

# Bird's-eye View



## WINTER 2013

Mark your calendars!  
**BIRDING THE ILLINOIS RIVER  
FIELD TRIP  
SAT. MARCH 2, 2013**

**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)

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

### **Fri. Feb. 15 - Mon. Feb. 18, 2013 Great Backyard Bird Count**

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/>

### **Sat. Mar. 2, 2013, 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM Field Trip: Birding the Illinois River**

Peoria Audubon's annual spring field trip, in partnership with the Peoria Park District. Mike Miller and Maury Brucker, local birding experts, guide this trip to numerous sites along the Illinois River south of Peoria. A small fee will cover the cost of the transportation and box lunch. Trip starts at 7:30 AM at Forest Park Nature Center. Register in advance by calling FPNC at 686-3360. The fee is \$35 per person, \$30 for Audubon/FPNC members.

### **Wed. Mar. 13, 2013, 7 PM To Be Announced**

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC.

### **Sat. Mar. 23, 2013 Spring Wake up at Wildlife Prairie Park**

Free Admission, more details inside newsletter.

### **Wed. Apr. 10, 2013, 7PM Birds in an Urban Habitat**

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC. Vern Kleen will present recent findings from a 4-year bird banding study conducted at the Margery Adams Bird Banding Station in Springfield, IL.

### **Thu. Apr. 18, 2013, 6:30 PM Peoria Academy of Science Banquet**

Annual Banquet at Barrack's Cater Inn, storyteller and Science teacher, Brian "Fox" Ellis becomes "Charles Darwin and his Revolutionary Idea." Fox personifies young Charles Darwin, telling the stories of his amazing adventure. Contact Frank Hitchell of the Peoria Academy of science for reservations

### **Sat. Apr. 20, 2013, 7:30 AM - 3 PM MWRD Field Trip & Bird Survey**

Thad Edmonds will lead a fall birding trip to the 15,000 acre wetlands, just southwest of Canton, IL. These wetlands are not open to the public, so it's a special opportunity for Audubon Society. Thad is continuing a survey, compiling data from previous counts. Bring your own lunch. RSVP by April 6, by contacting Thad Edmonds at 309-243-1854.

### **Sat. Apr. 20, 2013, 11 AM - 4 PM Earth Day Celebration at FPNC**

Celebrate Earth Day with food, music, booths, crafts, face painting, door prizes and more.

### **Apr. 26-28, 2013**

### **Illinois Audubon Spring Gathering Experience Emiquon**

Hosted by Emiquon Audubon Society at The Harvester Inn, Canton, IL. Look for upcoming details.

### **Sat. May 4, 2013 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 to participate in the statewide count. Contact Mike Miller to volunteer: 309-681-2858.

### **Wed. May 8, 2013 7PM Bird Tales: Stories and Songs from Many Cultures**

Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC. Brian "Fox" Ellis volunteered to provide his program on Bird Tales. By weaving his life long love for birds with traditional folktales from many countries, storyteller Fox takes listeners on the migratory flyways of our winged friends. Taking strands from the latest ornithological research, Fox creates a tapestry of tales that is informative and inspiring.

### **Sat. May 18, 2013 Spring Creek Field Trip**

See this little known natural area owned by East Peoria Park District. Trip will be guided by Maury Brucker and/or Pete Fenner. Meet at Spindler Marina at 7:30 am

## *A Note from our President*

by Mike Miller



It's been over 20 years since I first became involved with Peoria Audubon, first as a Spring Count compiler, then as a newsletter editor and Board Member. After a brief hiatus from the Board, I now find myself back as President. I can honestly say that this is one organization in which I have no trepidation about dedicating time. It is a great organization with a long history of great service by dedicated individuals.

Recently, we honored two of our PAS Board Members for their years of service and dedication. Dennis Endicott (our past President and present Secretary) left some pretty big shoes to fill. I can only thank him for remaining on the board in a leadership role. He has become an integral part of our Peoria Audubon Identity with his expertise as webmaster, and skills in taking what can seem like chaos, and organizing all of our reporting efforts with National Audubon. We also wanted to thank Greet Princen for over 40 years of service as Treasurer. She too has the special skill of organizing our finances and keeping our records and club on a fiscally stable footing. Beyond these two individuals, I want to personally thank all PAS members who have stepped forward to take on a role or task. Everything our members do to make the organization a success is an important part of fulfilling our mission and the mission of National Audubon Society.

As we move forward, there are several new and exciting things that will need your help. We are close to fulfilling a goal of developing a local Peoria Audubon Sanctuary.

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*A note from our new president Mike Miller*

While the sanctuary details are still being worked through, it will fulfill a 12-year quest for establishing a local sanctuary dedicated to improving local habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl. We embarked on this Sanctuary Initiative under the leadership of Rick Fox over a decade ago. As we move forward with this we need a dedicated team of volunteers to establish a Local Sanctuary Committee to oversee the process of sanctuary development, planning, funding and stewardship. If this interests you, please contact Maury Brucker or me.

It is an exciting time for Peoria Audubon. I appreciate the opportunity to serve in a leadership role, and would like to offer a challenge to you as well... Become involved! Peoria Audubon is one of the best chapters of National Audubon, let's strive towards making it one of the most appreciated chapters by the local bird population as well!

## 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 birds 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: 686-3360

**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: 686-3360

## 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 also 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 someone special in your life. Please contact Melissa Sauder at [msauder@wildlifeprairiestatepark.org](mailto:msauder@wildlifeprairiestatepark.org) or (309) 676-0998 for more details.



[www.LucyGardens.com](http://www.LucyGardens.com)

## Recognizing those who keep the Peoria Audubon Society chirping.

*by Deb Roe*



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

At the January Monthly Membership Pot Luck Dinner, Peoria Audubon Society recognized two members for their dedication and service. Greet Princen 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.

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.



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

The Peoria Audubon website 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.

## 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 respectfully. 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 American sparrows in Oct. and Ducks in Nov. No House Sparrows found yet surprisingly.

We started the Dec. list on the first with 6 surveyors. 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.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**17 TREES**



**MAKE**

**1 TON OF PAPER**



**SAVE PAPER  
SAVE TREES**

## Electronic Newsletter - Coming Soon.

By Deb Roe

The Peoria Audubon society is now offering members the ability to receive the newsletter electronically via email, instead of a mailed, paper copy. The Audubon Society sends out four newsletters each year. These newsletters include important dates,

information on bird watching trips, conservation topics and events of interest to birders and conservation-minded folks in the Peoria area. Each issue involves printing and mailing over 600 newsletters. The costs of printing and postage are continuing to rise. In order to keep our membership fees reasonable, we are investigating the feasibility of sending the newsletter via email, instead of USPS. In addition to saving money, as a conservation orientated organization, Peoria Audubon Society would like to reduce our footprint and save as many trees as possible.

In order to receive an electronic newsletter, we will need your email address. If you would like to opt out of the paper version, and help save trees, send an email to: [newsletter@peoriaaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@peoriaaudubon.org). Put newsletter in the subject line. Include your name and address in the email, so we can cross reference the email address with our membership database. Peoria Audubon will not share your email with anyone else.

We will still provide newsletters in the traditional paper-via-mail format for those who prefer a hard copy. If you want to keep receiving your paper copy, do nothing, except keep your membership current. The paper newsletter will continue to be mailed to members who haven't specifically asked to opt out.

We may need a couple newsletter cycles to iron out the wrinkles, so bear with us as we make this earth-friendly, budget-friendly transition. Feel free to contact any board

## Seed Sale Re-Cap

by Joe VanWassenhove

"Thanks to all who supported our annual birdseed sale. This is our only fundraiser each year and the proceeds allow us to bring in guest speakers each month, pay for printing and mailing our informative newsletter and support the school outreach program through Audubon Adventures. The kind folks at Kelly Seed & Hardware again did an outstanding job of supporting us. We sold just under 6,000 lbs. of birdseed in 2012. That should be keeping a good number of central Illinois birds very happy this winter!"



## Bald Eagle Count

By Mike Miller

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 two participants. The count territory extended from 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 crew went 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 on the ice.

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



## Christmas Bird Count Re-cap

Summary by Deb Roe

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 count circle recorded by Sig and Richard Bjorklund 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 was 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 relative 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 75 species and 11,851 birds. Ruddy Ducks were numerous, with over 1,500 counted. Crows were plentiful as well.



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

# Inside: Christmas Bird Count Results

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

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**Peoria Audubon Board**  
audubon@peoriaaudubon.org

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- Greet Princen - Treasurer
- Dennis Endicott - Secretary/Webmaster
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- Pete Fenner - Board Member
- Deb Roe - Board Member / Newsletter Editor
- Jim Miller - Board Member
- Melissa Sauder - Board Member
- Susie Grana-Ingram - Board Member



## Conservation

### *Blanding's Turtle Habitat Protected*

The Illinois Audubon Society announced in December its acquisition and permanent protection of a rare and fragile Northern Illinois ecosystem. Amboy Marsh, located in southeastern Lee County, is a 272-acre wetland complex interspersed with black oak sand savannas, sedge meadows and dry sand prairie. According to Illinois Natural Area Inventory data, Amboy Marsh has unique natural features that attract and host one of Illinois' highest populations of nesting state-endangered Blanding's turtles.

Illinois Audubon Executive 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 land owners, since 1986, carrying out Blanding's turtle 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 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 day 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.

