



BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Newsletter of The Peoria Audubon Society



Chapter of National Audubon since 1981
 Chapter of The Peoria Academy of Science since 1930
 Affiliate of Illinois Audubon



PEORIAAUDUBON.ORG

CONTACT US : PEORIAAUDUBON@GMAIL.COM

Peoria Audubon Society formed in 1930 to promote appreciation and conservation for birds within the Peoria region. We are a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting birds through education, advocacy, and sanctuary initiatives. We strive to be inclusive, welcoming, and judgment-free to all.

Become a Member!

Dual membership includes membership in the Peoria Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society. Peoria Audubon is incorporated in the State of Illinois with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, making all charitable contributions tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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TREE SWALLOW , JULY 2024 PATRICK MENKE

SPRING BIRDING

Spring has sprung and migration is well underway in Peoria! Across central Illinois millions of shorebirds, waterfowl, and songbirds are traveling north towards their breeding grounds. Lucky for us- The Illinois River Valley provides an important stopover where migrants can rest and refuel after long flights. These travelers depend on healthy habitats to find the food and shelter they need along the way. Protecting these habitats is critical and an important mission of the Peoria Audubon Society and its members.

Through community efforts such as education, volunteering, and supporting conservation-minded organizations that help contribute to healthier ecosystems, we hope to combat declining bird populations and nurture stewardship among nature enthusiasts. Keep a close eye out for warblers, thrushes, and tanagers this migration and thank you for your support of the Peoria Audubon Society and our newsletter.
 -Logan Stanley

Monthly Meetings Free and Open to Public

Peoria Audubon Society Monthly Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday September-May held at Forest Park Nature Center and streamed via Zoom



PLEASE JOIN US

UPCOMING EVENTS

*** Monthly Meeting**

April 8, 2026 7:00PM
 In person at Forest Park Nature Center and on Zoom
What can you do for birds? by Patrick Menke
 Discussing the decline in bird populations and various strategies that will benefit local bird numbers including bird friendly plantings/yard certifications, reducing bird strikes, keeping cats indoors, etc.

*** Park District Event**

April 11, 2026 9:30-11:00AM
 Forest Park Nature Center
Spring Migratory Bird Hike - pre-register with Park District online or at Forest Park Nature Center.
 \$5/person or free with FPNC membership

*** Earth Day Festival**

April 18, 2026 11:00 AM-4:00 PM
 Forest Park Nature Center
 Visit our table while we celebrate Earth Day! There will be a vendor and exhibitor area that features organizations and businesses with sustainable practices and missions eager to share their work, products, and ways you can get involved or make a difference.

*** Casual Bird Outing!**

April 25, 2026 8:00-10:00AM
 Detweiller Riverside
 Come join us in some casual birding. This is an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy some birds! Inclusive to all and welcome to all skill levels!

CONTINUED EVENTS ON NEXT PAGE

PARTICIPATE IN
 CITIZEN SCIENCE!

CONSIDER DOWNLOADING THESE APPS
 OR CHECKING OUT THEIR WEBSITES



Woodcock Watch at Tawny Oaks Field Station



Field Trip: Monday March 9th 2026 6:50 PM

Thank you to all who showed up to our Woodcock Watch on Monday March 9th! We had some lovely weather around 67° F and around 60 people in attendance. We watched at least 4 Woodcock's perform their annual spring courtship display and heard their incredible peents. Special thank you to Pete Fenner for setting up and guiding this field trip!

Please keep an eye on our social media, website, or email list for future field trips and birding opportunities.



Who's singing?
 Merlin Bird ID can tell you

Common Yellowthroat
 House Wren
 Tree Swallow

Download for free!

UPCOMING EVENTS

✳️ **Park District Event**
 May 2, 2026 8:00-10:00AM
 Forest Park Nature Center
Migratory Bird Hike- [pre-register with Park District online](#) or at Forest Park Nature Center. \$5/person or free with FPNC membership

✳️ **Spring Bird Count**
 May 9-10, 2026 All Day
 Our Spring Bird Count will be Saturday May 9th for Peoria, Tazewell, Marshall, and Mason Counties. Sunday May 10th will be the Fulton County SBC. Please reach out to the following if you would like to participate!

- Peoria -- Mike Miller (309) 681-2858
- Tazewell -- Don Hartzler djhartz@mtco.com
- Marshall -- Pete Fenner (309) 258-5969
- Mason -- Andy Gilbert agilb849@illinois.edu
- Fulton -- Rick Fox (309) 369-5330

Or click [here](#) to see who your county compiler is.

More events will be added. Check the website calendar of events and follow us on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date with current field trips and events!



Want to see more events? Looking for volunteers to help lead field trips, education, and volunteer opportunities. Reach out to peoriaaudubon@gmail.com

Native Plant Spotlight



Wild Columbine

If you're looking for an early spring bloomer, Wild Columbine offers a splash of color to your early May days. With its red and yellow tubular/bell-shaped flowers, it becomes a lovely food source for hummingbirds in the early season. This plant is frequently utilized for areas with shade, however they can also tolerate full sun. Consider planting some in your yard to help increase biodiversity!

Spring Bird Spotlight



Northern Parula

Setophaga americana

Small, short-tailed warbler with a sharply pointed, bicolored bill. Blue-gray above with mossy-green patch on the back, white eye-arcs, and yellow breast. Breeds in mature coniferous or deciduous forests, especially near water. Builds nest with moss; especially fond of Spanish moss in the southeast U.S. and old-man's-beard in the Northeast. Found in any wooded habitat in migration.

RARE BIRDS SEEN RECENTLY BY PETE FENNER

Recently, a Spotted Towhee was seen in February at Coal Hollow Park in Chillicothe. This is a bird that breeds in New Mexico and the states west of there. Local birder, Birch Davis, first spotted the bird associating with American Robins, and took a quick photo of it buried in some branches. Birch knew it wasn't a Robin, but was unsure of just exactly what it was. She made the final identification when she got home to review the picture. Sure enough, it was a Spotted Towhee. Many other birders from around the area and state traveled to our area to catch a glimpse of the bird over the next few days. Mostly, the bird stayed hidden like in this top photo. Can you see it? It is very well camouflaged!



SPOTTED TOWHEE, FEB 13, 2026 COPYRIGHT PETE FENNER



SPOTTED TOWHEE, FEB 13, 2026 COPYRIGHT PETE FENNER

WHAT RARITY COULD BE NEXT?

What is another rarity that could stop by our area in April or May? Who knows! But I'll just guess it could be a Western Kingbird. This is a common bird west of our area, but sometimes wanders our way. I'll include a photo so you will know what to look for. Good birding!



WESTERN KINGBIRD, COPYRIGHT PETE FENNER



RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS BY MIKE MILLER

Central Illinois has long supported healthy populations of Red-headed Woodpeckers, thanks to its oak woodlands and river valleys. With their bright red heads and bold black-and-white bodies, these birds are hard to miss. Despite their long presence in the region, populations have declined by about 50% over the past 50 years. While this drop is less severe than in other areas, it reflects a broader decline across most of the species' eastern North American range.

The reasons for this decline are complex. Red-headed Woodpeckers are unusually omnivorous, eating insects, fruits, nuts, seeds, and even small vertebrates. While this flexible diet seems advantageous, it requires highly diverse habitats—something increasingly rare as natural areas become fragmented.

These woodpeckers also depend on standing dead trees for nesting, excavating cavities in partially decayed wood. Their numbers briefly increased following widespread elm die-offs caused by Dutch Elm disease in the 1950s, but this benefit was short-lived as dead trees fell or were removed.

Habitat structure is another critical factor. Red-headed Woodpeckers thrive in open oak woodlands, which historically were maintained by periodic wildfires. Fire suppression over the past century has allowed forests to become denser, limiting

the birds' ability to catch flying insects. Invasive shrubs such as autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, and European buckthorn further degrade these habitats.

Overarching all these challenges is climate change. Models combining bird population data and climate projections suggest severe future impacts. A global temperature increase of 1.5°C could make parts of southern Illinois unsuitable for the species. At 2°C, central Illinois would mark the southern edge of its range, and at 3°C, the Red-headed Woodpecker could disappear from the state entirely. For more information, or to see the projections for Red-headed Woodpeckers, visit National Audubon's Climate study by clicking [here](#).

Improving the species' outlook requires action on multiple fronts. Maintaining open woodlands through prescribed fire and invasive species control has been shown to support population increases. At the same time, addressing human-driven climate change is essential. The decline of this species serves as a reminder that environmental changes affecting wildlife will ultimately affect humans as well, often in even more complex ways.



BOARD MEMBERS

President: Dennis Endicott

Treasurer: Pete Fenner

Conservation Chair: Mike Miller

Patrick Menke

Logan Stanley

Victoria Harting

Emma DeBruyn

Jane Easterly

Lee Maki

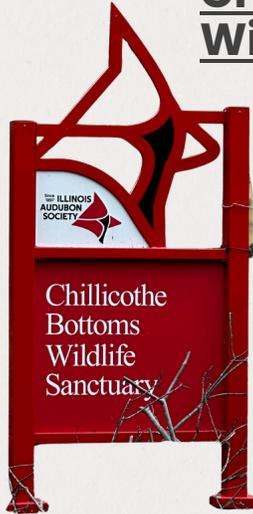
Steve Zehner



ANY MEMBER IS WELCOME TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES TO THIS NEWSLETTER. HAVE YOU SEEN ANY UNUSUAL BIRDS AT YOUR HOME OR IN THE FIELD? HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANY MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, OR CAMPS THAT YOU'D LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT? WRITE IT UP OR EMAIL THE EDITOR: VICTORIAROSEHARTING@GMAIL.COM

HOTSPOT HIGHLIGHT:

Chillicothe Bottoms Wildlife Sanctuary



PHOTOS BY: EMMA DEBRUYN

The 225-acre sanctuary is adjacent to the city of Chillicothe and contains high quality examples of wetland, swamp and floodplain forest habitat. The original purchase was completed by Ducks Unlimited in 2012 with assistance from private donors and grants from Grand Victoria Foundation and Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. It was donated to the Illinois Audubon Society in August 2018.

The property includes approximately 1 mile of frontage on the Illinois River and approximately ¼ mile of lower Senachwine Creek at its confluence with the river. The area has been identified as a Conservation Opportunity Area in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (IWAP) and is a conservation priority in the US Fish & Wildlife Service's North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

TRAILS ARE OPEN YEAR-ROUND, SUNRISE TO SUNSET.




DRINK BIRD FRIENDLY



LEARN MORE ABOUT BIRD FRIENDLY COFFEE FROM OUR SEPTEMBER 2025 MEETING



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For State Senators and
Representatives, to determine who
exactly in Illinois government
represents you, the Illinois State
Board of Elections District Locator
website can help. The boundaries
are difficult to describe, so click [here](#)
to check.

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