

Birds-eye View



SPRING
2009

Mark your calendars!
RIVER BIRDING TOUR
MARCH 7, 2009

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 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

Sat. Mar. 7, 2009, 7 AM - 4 PM
Birding Tour of the Illinois River

Field Trip of the hotspots along the Illinois River. Trip includes transportation and lunch. Trip led by renowned local birders Maury Brucker and John Mullen. Preregistration required call 686-3360 for more information and registration. Fee \$35

Wed, Mar. 11, 2009, 7 PM FPNC
Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway

Monthly Membership Meeting. Anaise Berry, Director of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway will discuss the benefits and establishment of the Scenic Byway based on their scenery, cultural, historical, natural, recreational or archaeological opportunities.

Wed. Apr. 8, 2009, 7 PM FPNC
Lose 5000 LBS - Low Carbon Diet.

Monthly Membership Meeting. Keith Blackmore from the Highland Community College in Northern Illinois, will be presenting a 30 day program to lose 5000 pounds in a Low Carbon Diet.

Wed. May 13, 2009, 7 PM FPNC
CREP Program and local conservation projects.

Monthly Membership Meeting. Bud Grieves, former mayor of Peoria, will speak on the development of his 400 acre farm into a wildlife habitat through the CREP program and other local conservation projects.

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

May 9, 2009
Spring Bird Count

PAS participates in the Annual Statewide Bird Census. To volunteer in Peoria County contact Mike Miller (309) 686-3360. To volunteer in other counties check the website for phone numbers.

April 11th, May 9th, May 23rd
and June 6th. 7AM FPNC
Migratory Bird Walks

Search for spring migrants and avian residents of Forest Park with a guide from Peoria Audubon. Please bring your own binoculars or you may borrow some from the Nature Center. Donations appreciated.

Sat, April 25, 2009, 11AM - 4PM
Earth Day Festival at FPNC

Enjoy Music, storytelling, live entertainment, tasty local food and educational materials.

Identify environmentally friendly products and learn what you can do to make a difference. A fun family event offering hands on demonstrations, kids crafts, face painting, numerous displays and chances to win green door prizes. Check out the Trailhead Nature Store for discounts on environmentally friendly clothing, household and personal products and other nature related selected items.



Tue. May 5 & Thu, May 7, 2009
10:00AM -11:30AM FPNC

Nature Classes for Home Educators: Flight & Function in Birds

One of a Series of sessions, this one will concentrate on the dynamics of bird flight. How various birds or species use flight, how the shape and structure of the birds determines types of flight. There will be an outside portion. PREREGISTRATION REQUIRED. Two identical sessions available. Age: 6-12. Fee: \$5 per class. Parents are free.



Thank You !

Dear Friends,

Thanks so much to everyone for your cards of sympathy and all of the wonderful support that I received during Bert's illness.

I also want to thank everyone who donated so generously to the Peoria Audubon Sanctuary Endowment Fund for Bert's Memorial.

It is greatly appreciated. I thank you very much.

Greet Princen



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
WITH THIS UPCOMING EVENT:**

**Birding Tour of the Illinois River
Sat. March 7, 2009, 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

Take in some of the bird migration hot spots along the Illinois River—spots renowned for both scenic quality and bird diversity. We'll meet at Forest Park Nature Center and travel south along the east shore of the river stopping at Spring Lake and Chautauqua. After a catered lunch overlooking the Dickson Mounds, we'll proceed to one of the largest wetland restoration projects in the world, the Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Preserve. The trip will wrap up at Rice Lake and Banner Marsh. Trip leaders: Maury Brucker and John Mullen of Peoria Audubon Society. Preregistration through Peoria Park District a must. Call 686-3360 for more info and registration. Fee: \$35

Changes in the Endangered and Threatened Listings for Illinois Birds

contributed by Maury Brucker

Based on field scientists' nesting data, Loggerhead Shrike and Common Moorhen are being moved from the threatened list to the endangered list. The list then becomes 25 mostly wetland birds in Illinois. The Black-billed Cuckoo is being added to the threatened list as reduced numbers of nestings have been seen. Should you find nesting activity of any of these three birds in Central Illinois, please fill out a documentation form or let Maury Brucker know. Around 1990, Loggerhead Shrikes were confirmed nesting in Stark, but I have not seen them since. One Loggerhead Shrike was reported on the Chillicothe Christmas Count about 10 years ago. Keep an eye out for Moorhens at the big restoration projects along the Illinois River.



Loggerhead Shrike



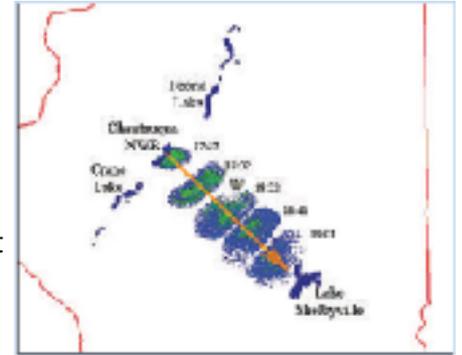
Mississippi Kite

On the positive side, Mississippi Kites are being removed from the endangered list and put on the threatened list. During the year of the Cicadas, many people saw the three immature kites at Jubilee College State Park. Also, Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane and Henslow's Sparrow are being removed from the threatened list as more successful nesting is occurring in more counties.

This will allow the scientists to shift their surveys and research to the bird species doing less well. With the recovery of the above bird species, bird species in general are faring better than T + E plants as most plants coming off the endangered list at this time are due to they are no longer being found in the state.

**February Meeting Recap
"Waterfowl on Weather Radar:
Tracking Clouds of Ducks"**

At the Feb. 11 meeting, Ben O'Neal, doctoral candidate from the University of Illinois, discussed using weather radar to track the migration pattern of ducks in Central Illinois. Ben indicated that in the early World War II days of using surveillance radar, operators would sometimes observe "angels" in the images. Many of the "angels" turned out to be flocks of migrating waterfowl.



With funding from the Illinois Natural History Survey, Ben is using the "angels" as a biology research tool to study duck migration. One advantage of radar is that the observation tool can be used 24-hours daily. According to Ben, "Migration is a critical stage in the annual cycle of birds, but a difficult one to study. It occurs over an enormous scale and often at night."

Using the NEXRAD radar in Lincoln, Illinois, Ben observed a dominant southeast migration of ducks from Central Illinois. Note the image above where a flock of ducks is moving southeast from Chautauqua toward Lake Shelbyville.

Ben authored an article with Joshua Stafford and Ron Larking that was published in Outdoor Illinois. There is a link to this article on the Peoria Audubon Website.

Spring Bird Feeding

contributed by Deb Roe



Typically, we are diligent at feeding birds during the winter, but spring is important time keep the feeders full and clean. The birds are migrating and preparing to nest. Many seed plants and berry plants have not grown yet, so supplemental feeding suburban birds is important in the spring.

According to "Wild Birds Unlimited" calcium, suet dough and water are beneficial this time of year.

According to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the biggest change necessary for spring is to increase the proportion of millet mix provided. Spring migrating song birds and mourning doves tend to prefer the smaller seeds of millet type mixes. Millet can also attract indigo buntings in early May. Black oil sunflower seed and cardinal mixes are great for the cardinals, jays, chickadees, and finches. Thistle feeders will attract not only the finches but the winter visitors like redpolls and pine siskin that linger in the spring..

2008/2009 Christmas Bird Count Recap

The 2008 Peoria CBC was canceled due to an ice storm that was immediately followed up by a layer of snow. Because of the treacherous road conditions, due to safety concerns, Thad Edmonds, the Peoria CBC organizer, canceled the Peoria count.

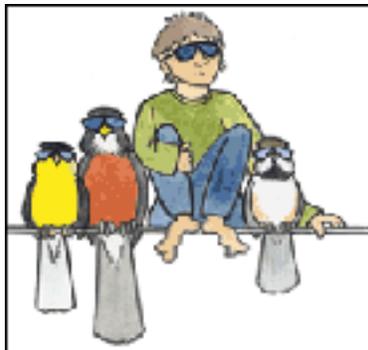
The Chautauqua count was held on December 27, 2008 headed up by Dick Bjorklund. They reported 84 species, detail report is available for viewing on the Peoria Audubon website at: <http://www.peoriaaudubon.org/bcs>

The Chillicothe count was held on Jan. 5, 2009, headed up by Tracey Fox, and was dedicated to the memory of two Central Illinois birders; - Louise Augustine of Chillicothe and Dr. Bert Princen of Peoria. Both were fixtures on the count for many years.

Louise generously shared her special places for birding west side of the Illinois River and it's no surprise that without her keen eyes we found no unusual gulls or shorebirds this winter. Bert sagely worked with another local birder, Thad Edmonds, for the past few years to ensure that the Warblers and Red-breasted Nuthatches, continue to be found. Thad's fabulous finds on this count certainly upheld Bert's standard of excellence. This year's Chillicothe Counters counted 70 species. Details of the Chillicothe count results are also posted on the Peoria Audubon Website.



Ring Billed Gull



What are Birds Telling us About Climate Change?

What are Purple Finches, Boreal Chickadees and Black Ducks trying to tell us about climate change? They are all telling us that climate change is here, now. They are telling us we must act now to address this urgent problem.

They are showing us a pattern of ecological disruption that tells an alarming story.

Audubon's latest report, **Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion**, looks at the last 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data and concludes that 58% of the species studied have moved significantly northward as winter temperatures increase, with the Purple Finch shifting the furthest — 433 miles.

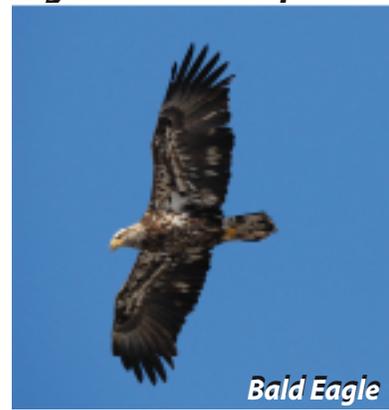
We all know that birds are strong, early indicators on the health of our environment. This evidence of ecological disruption is a yet another warning that global warming is an urgent problem, one that demands bold action now.

The report is on the internet at: <http://audubonaction.org/campaign/birds and climate>

Audubon is also organizing a petition to press our legislatures with this additional information to take measures to move our country towards a clean energy future. You can sign the petition at the above website.

2009 Mid-winter Bald Eagle Count Recap

On January 24, as part of the Eagle Nature Foundation Midwinter Eagle Count on the Upper Mississippi River and its tributaries, Peoria Audubon counted the eagles between Henry and Havana on the Illinois River.



Bald Eagle

Usually, five teams will go out in the field to count eagles from both sides of the Illinois River. Generally, this count will take about 4-5 hours on the Saturday. Note that one of the teams will be in a boat that goes down the river from Pekin to Havana. This year (2009), the Illinois River was not navigable for small boats. Due to the single digit temperatures and river ice, the boat team was canceled.

Two teams cover Henry to Peoria and two teams cover Peoria to Havana. Each team is on their respective side of the river. A total of 197 Bald Eagles were counted. A detail of the results along with several photographs are available on the Peoria Audubon Website.

The Eagle Nature Foundation also has additional information available on their website as well: <http://www.eaglenature.com>



PEORIA LOCAL MEMBERS WHO DON'T PAY NATIONAL DUES, DO NOT GET RENEWAL NOTICES. PLEASE CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS AND PAY YOUR DUES.



Winter Finches

contributed by Pete Fenner

Regardless of what you think about winter, the 2008-2009 winter season has been an especially productive one for winter finches. There have been numerous reports of Common Redpolls in Central Illinois, and the photo below is one of seven Redpolls that have visited my backyard feeder. One birder from Galesburg recently recorded a Common Redpoll at his feeder, which was the first time he has seen that species in his yard for the 21 years he has lived there! Pine Siskins



Common Redpoll

are also visiting this winter with some regularity. Both species seem to favor thistle (nyger) seed, but will also take sunflower seeds. Keep your eye out for these species, they are easy to overlook. Other more rare species which have been seen in Central Illinois this winter include Hoary Redpoll, White-winged Crossbill, and Red Crossbill. So looking for uncommon winter finches this year could be one way you can enjoy what is left of winter!

Inside: Threatened and Endangered Species Update

When does your annual membership expire?

Check the date on your mailing label

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Conservation

TOP TEN WAYS TO COMBAT GLOBAL WARMING AND ITS IMPACTS ON BIRDS

All of us have a role to play in reducing the worst impacts of global warming. As individuals and engaged citizens, we can all take steps to reduce our energy use, switch to cleaner sources of power, conserve habitat and encourage our leaders to take immediate action. Here's a short list:

1. Be an Active Citizen

Join Audubon's activist team and urge our elected officials to make global warming a top priority by signing our petition at birdsandclimate.org. Stay informed, write letters to your leaders, and support candidates who promise to take the aggressive and farsighted actions necessary to curb global warming.

2. Get Involved in Your Community

Support conservation efforts that protect and restore essential bird habitat, keeping it healthy to better withstand global warming. Learn how the Important Bird Areas program is building a national network of conservation stewards. And join in "Citizen Science" efforts like the Christmas and Great Backyard Bird Counts.

3. Determine Your Energy Profile and Carbon Footprint

An energy audit assesses how much energy you consume. A carbon footprint shows how much greenhouse gas you emit into the atmosphere. These figures can help you determine steps you can take to make your home, school, or office more energy efficient. Many footprint calculators are available online.

4. Reduce Energy Consumption

Save money and energy by switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs and maximize the use of natural sunlight for daytime lighting needs. Reduce excessive use of home heating and cooling and weatherize your home. Buy energy efficient appliances such as those that are "Energy Star" compliant.

5. Eat Locally Grown and Organic Produce

The fewer miles your products travel, the less energy is used for refrigeration and transport. And buy organic. That reduces the use of pesticides that kill the organisms which help keep carbon in the soil.

6. Shop Smarter

Manufacturing, packing, transporting, and selling goods not only use huge amounts of energy but also release excessive amounts of greenhouse gases. When shopping, always ask, "Do I really need this? Does the Earth really need this?" You'll probably save money as well.

7. Save Gas and Money

Use public transportation, ride your bicycle, walk, carpool, and drive a more energy-efficient vehicle. Keep tires properly inflated to increase fuel efficiency - it will lower your fuel costs.

8. Plant More Trees and Buy Good Wood

An average tree absorbs ten pounds of pollutants from the air each year, including four pounds of ground level ozone and three pounds of particulates. So, plant leafy trees around your house to provide windbreaks and summer shade. When shopping for wood, ask about certified wood to support sustainably managed forests that are bird-friendly.

9. Switch to Green Power

Power plants are the single largest source of heat-trapping gases in the United States, but in some states you can switch to utilities that provide 50 to 100 percent renewable energy. You may also want to consider installing solar panels on your home.

Visit Audubon's Global Warming web site for more ideas on how you can make a difference