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The Illinois Audubon Society’s Acquisition Director Tom Clay praised Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and Grand Victoria Foundation for financial support of Amboy Marsh. “Like never before, and primarily due to these conservation-minded Foundations, Illinois land trusts are protecting some of our most vital lands,” Clay said. “These Foundations and our members are preserving land for public use and benefit now and for generations to come.”

Blanding’s turtles are medium-sized, semi-aquatic, freshwater turtles that inhabit wetlands in parts of the upper Midwest, New York, New England and southern Canada. With comparable sea turtle and tortoise life history characteristics, they can live 70 years. Blanding’s turtles reach sexual maturity at more than 20 years of age and have low reproductive potential.

Debra Carey, of Lee County Soil & Water Conservation District, said “We have worked with the site owners, and neighboring landowners, since 1986, carrying out Blanding turtle’s research. We could not be happier about Illinois Audubon’s permanent protection of this site and we look forward to a long-term partnership with the Society to steward and study this rare and remarkable land.”

Besides helping to cover the land cost, Grand Victoria and Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundations also supported, not-for-profit, statewide organization. Founded in 1897, the Society is Illinois’ oldest private conservation organization with over 2500 members, 20 chapters and 13 affiliate groups. Illinois Audubon Society has protected over 3000 acres by investing more than $6 million to protect land and water throughout Illinois.

These are just a few of the upcoming events listed at www.peoriaaudubon.org/calendar

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Annual event for birders to tally the number of bird species seen during the count period. Enter the information on the GBBC website: http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc

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Peoria Audubon Board Meeting
Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC.

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Spring Bird Count Statewide survey of birds. This bird count is timed to be at the peak of spring migration. The Peoria Audubon Society organizes teams, which participate in the statewide count. Contact Mike Miller to volunteer: 309-681-2858.

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Recognizing those who keep the Peoria Audubon Society chirping.

by Deb Roe

Dennis Endicott, past president and webmaster extraordinaire, stepped in to fill valuable board positions when we had some sudden and unexpected departures. Dennis served four terms as President, while also acting as secretary and webmaster. Dennis continues on with new Board as secretary and webmaster as the new elected president Mike Miller attempts to fill his shoes.

The Peoria Audubon newsletter is frequently updated, and easy to navigate. Maintaining a current web page is a challenge for any organization and Dennis keeps Peoria Audubon website in tip-top shape.

Receiving comments:

Treasurer Greet Prince receives award from President Mike Miller, recognizing her 40 years of service to Peoria Audubon.

Past-President Dennis Endicott receives award from current President Mike Miller, recognizing his extraordinary service to Peoria Audubon.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR UPCOMING BIRDING TRIPS

Peoria Audubon offers guided birding tours throughout the year. Audubon’s local bird experts scout the areas, identify and help teach new birders where to look and how to identify the numerous species living here in the Illinois River Valley. The Field Trips are great fun for amateurs and experts alike. Upcoming trips include:

March 2: Birding the Illinois River. Reservations required. Contact Forest Park Nature Center: 866-3360

April 20: MWRD wetlands Canton, IL. Registration required. Contact Thad Edmonds: 243-1854

May 4: Spring Bird Count: Contact Mike Miller: 681-2858

May 18: Spring Creek Nature Preserve East Peoria. Contact Maury Brucker: 691-5213

August 17th: Fall Shorebird Migration. Reservations required. Contact Forest Park Nature Center: 866-3360

Spring Wake Up brings Free Admission to Wildlife Prairie Park by Melissa Sauder

Take this opportunity to get a sneak peak of what’s new for 2013 at Wildlife Prairie Park! On March 23rd, there will be FREE ADMISSION, along with special activities surrounding the park's new butterfly habitat and aviary.

The park will provide a guided hike of the new facilities, crafts for the kids, raptors on display, educational booths, and a variety of programs throughout the day. There will be the opportunity to purchase personalized fundraising items that will support the construction of these new additions. These items would make a great gift for Mother’s Day or something special in your life. Please contact Melissa Sauder at msauder@wildlifeprairiestatepark.org or (309) 676-0998 for more details.

Chillicothe Bottoms Bird Survey by Maury Brucker

The Peoria Audubon Society bird survey team which is helping Ducks Unlimited to assess their new property, Chillicothe Bottoms, is finding a relatively high number of birds each month. Aug., Sept., Oct., and Nov. were 76, 82, 66, and 46 bird species respectively.

This is good for one location which is wetland and flood plain forest. We had bird families of shorebirds in Aug. warblers in Sept. and 14deg F, and wind was calm. Eagles were concentrated around open water especially along the channel south of Peoria, and warm water discharges.

Chillicothe Count, on January 5, also posted some record numbers with 82 species and 19,769 individual birds, including 5 different species of geese, 3 species of swan, 18 duck species, 173 Bald Eagles, six other raptors. They reported 3 species of woodpeckers listed in Illinois. Blackbirds were “everywhere”. It ws noted that the numbers of red-headed woodpeckers, lapland longspur and white crowned sparrows were low compared to previous counts. The weather on counting day was sunny and rather calm, after two days of very high wind.

The Chillicothe Count, on January 5, also posted some record numbers with 82 species and 19,769 individual birds, with Mallards being the most numerous. All four owl species for the area were recorded.

The Peoria Count was on Dec. 15th, the weather was rainy, windy and in the forties. The volunteer counters recorded 79 species and 9,815 birds. Ruddy Ducks were numerous, with over 1,500 counted. Crows were plentiful as well.

Christmas Bird Count Re-cap

Volunteers from the Peoria Audubon Society took part in the 113th annual Christmas Bird Count. It was a record setting year in the count circles.

On Dec. 22nd, the Chautauqua circle recorded by Sig and Richard Blackwood was an all time record. 101 Species, 148,837 individual birds, including 5 different species of geese, 3 species of swan, 18 duck species, 173 Bald Eagles, six other raptors. They reported all 7 species of woodpeckers listed in Illinois. Blackbirds were “everywhere”. It ws noted that the numbers of red-headed woodpeckers, lapland longspur and white crowned sparrows were low compared to previous counts. The weather on counting day was sunny and rather calm, after two days of very high wind.

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The complete details of the Christmas counts can be found on the Peoria Audubon website at: http://www.peoriaaudubon.org

Bald Eagle Count

Volunteers from the Peoria Audubon Society took part in the Midwinter Bald Eagle Count on January 26.

There were 4 teams from the shore, and a boat team on a portion of the south end of the stretch of the river. Each team had at least 6 participants. The count territory is centered along the Rt 18 Bridge in Henry at the north end, and extended to the Rt 97/US 136 Bridge in Havana at the south end of the territory. The Boat counted from Pekin, below the Peoria Lock and Dam to Havana.

All combined, we documented 324 Eagles on the stretch of the Illinois River from Henry to Havana. This was composed of 192 adults, 11 Sub Adults, 112 immatures, and 9 Unknowns.

Some observations on this year:

The River had much more ice coverage than recent counts, especially north of Peoria. Temperature was 14deg F, and wind was calm.

Eagles were concentrated around open water especially along the channel south of Peoria, and warm water discharges.

Eagles were in two locations scavenging dead deer in the ice.

Peoria Audubon thanks all the counters: Mike Miller, Thad Edmunds, Melissa Sauder, Mike Ingram, Dennis Endicott, Mike, Todd, and Tori Rodgers, Brenda Garman, Sue Hunt, Mark Werner and Kim Joesting.

...continued from page 1
Recognizing those who keep the Peoria Audubon Society chirping.

By Deb Roe

At the January Monthly Membership Pot Luck Dinner, Peoria Audubon Society recognized two members for their dedication and service. Greit Prinzen has been Treasurer for the Audubon Society for over 40 years. Having the same dedicated and diligent person volunteering to keep the books, year after year, has been a valuable asset to the organization.

Treasure Greit Prinzen receives award from President Mike Miller, recognizing her 40 years of service to Peoria Audubon.

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This is good for one location which is wetland and flood plain forest. We have been hearing the shorebirds in Aug. warblers in Sept. and American sparrows in Oct. and Ducks in Nov. No House Sparrows found yet surprisingly.

We started the Dec. list on the first with 6 surveys. It was a wonderfully warm day. Between 9 am and 12, we found 37 bird species which is very good for Dec. Highlights were 7 species of ducks despite shooting from across the river, 5 different woodpeckers and 5 sparrow species. A late Yellow-rumped warbler was the most unusual bird found.

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Blanding’s Turtle Habitat Protected
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Besides helping to cover the land cost, Grand Victoria and Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundations each granted dollars for near-term restoration as well and Grand Victoria’s grant also includes support for long-term site stewardship. Illinois Audubon will immediately assemble an Amboy Marsh management team consisting of local, regional and statewide natural resource professionals. “Our goal is to have the site open for public use by next summer,” Clay said. “We also look forward to Amboy Marsh becoming a scientific research and environmental education resource for the community and the region.”

The mission of the Illinois Audubon Society is to promote the perpetuation and appreciation of native plants and animals and the habitats that support them. The Illinois Audubon Society is a member supported, not-for-profit, statewide organization. Founded in 1897, the Society is Illinois’ oldest private conservation organization with over 2300 members, 20 chapters and 13 affiliate groups. Illinois Audubon Society has protected over 3000 acres by investing more than $6 million to protect land and water throughout Illinois.

Peoria Audubon Board
Dennis Endicott - President
Mike Miller - Vice President/Program Chair
Maury Brucker - Treasurer
Wendy Princeton - Conservation Chair
Jesse Au - Board Member
Maury Brucker - Executive Director
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Inside: Christmas Bird Count Results
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Contact the Peoria Audubon Society at audubon@peoriaaudubon.org

WINTER 2013
Bird’s-eye View
BIRDING THE ILLINOIS RIVER
Field Trips at. march 2, 2013