

Bird's-eye View



SPRING 2012

Mark your calendars!
SPRING BIRD COUNT
SAT. MAY 5, 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

Sat. May 5, 2012 Illinois Spring Bird Count

Peoria Audubon participates in the statewide Illinois Spring Bird Count. Multiple teams will go out into the field to take a census of migrating birds in our area. Contact Mike Miller, 309-657-8788, to volunteer for this event.

Wed. May 9, 2012, 7 PM Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC

Don Chamberlain, from DEC Mind Meld Photography Decatur, IL, will speak on bird photography and share photography tips gleaned during several in-the-field photography workshops taken during the 2009 and 2010 Space Coast Birding Festival in Titusville, Florida.

Sat. May 12, 2012, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Hennepin Hopper - Oak Bluff Savannah Field Trip

 Maury Brucker will lead this spring trip to the wetland restoration at Hennepin Hopper and an Oak Bluff Savannah Restoration, both near Henry, IL. Meet at Forest Park Nature Center. Be prepared for a dutch treat lunch in the vicinity. Contact Maury 309-696-5490 to sign up.

Wed. May 16, 2012, 10 AM Wed. Jun. 6, 2012 10 AM Wildflower Walk at FPNC

Naturalist guided tour at the Forest Park Nature Center. Wear comfortable walking shoes, expect to walk up to a half mile. Donations requested.

Sat. May 5, 2012, 7:30 AM Sat. May 19, 2012, 7:30 AM Migratory Bird Walks at FPNC

Search for spring migrants and resident birds of Forest Park with a guide from the Nature Center or Peoria Audubon. Please bring binoculars or you may borrow some the Nature Center. All levels welcome, no experience required. Donations requested.

May 18-20, 2012 Annual Illinois Audubon Southern Field Trip

Throughout Shawnee Forest Area. Locations visited: Union County Conservation Area, Mermet Lake Conservation Area, Heron Pond Nature Preserve and Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Contact Verne Kleen at: 217-787-3515 or vkleen@comcast.net.

June 1-3, 2012 Birds and Bridges Field Trip

Enjoy a Tour of Western Indiana covered bridges and birds. Tour led by Marilyn Campbell. Limited space available. Cost \$30. Contact Marilyn at: 217.662.6460. or owl-watcher@egix.net.

Sat. June 9, 2012, 9 AM - 3 PM Prairie Cemeteries of Western Illinois Monmouth, IL

Travel to four Nature Preserve prairie cemeteries in Western Illinois. Trip led by Angela Moorehouse, Illinois Nature Preserves. Cost \$10 per person, includes snacks and water. Registration required, call 217-544-2473 or check www.illinoisaudubon.org.

Sat. July 21, 2012, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM Dragonflies - Altamont, IL

One day field trip led by Richard Day begins with an informative program at Ballard Nature Center. Learn natural history and dragonfly identification tips. Cost \$40 per person, includes continental breakfast and snacks. Registration required. Call 217-544-2473 or check www.illinoisaudubon.org.

SAVE THESE DATES:

Sat. Aug. 18, 2012, 7 AM - 4 PM Birding the Illinois River Fall Shorebird Migration Field Trip

Sat. Aug. 25, 2012, 9 AM - Noon Hummingbird Festival at FPNC

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

A Note from our President

Audubon Society and Wind Energy Guidelines

Dennis Endicott

With the increase in the numbers of wind turbines going up which help to promote a more sustainable source of energy, one of the on-going concerns is the potential for increasing the numbers of bird strikes. The National Audubon Society promotes a more energy sustainable future, but the Society also promotes wildlife conservation. So how can implementation of these two potentially conflicting goals both be accomplished? David Yarnold, President of the National Audubon Society, wrote to Ken Salazar, Secretary of the US Department of the Interior voicing support of promoting bird and wildlife protection through the just drafted US Fish and Wildlife Service's, "Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines."

The overall goal of the new guidelines is to implement strong, science-based policy and procedures regarding wind energy. The implementation of the guidelines would provide thorough training to field personnel to ensure consistent application of science-based guidelines for bird and wildlife protection. Part of the Audubon goal is to work with wildlife conservation groups across the country to translate the national guidelines into effective conservation measures. The voluntary guidelines were designed to help wind energy project developers shape the smart siting, design, and operation of this nation's growing wind energy economy.

We all know how the goals are lofty, but how do they work? One of the first considerations is to provide guidelines for optimal site selection and how to evaluate the potential risks and benefits.

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



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Audubon Society and Wind Energy Guidelines

The guidelines:

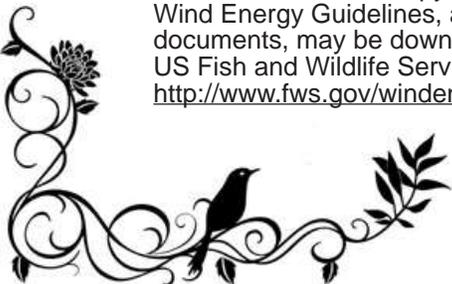
- Promote compliance with relevant wildlife laws and regulations;
- Encourage scientifically rigorous survey, monitoring, assessment and research designs to evaluate the risk to species of concern;
- Produce potentially comparable data across the Nation;
- Provide mitigation strategies for potential adverse effects on species of concern and their habitats
- Improve the ability to predict and resolve effects locally, regionally, and nationally
- Optimize turbine locations to avoid separating bird and bat species of concern from their daily roosting, feeding, or nesting sites if documented that the turbine presence poses a risk to species.

Once a site is selected, the guidelines also provided 27 Best Management Practices and a number of other strategies to help reduce potential impacts and minimize risk to wildlife. These include:

- Placing low and medium voltage power lines underground to the extent possible.
- Avoid use of guy wires with communication or other towers at the wind energy project sites.
- Employ only red or dual red and white strobe, strobe-like, or flashing lights. Do not use steady burning lights to meet visibility requirements.
- Only a portion of the turbines within a wind project should be lighted.
- All pilot warning lights should fire synchronously.
- All internal turbine and tower lighting should be extinguished when unoccupied.

Being in the form voluntary guidelines, the document is intended to help provide a standardized science-based evaluation of a potential site anywhere in the US. Recent advances in wind energy technologies and utilization of best practices should help provide an optimal benefit while minimizing the potential for wildlife impact.

To learn more, a full copy of the 82-page Wind Energy Guidelines, and support documents, may be downloaded from the US Fish and Wildlife Service website at: <http://www.fws.gov/windenergy>



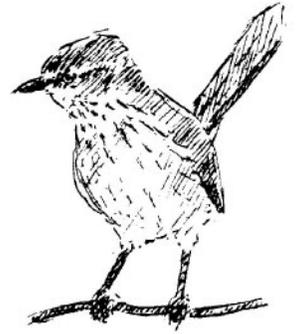
Spring Bird Count

by Mike Miller

Saturday, May 5 is the annual Spring Bird Count. Each year, birders throughout the state organize teams in every county. This time of year is usually during the peak of spring migration, and the results are used by the Illinois Natural History Survey to give a good snapshot of the spring migratory bird population on a state-wide level.

If you are interested in taking part, contact one of the county coordinators listed below:

Peoria, Mike Miller (309)681-2858
 Tazewell, Thad Edmonds
 (309)243-1854
 Woodford, Matt Winks (309)287-8114
 Mason, Dick Bjorklund (309)968-6502
 Fulton, Helen Gasdorf (309)676-3384



K.M.

Flock of snow geese at Emiquon, photo by D. Endicott



Birding on the Illinois River Field Trip Report

by Mike Miller

Our annual Birding on the Illinois River field trip took place on March 3, 2012. This program is conducted in cooperation with the Peoria Park District's Forest Park Nature Center. This year, over 30 participants set forth on a windy March morning to travel a route that took us to Spring Lake, Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge, Sand Lake, The Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Preserve, and Rice Lake. We time the spring trip to take advantage of waterfowl migration. We saw over 50 species of birds that day, and some of the highlights included a record number of Pintail Ducks, Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese and Tundra Swans.

Join us for the fall migration, where the focus will be shorebirds! Save the date of Saturday, August 18 from 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM. The trip includes transportation and lunch. Fee for Peoria Audubon and Forest Park Nature Center members is \$30/person. Call the Nature Center at (309)686-3360 to make your reservation.



Birders looking through the scopes at Emiquon photo by D. Endicott

Peoria Audubon Membership Dues

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

\$35 Local plus National dues

\$15 Local dues only

Send dues to Peoria Audubon Society,
677 E. High Pt. Terrace, Peoria, IL 61614

A Friendly reminder to please pay your membership dues.



Springdale Cemetery Savanna Update

by Mike Miller

A well publicized conservation issue concerning the future of Springdale Cemetery Savanna has fallen from the front page of the local news, but it is an issue that still needs local attention. This rare remnant oak savanna is one of the few that remain in the state of Illinois. It has been under the care of Peoria Wilds, a local not-for-profit stewardship group since 1990. The recent debate stemmed from discussion by the Springdale Cemetery Management Authority about developing the savanna for burials, green burials, or a combination of both. Last summer, several acres of the savanna were mowed by cemetery staff, which compromised the decades-long work of savanna restoration conducted by Peoria Wilds. It was also in violation of the long-standing agreement the Cemetery had with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources since the area was designated an Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark in 1993. After several highly charged meetings and numerous letters from concerned citizens, the cemetery board agreed to allow Peoria Wilds to present a program at its February meeting. At that meeting, the Cemetery board voted to leave the savanna intact, keeping the agreement with IDNR.

Even though this is a great step towards the protection of this rare natural area, the issue is not fully over. The cemetery board feels that the northern end of the savanna is not within the boundaries of the Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark. They are still exploring the option of selling plots for "green burials" within the bounds of the savanna habitat. Peoria Wilds feels differently. They contend that the northern end of the savanna is within the Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark and that there are ample areas within the cemetery near the savanna without having to jeopardize the integrity of the preserve by digging graves. So there could be more action needed by those wanting to keep the savanna, as it exists today, intact. Peoria Audubon's board has endorsed the position of Peoria Wilds in maintaining the Savanna as it exists today. If you would like to help Peoria Wilds preserve Springdale Cemetery Savanna, come to one of the monthly Peoria Wilds workdays on the first Saturday of the month, or contact John Paul McGreal from Peoria Wilds at (630)215-8204.

Audubon Adventures

by Deb Roe & Carol Borders

Audubon Adventures is an award-winning environmental education program. The program features vividly illustrated classroom kits that can be used across the curriculum and offers correlations to National Language Arts and Science Standards PLUS student assessment material.

By linking content to the common core standards for language arts and science, Audubon Adventures helps teachers and students alike.

The theme for this year's program is "Sharing our Earth" with topics including: Save Our Shores, Bird Friendly Communities, Forests, and Healthy Climate for People and Wildlife.

The local Peoria Audubon chapter is pleased to sponsor 24 classrooms from 8 local schools to participate in the program this fall. Schools participating include:

Charter Oak Primary School
Christ Lutheran School
Dee Mack Primary School
Holy Family
Illinis Bluffs Elementary
New Central Elementary School in Havana
Pleasant Hill Elementary School
Pleasant Valley School

Carol Borders, the education chair for the Peoria Audubon Society, has done an excellent job getting schools signed up for the program this year.

More information about the program is on the internet at: <http://education.audubon.org/audubon-adventures>

Each classroom kit costs \$50. Members of the Peoria Audubon can participate by sponsoring a kit for one classroom. Two sponsors have donated, so far, and Peoria Audubon society could use 22 more. Peoria Audubon society is a 501c(3) corporation, so sponsorships are tax deductible.

If you would like to sponsor a classroom, please clip the coupon below and send it, along with a check written out to Peoria Audubon Society for \$50, to Peoria Audubon Society, 677 E. High Pt. Terrace, Peoria, IL 61614.

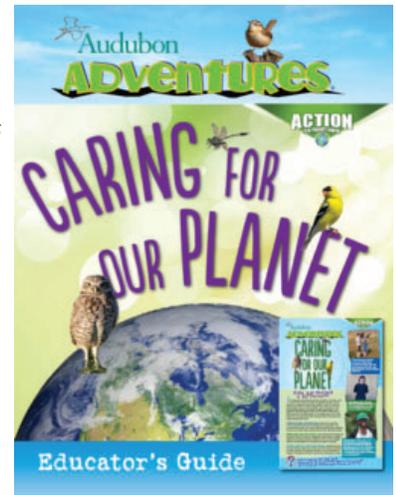
2012 Audubon Adventures Classroom Sponsor

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Send \$50 to Peoria Audubon Society,
677 E. High Pt. Terrace, Peoria, IL 61614





PEORIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE
677 E HIGH PT TERRACE
PEORIA IL 61614

Inside: Springdale Savannah Update

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

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Conservation

Oil & Birds Don't Mix

Two years ago on April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, under contract to BP, exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, tragically killing 11 people and setting in motion the worst oil spill in American history. Oil gushed for nearly 90 days, while BP and other contractors in the Gulf sought in vain to find a solution to the blowout.

By the time the well was capped, nearly 5 million barrels of oil—that's more than 200,000,000 gallons—had poured into the Gulf. The toll on birds and other wildlife, and on the livelihoods of the communities who depend on the Gulf for fishing and tourism, has been catastrophic.

To mark the anniversary, Audubon is calling on concerned Americans to take one action every day to restore the Gulf to health, to help prevent future disasters, and to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. And because we need to remember—oil and birds don't mix!

Audubon's Oil & Birds Don't Mix campaign marks the two-year anniversary of the blowout, not with anger but with hope and commitment, to:

- * Ensure that the Gulf region gets the funds needed to restore damaged habitats;
- * Encourage supporters to think globally and act locally by making simple change that, added together, can make a difference; and
- * Make sure lessons learned are not forgotten as we debate new drilling sites in ecologically critical places.

To learn more about the steps Audubon encourages for the Oil & Birds Don't mix campaign:

<http://gulfoilspill.audubon.org/oil-birds-dont-mix-how-you-can-help>

