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Bird Counts are Fun- Join Us!
Susy Turner

The Illinois Spring Bird Count is coming up on Saturday, May 10. If you have ever thought a bird count sounds interesting, the spring count is an amazing experience you won’t regret.

Scheduled at the peak of spring migration, the woods are filled with colorful migrants and this citizen science experience is the perfect excuse to spend an entire day birding.

But- Aren’t bird counts only for expert birders who can identify every warbler by song and every high-flying silhouette at a glance? That’s exactly what I thought until I tagged along on my first Christmas Bird Count three years ago. I quickly realized that most of the birds around Peoria at that time of year are common “backyard” species or perhaps waterfowl that will conveniently hang around long enough to identify with a field guide if needed. I felt confident enough after that initial experience to head my own Christmas Count team the past two years.

But what about the Spring Count? There are so many more species and I don’t know all the warblers and vireos by sight, much less by sound! I will admit that I was rather terrified last year when I found out my friend Meghan and I would be covering our own large area in our first ever spring count. The other teams WERE the experts, and while I knew there was no competition- the other teams far exceeded our skills- I didn’t want our newbie team to fail miserably. It turned out to be a fantastic day of birding and great experience in developing our identification skills. If we couldn’t identify a warbler, we carefully recorded the field marks and looked it up when we had time. We ended our day with 73 total species, over 1200 total birds and 13 warbler species. We saw scarlet tanagers and orioles, each found several life species and felt great about our day.

If this sounds like fun experience but you’re still a little unsure, tag along with Meghan and me! You’ll quickly realize you are a much better and more qualified birder than you may have thought. Contact Peoria County compiler, Mike Miller, at (309) 681-2858 for more information.

Peoria County count information is sent to Tara Beveroth at the Illinois Natural History Survey and compiled as part of the Illinois Spring Count Database. Thirty years of data can be found at www.inhs.illinois.edu/sbc/about.html.

Continued from page 1...

This winter has been a very productive one on the Sanctuary Initiative. Our board has been very active in networking with the Chillicothe community. As you know, Peoria Audubon has partnered with Ducks Unlimited in the acquisition and long term care of a 230 acre parcel we call “Chillicothe Bottoms.” This winter we have met with the Chillicothe Chamber of Commerce, the Chillicothe Historical Society and have assisted with the Eagle Day event at Shore Acres Park. One thing has been very evident- people of Chillicothe love their river and will be great supporters of a sanctuary. I don’t think we could have picked a better group of folks to be neighbors in our sanctuary initiative. We invite you to join us Sunday, May 4, from 2:00-4:00 PM for a tour of Chillicothe Bottoms. Meet at Moffit Park in Chillicothe. It will be a great time to see some spring migrants!

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Photo Peoria Audubon Society
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Photo Peoria Audubon Society

Melissa Sauder
Peoria Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3535
Peoria, IL 61614

March 20, 2014

Dear Fellow Nature Enthusiast,

The Peoria Audubon Society is currently in the process of acquiring an incredibly diverse and unique habitat known as the Chillicothe Bottoms, located along the Illinois River. The Audubon is in need of donations for our fundraising auction. We are asking for donations of nature related artwork, outdoor enthusiast equipment, educational items, gift cards for local community services, along with any other items deemed appropriate to the goals of the Audubon Society and its members. Proceeds from the fundraiser will go directly to the enhancement of the site for public access and viewing, along with the general maintenance of the sanctuary.

The fundraiser will be held on Wednesday, May 14th, 2014 at 7pm at the Forest Park Nature Center in Peoria Heights. We will be featuring a silent auction, live auction, refreshments and more. If you would like to make a donation, please contact one of the following coordinators with questions:

Melissa Sauder (309) 472-3561
tracy@tracyfox.com

Melissa Sauder Sauder83@gmail.com

Tracy Fox (309)369-5331
tracy@tracyfox.com

Gift cards and monetary donations can be mailed to the address listed above and donations can be received no later than May 7th, 2014. The Peoria Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. We greatly appreciate your in-kind donation that will enable nature lovers for generations to enjoy the Chillicothe Bottoms Wildlife Sanctuary.

Sincerely,

Melissa Sauder
Vice President
Peoria Audubon Society
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