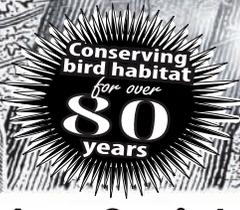


Bird's-eye View



SUMMER 2011

Mark your calendars!
ILLINOIS RIVER BIRDING TOUR
SAT. AUG. 20, 2011

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

Sat., Aug. 20, 2011, 7 AM - 4 PM **Birding Tour of the Illinois River**

Catch the peak of shorebird migration with this field trip led by Maury Brucker, of Peoria Audubon Society, and Mike Miller, of Forest Park Nature Center. Destination includes Emiquon, Lake Chautauqua, Rice lake, Banner Marsh and other great birding spots along the Illinois River.

Trip includes transportation in a Park District, 15-passenger van and a catered lunch.

Pre-registration required. Register early as this trip fills up fast. Best for 12 and up. Forest Park Nature Center and/or Peoria Audubon Members receive a \$5 discount. Call Peoria Park District at 686-3360 for more info and registration. Fee: \$35.

Sat., Aug. 27, 2011, 9 AM - 12 PM **Hummingbird Festival at FPNC**

Vernon Kleen from Springfield (one of the two licensed hummingbird banders in Illinois) will demonstrate hummingbird banding and discuss the fascinating world of hummingbirds. You will have a chance to feel the heartbeat of a hummingbird and "adopt" one of these beautiful flyers with a donation to the Illinois Audubon habitat acquisition fund. This free event is a come-as-you-please activity. Jointly sponsored by Forest Park Nature Center and Illinois Audubon. Fee: FREE, donations greatly appreciated.



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Wed. Sept. 14, 2011, 7PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Ducks Unlimited - Peoria Lakes Restoration Eric Schenck, Regional Biologist with Ducks Unlimited, will speak about the Ducks Unlimited work on the Upper Peoria Lakes Restoration Project and other local wetland restoration projects.

Wed. Oct. 12, 2011, 7PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Anaise Berry, Director of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, will be speaking about the Illinois River Road Project, which unites more than 100 nature-based destinations and numerous unique communities throughout the Illinois River Valley.

Sat. Nov. 5, 2011, 7:30 AM - 3:00 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 wishes to do a bird survey of the waterfowl, and then compare it to a survey next spring and the following fall.

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. Reservations are required.

Contact Thad Edmonds at 309-243-1854

Sat. Nov. 5, 2011, 8 AM - 10 AM **Bird Seed Sale at Kelly Seed**

Pre-order Seed in October. Details inside the newsletter.

Wed. Nov. 9, 2011, 7 PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Marshall B. Plumley, Illinois River Basin Integrator for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will speak on the present status in establishing the artificial islands in the Peoria Lake and the plans for continued progress.

Wed. Dec. 14, 2011, 7 PM

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

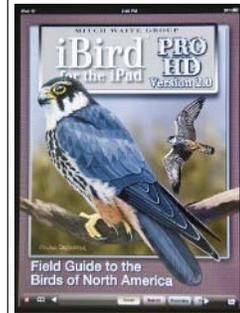
Travis Wilcoxon, Assistant Professor of Biology at Millikin University, will share plenty of information and new data on his recent research into bird feeding. Travis will present, "Are your feeder birds healthy?"

A Note from our President

New Field Guides - Print & Electronic

Dennis Endicott

It's been almost two years since I bought my first digital field guide to go along with an iPod Touch. What has surprised me is how these "birding apps" have continued to improve and are now available for other platforms. Originally, I purchased the



iBird Explorer Pro and the Audubon Field Guide of North American Birds, then downloaded them directly to my iPod Touch. Within two months Sibley and National Geographic both came out with their versions of electronic field guides for iPod Touch and the iPhone. This shows how dynamic the market was and how it continues to expand for electronic field guides.

One of my first surprises came about a month or so after my original field guide purchases when I found out that newer versions of the electronic guides were available to download without any additional cost. That is, when I synchronized my iPod to my computer, the software that connects to the Internet would indicate that a newer version of the field guide was available for download and installation. Since my original purchase of these apps, I have downloaded newer versions 4 to 6 times. So, what did the newer versions do for the birder who uses these electronic apps? The simple answer is that they provided more features with additional content and sometimes address software bugs that might form across multiple platforms.

One example of additional content is that when the electronic Audubon Field Guide came out (after the iBird), it provided multiple bird recordings from multiple locations. Shortly afterwards, the iBird Explorer field guides came out with multiple recordings and additional

...continued on page 2

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

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



Learn More: Scan the adjacent code with your smart phone to connect with the Peoria Audubon Event Calendar

New Field Guides, continued from page 1 ...

searching tools. And at the same time, additional images were included. The latest version of the iBird Explorer introduced the use of a visible song spectrum analysis to view the sound as you are listening to it [see the adjacent screenshot image].

Then, in April 2010, Apple released the iPad. This Tablet PC was a larger platform for electronic field guides. If you already had an Audubon Field Guide for the iPod Touch or iPhone, you could also be allowed to upload and use a copy with the iPad. And then, to expand on the potential for what can be done, iBird developed a new version of their electronic field guide just for use with an iPad, the iBird Pro HD. The larger format of the iPad allowed for increasing the number and details of the photos plus continuing with all the audio. The iPad also allowed for showing more information on the screen at the same time.



With the iPhone, Blackberry and Android smartphones being sold, Nielsen Company now projects that smartphones will become half of all cell phones sold in the US by Q3, 2011.

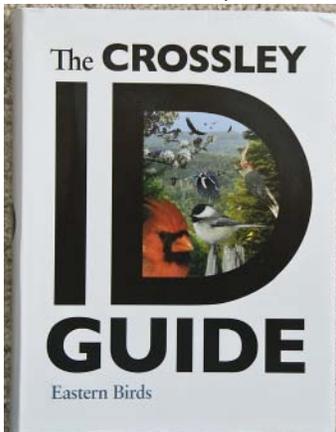
Although the smartphones and tablet PCs can be rather expensive, the electronic field guides are rather modest. And, using an electronic field guide does not use any of your plan minutes. Here are the current sale prices for the apps reviewed here:

- iBird Explorer Pro: \$20 for iPhone, iPod Touch, or Android
- Audubon Birds Field Guide: \$15 for iPod, iPhone, & iPad; \$10 for Android
- iBird Pro HD for iPad: \$20

The Crossley ID Guide

Imagine having 10,000 bird photos in a single field guide. Richard Crossley, the author of the new Crossley ID Guide has taken a new approach. He has designed his new guide to make it easy to compare the viewing of distant birds with the close-up details in larger images. What makes this guide different from other printed field guides? Crossley starts with an image of a bird in its usual habitat then electronically layers additional images into the same background. The Eastern Birds version of the guide has 640 scenes with 10,000 photos, 1 scene per species. It's larger than the Sibley Guide to Birds.

This way, in a single page, you can view distant birds at middle and long distance, and then compare the look next to those at close range. Not only that, but Crossley also includes images of juveniles along with images that reflect the range of plumage variation among other individuals as well as in different seasons. There are lots of images, sometimes 5, 10, 20, or even small flocks of the same species, all on the same page. Additionally, the book includes images of birds in flight.



Of course, the guide also includes text describing interesting aspects of bird behavior and a range map. There is a lot of hype going around about this new type of field guide, but the hype is well deserved as this new reference is a very impressive work.

Whether electronic or in print, these new field guides help to provide the birder with lots of good information, making for a more enjoyable experience.

Fall Migration & How you can help!

by Suzie Grana

Program Specialist at Forest Park Nature Center

Each fall, approximately three quarters of the birds we see in Illinois will attempt to migrate to some other part of the state, country, or world to cope with the change of seasons. Migration is an exciting time for those of us who enjoy watching birds, but it can be a hazardous experience for the birds. This is especially true for young birds that have never migrated before. For many species, the majority of birds will not complete migration due to a variety of challenges - both natural and human-caused - along the way.

Fortunately, we humans can help migrating birds each fall (and spring) in numerous ways. Here are just a few things you can do to make the migratory journeys of birds more pleasant and successful:

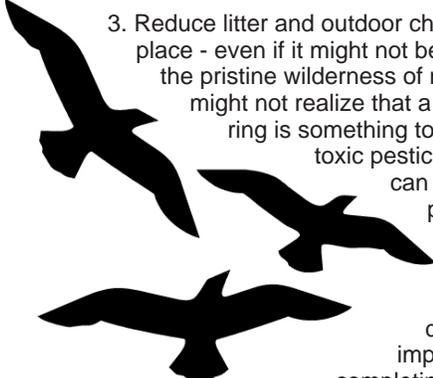
1. Turn off your outdoor lights at night whenever possible, (unless safety is an issue). Excessive lighting can interfere with clear vision at night and will attract certain birds away from their migratory path. Even a motion-sensored light can be extremely helpful in reducing light pollution for migrating birds as well as other nocturnal animals such as bats and moths.

2. Provide food, water, and shelter in your yard or outdoor space. These provide important resting and refueling zones for birds along their migratory path. Many of their natural stopover areas have been lost to deforestation and development. Your yard can become a place to rest and refuel for the journey ahead.

3. Reduce litter and outdoor chemical treatments. Put trash in its place - even if it might not be your trash. Birds migrating from the pristine wilderness of northern Canada, for instance, might not realize that a candy wrapper or plastic 6-pack ring is something to be avoided. The same goes for toxic pesticides and herbicides. Do what you can to eliminate their use wherever possible.

4. Help birds recognize that your glass windows are reflective barriers. Even if a window strike does not kill a bird outright, it could impair its flight so as to prevent it from completing its migratory journey. Use stickers, decals, window birdfeeders, or colorful blinds/curtains in order to make it clear to flying animals that 'this is a window!'

5. Talk to people about birds. This might not seem like a big deal, but sharing what you enjoy about birds, especially with a young person, can help foster an interest in birds and a concern for their welfare. Often, an interest in a particular animal or group of animals can lead to a lifelong desire to protect wildlife and habitats in general - for a great example of this, we need look no further than Audubon! What began as a group of people interested in watching birds is now a huge leader in conservation efforts throughout the world.



Sample page Inside the Crossley ID Guide

Woodford Spring Bird Count 2011

by Matthew Winks

Despite a rather poor spring migration, we set yet another new high mark for species at 155. The Garmans, formerly of Roanoke and the former compilers, bowed out this year. They're now residing in Hanna City. With fewer observers this year and the scarcity of songbirds, I was not expecting a great count.

The April weather pattern was dominated by northerly winds, cool temps, and cloudy skies. Neotropical migrants in particular were held up by this weather pattern. We missed Eastern Wood-Pewee for the first time since I've been compiling. In comparison, last year we recorded 21 pewees. This was an earlier count date than in recent years, but I don't think this played a big factor. I was out in the field the following week and the number of migrants was never impressive. We had a record low count of just 20 Tennessee Warblers. In 2010 we recorded 86. We recorded 30 American Redstarts vs 93 last year.



Highlights were numerous, including a remarkable and record high 28 species of warblers. We had every vireo with the exception of White-eyed. Pete Fenner found a couple goodies along the Illinois River floodplain with a Black-necked Stilt and two Snowy Egrets. I believe these are both new count species. Lesser Scaup, Gadwall, Purple Finch, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Canada Warbler were also nice additions from his western territory. American White Pelican and Double-crested Cormorant were good Illinois River birds.

Ted Hartzler added two Blue Grosbeaks which are new to the count. This species is becoming increasingly common and probably colonizing suitable habitats in our area. Bell's Vireo, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Cape May Warbler were also excellent additions from Ted's territory. That could be a count first for Bell's. I'll have to see if I can find the Garmans' historical data. The El Paso Sewage Lagoon continued to turn up good shorebirds with Willet and Dunlin.

Matt Fraker had an American Bittern, found for the third consecutive spring on wetlands in the Mackinaw Bluffs. I'm curious if this species might be breeding in the area or it's just a stopover site. Hermit Thrush and Hooded Warbler were good finds as was the return of Henslow's Sparrows to South Chinquapin. Two Common Loons at Evergreen Lake were also noteworthy.

Mary Jo Adams and Annette Raver added the count's only Mourning Warbler which is always a great bird for the count. They also had the count's only Bald Eagles, Common Nighthawk, Veery, Bay-breasted and Blackpoll Warblers. All this while spending the entire day on foot! They missed Cerulean Warbler on count day, but have since had a singing male. It's great to know this species is still hanging on out there.

We are pushing Woodford County totals toward the top of the class!

HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL SAT. AUG. 27, 2011 FOREST PARK NATURE CENTER



Hummingbird festivals offer an up-close view of these amazing, tiny little birds as Vernon Kleen, Master Permit Bander and member of the IAS Board of Directors, captures and bands the birds during the festival.

Banding helps determine how far into Mexico or Central America the birds go for the winter, where they stop during their travels, how long they live, and whether they come back to the same sites year after year. Kleen reports that birds banded in Illinois have been found in Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Attendees at IAS Hummingbird Festivals "adopt" hummingbirds by making a \$5 donation to the Illinois Audubon Society's land acquisition fund; this fund is earmarked for the protection of Illinois wildlife habitat. Donors will receive an attractive, signed certificate, be given the privilege of releasing their adopted bird, and will be notified if their bird is ever recaptured.

Peoria Hummingbird Festival will be August 27 (9:00 am to noon) Forest Park Nature Center.



Annual Bird Seed Sale

by Joe VanWassenhove

Peoria Audubon will be taking orders for Bird Seed in October for pick-up on Saturday, November 5, 2011. You can pick up your seed between 8 am and 11 am at Kelly Seed, 202 Hamilton Blvd, Peoria, IL.

This is our primary fund raiser each year, so we very much appreciate all the pre-orders. Order forms will be included in the next newsletter. Order forms will also be available online at www.peoriaaudubon.org. Orders and checks should be submitted by Wednesday, November 2. Kelly's has been very accommodating so extra seed will be available on the pick-up day at the special Audubon prices for people who did not pre-order.

Due to droughts overseas that are increasing demand and because many farmers are switching to corn due to recent corn prices (up 30%!), sunflower seed prices have been climbing. We won't know the final pricing for this year's sale until October but current prices are up 10-40% over last year's sale prices. Final info on this year's sale will be available in early October so please check our website then for this update. Regardless of prices, though, our feathered friends will very much appreciate your continued support!



The Friends of Rocky Glen

is a nonprofit organization advocating for the protection of an historic natural hiking area with unique geologic formations. In fact, some people believe this area to be a Peoria-based version of Starved Rock. The land is currently privately owned but borders an area owned by the Peoria Park District. The group has received permission to conduct guided hikes into Rocky Glen on a monthly basis.

To participate, check out their calendar at <http://friendsofrockyglen.org/visit/> and join them for a hike. You will hear how you can do your part to protect and preserve this beautiful natural area. By raising funds to purchase the rights to the land, the Friends of Rocky Glen hope to protect the area from development and open it up to public enjoyment.

Bird Migration - what you can do...

Inside:

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

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Conservation

What Birds Teach Us: Don't take them or the future for granted.

The bird you heard singing or saw overhead today? It's pretty easy to take it for granted, but in fact, it might have traveled thousands of miles to get to your house. It might have been to places where you'd need a passport and vaccinations to visit. Those ducks that show up every winter in your local park? It's likely they were hatched in the Arctic tundra. When you stop to think about it, birds are the last connection to the wild for many of us. And the arrival and departure of birds -- particularly during their heroic migrations -- is a link to nature's rhythms.

But that bond can be broken. We are seeing fewer and fewer migratory birds, even many so-called common species. That's because they depend on a chain of food and rest stops, whether they travel up the Mississippi River or along the Atlantic or Pacific coasts. Break enough links in the chain, and birds die -- or are never born.

The Eastern Meadowlark's four-note call (it sounds like we'ee SEE you) is a classic spring birdsong. Like a super-hero's costume, the meadowlark has a brilliant yellow breast emblazoned with a black V.

But the meadowlark is no super-hero. In fact, it is in mortal danger. Four decades ago, there were an estimated 24 million Eastern Meadowlarks in the wild. Today that number has fallen to fewer than 7 million.

The meadowlark is an indirect victim of American dependence on foreign oil. As oil prices have skyrocketed, farmers have switched over their fields to grow corn for ethanol. Cornfields make poor meadowlark habitats. The chain is broken.

On the West Coast, the Rufous Hummingbird faces similar threats. The Rufous is a tiny, almost all cinnamon-colored bird (males have a red throat), found wherever flowers are near, from dense forests to sunny gardens in southern Alaska to northern California. Tiny and mighty, Rufous Hummingbirds migrate thousands of miles down the West Coast, to spend the winter in Mexico.

The Rufous Hummingbird breeds in Alaska and in the Pacific Northwest, where logging and urban sprawl have degraded its habitat. Current estimates suggest its numbers are crashing, having fallen by nearly 60 percent over the past four decades.

In all, my colleagues at National Audubon Society have identified more than 20 birds, once common, whose numbers have plummeted since the mid-1960s. They are victims of a growing list of threats, including disruption in our climate, conversion of pastures and meadows to farmland, urban sprawl, pollution, logging, and other human causes.

Why should you care about that bird pecking in your front yard or about the Rufous or the meadowlark? Because thriving birds = thriving ecosystems. And thriving ecosystems = clean air, clean water, abundant food and great habitat. And those are places where people thrive, too. This isn't just about doing what's best for birds; it's about doing what's best for our kids and the generations to follow.

Article by David Yarnold, President & CEO of Audubon

Article originally appeared in the Huffington Post online here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-yarnold/what-birds-teach-us-dont-_b_883120.html



Eastern Meadowlark