and another 12.5 million tons are absorbed each year.*

*These lands remain, for the most part, untouched by development. But with increasing world demand for resources, it was just a matter of time before mining and logging inched up from the south.*

*Now, those resource industries will be barred from half the land and have to work with the government and local First Nations communities to create sustainable development plans for the rest, McGuinty said.*

*Over the next 10 to 15 years, the province will work with scientists and communities to map out the specific lands that are the most valuable as carbon storehouses and for species protection and which lands have the greatest resources and should be developed."*

Mining and logging will still be allowed in the protected area but with tighter permitting and subject to the approval of the Aboriginal communities.



Pine Marten  
resident of  
Ontario's Boreal Forest  
courtesy of [www.borealforest.org](http://www.borealforest.org)