



The Meadowlark Messenger

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org

Champaign County Audubon Society • A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

NEW!

\$250 Mini-Grants for Educators

Deadline: February 3

Our mini-grants provide help to Champaign County educators with bringing environmental education to students. Some suggestions are: classroom equipment, books, guest speakers, outdoor learning areas, field trip costs, professional development, etc. Be creative!

Grants are available to educators within Champaign County only. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by members of the CCAS Education Committee. The final choices will be made by the our Board of Directors. Only one grant will be awarded to any educator.

If you would like to apply, please fill out the application found on our website.

Sponsor a Mini-Grant!

Your donation of \$250 will provide one mini-grant to a local classroom. Checks can be made out to CCAS and mailed to PO Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0882. All donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for supporting these valuable education opportunities!

February Program

Thursday, Feb 2, 7pm

Urbana Free Library Auditorium

Yellow Warblers to Willow Flycatchers: Using Social Behavior to Protect Songbird Populations

Presenter: Janice Kelly, PhD candidate

Join us for our first meeting of 2017 to hear about intriguing research being done right here at UIUC. Discover how social behavior in songbirds may be influencing habitat selection, and how land managers can utilize these unique behaviors to help protect and manage songbird populations. Hope to see you there!

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Champaign County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803
ChampaignCountyAudubon.org
mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org

Officers

- Co-Presidents: Sara Johnson and Cheryl Pettus
- Vice President: John Dunkelberger
- Secretary: Charlene Anchor
- Treasurer: Allan Penwell

Members at Large, 2016-2017

- Janet Jokela
- Caitlin Lill
- Jeff Peyton

Members at Large, 2017-2018

- Beth Chato
- Brody Dunn
- Carie Nixon

Committee Chairs

- Bylaws: vacant
- Conservation: Jeff Peyton
- Education: Pam Leiter
- Field Trip: Beth Chato
- Finance: Astrid Berkson
- Hospitality: vacant
- Membership: Caitlin Lill
- Nature Shop: Beth Chato
- Program: Sara Johnson
- Publications: vacant
- Publicity: Carie Nixon

Newsletter Coordinator: Ruth Walker

Webmaster & BirdNotes Listserve Manager: Pam Leiter

Champaign County Audubon publishes *The Meadowlark Messenger* nine times per year. Comments regarding the newsletter, or articles for submission, are welcome.



Get this newsletter delivered right to your inbox—in color! Would you like to go paperless and help our funds go further? Please visit our website

and look for the link “Get your Meadowlark Messenger via email.”



10% discount for CCAS members!

Monday–Saturday, 9am–4pm

Anita Purves Nature Center
1505 N. Broadway, Urbana, IL

Looking forward to spring, your shop has a selection of carefully chosen binoculars, plus a variety of field guides to birds and much more. As always we have books and many small items to interest young people in the natural world. We are completing inventory and restocking for the new year. We are always glad to special order items for you. Just call 344-6803. A portion of the proceeds support CCAS!



Field Notes

Submitted by: Beth Chato

A variety of waterfowl in December: Western Grebes in Lake Bloomington on the 4th, Homer Lake had Common Merganser, and Goldeneye on the 13th. River Bend had 4 Trumpeter Swans and Ring-necked Ducks on Dec 19. Goldeneye, Gadwall, and Canvasback and a Ross’ Goose were at Rantoul on Dec 29 & 31.

A large flock of Snow Geese were southeast of Homer and sighted in other nearby areas in late January. Bald Eagles continue to be seen in the area including a pair with a potential nest near St Joe, and one hanging out by a local church in southwest Champaign.

A Short-eared Owl was seen in Vermilion County on Jan 1. A Northern Shrike was seen at Fairmont Quarry on Dec 12 and again on Jan 1. Meadowbrook Park had Yellow-rumped Warblers on Dec 31, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk on Jan 14.

Birdnotes Listserve

Join our Birdnotes listserve to get the latest local bird sightings in your inbox!

Here’s how: go to ChampaignCountyAudubon.org and click on ‘Join Birdnotes.’ Enter your info, then click ‘Subscribe.’

Kendeigh Grants

Deadline: March 25

Each year we offer grants for research in ornithology in Illinois for a maximum of \$1000.

Applications must contain:

1. The applicant's name, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address
2. Description of the research to be carried out
3. Proposed budget
4. Evidence of your qualifications to do the research, including a brief CV and at least two references

Submit to:

Champaign County Audubon Society

Attn: Kendeigh Grant Committee

P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803

jbpeyton2@gmail.com

Applications must be received by March 25, 2017. Notification of awards will be made in April.

After the completion of the research, grantees must present the results in writing to CCAS. He/she will also be asked to give a presentation at a CCAS general meeting (typically the first Thursday in May, the year following grant award).

President's Corner: Looking for Love in the Middle of Winter

Submitted by: Sara Johnson

While most of the world has seemingly settled in for a long winter's dormancy, activity is all around us. Post autumn's hasty preparations, the following months are a time to escape, or lay low, and wait for warmer months. It is at this same time that Illinois' resident owls prepare for the arduous task of finding a perfect nesting spot in which to rear their young successfully through many wintry obstacles.

Owls begin to hone in on prime nesting locations using old hawk nests, abandoned drays, or large natural cavities in trees before any competition arrives. Due to the freezing temperatures, eggs must be given constant care and incubation; surely a tireless task for the adults. During this time you may have an increased chance of seeing and hearing these crepuscular creatures as they are prolific hunters this time of year.

With the trees and ground bare, there is plenty of easy access to a warm meal and it is suspected this success is the primary reason for breeding during such a seemingly challenging time. By mid-March, one expects to see young owlets bobbing their heads eagerly awaiting their parents return with a fresh supply of food. Some owls you may catch a glimpse of include our resident Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, Eastern Screech Owl, or the more elusive Barn Owl, Short-eared Owl, or Long-eared Owl.

Frequent sightings make winter a refreshing opportunity to get out and enjoy nature, even during the most harsh conditions.

Christmas Bird Count Results

Submitted by: Helen Parker

Here are the results of the Champaign County Christmas Bird Count, conducted Dec. 17, 2016. Total 54 species + 1 CW. 11 field observers + 1 feeder Watcher. Weather: very icy, neither walking nor driving was safe.

- White-fronted Goose 4
- Cackling Goose 2
- Canada Goose 1506
- Gadwall 6
- Black Duck 1
- Mallard 400
- Pintail 2
- Com. Goldeneye 1
- Hooded Merganser 2
- Pheasant 1
- Kingfisher 2
- Great Blue Heron 7
- Cooper's Hawk 1
- Red-shouldered Hawk 1
- Red-tailed Hawk 17
- Rough-legged Hawk 1
- Wilson's Snipe 1
- Rock Pigeon # not reported
- Eurasian Collared Dove 2
- Mourning Dove 117
- Great Horned Owl 4
- Red-bellied Woodpecker 28
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 3
- Downy Woodpecker 29
- Hairy Woodpecker 4
- Flicker 11
- Pileated Woodpecker 4
- Kestrel 6
- Blue Jay 51
- Crow 302
- Horned Lark 1
- Carolina Chickadee 32
- Black-capped Chickadee 3
- Tufted Titmouse 13
- Red-breasted Nuthatch 1
- White-breasted Nuthatch 22
- Brown Creeper 1
- Carolina Wren 15
- Eastern Bluebird 8
- Hermit Thrush 5
- Robin 58
- Starling 375
- Lapland Longspur 100
- Yellow-rumped Warbler 9
- American Tree Sparrow 37
- Junco 88
- White-crowned Sparrow 100
- White-throated Sparrow 32
- Song Sparrow 27
- Cardinal 25
- Grackle 2
- Cowbird 27
- House Finch 11
- Goldfinch 8
- House Sparrow 105
- Seen count week but not count day: Peregrine Falcon

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18, 9am-4pm

Guided Hikes at 10am and 3pm

Anita Puroes Nature Center

Help with bird conservation by counting birds for as little or as long as you like. Audubon members will be there to help with identification in the Wildlife Observation Room and will lead hikes at 10am and 3pm. Learn more about this annual 4-day event at gbbc.birdcount.org.

Or Count on Your Own!

February 17 - 20

Count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the GBBC. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day, each new location, and for the same location if you counted at that location again at a different time of day. Estimate the number of individuals of each species you saw during your count period. Enter your results on the GBBC website by clicking "Submit Observations" on the home page (gbbc.birdcount.org). Download the free eBird Mobile app to enter data on a mobile device.



Conservation Spotlight: Champaign County Forest Preserves

Submitted by: Jeff Peyton

Starting with this issue, the Meadowlark Messenger will feature a series of monthly spotlights on local conservation organizations to highlight their efforts to preserve our natural resources and habitats. It is a critical time for protecting our natural areas, and we hope to provide concerned readers with information about how they can join the effort, either through volunteering, contributions, or just by taking advantage of the services these organizations provide.

Our first spotlight column features the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. They have provided us with this overview:

The forest, prairie, and wetland habitats of east central Illinois provide tremendous opportunities for birding, hiking, and other year-round outdoor recreation. Did you know that many of these natural areas belong to the Champaign County Forest Preserve District?

The Forest Preserve District was established by public referendum in 1935, and opened its first preserve in 1948 on a 260-acre parcel of land around a small lake near Mahomet, Illinois. In the 70 years that followed, the District has expanded to cover more than 3,900 acres of natural resources throughout Champaign County.

In addition to Mahomet's Lake of the Woods, residents and visitors to Champaign County can get close to nature at the following forest preserves: Homer Lake, Middle Fork River, River Bend, and Sangamon River. In 2017, the District will open the area's first multi-use recreational rails-to-trails project. More than 6½ miles of the Kickapoo Rail Trail will open this spring between Urbana and St. Joseph for hiking and bicycling.

Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the year. To learn more about the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, visit www.ccfpd.org or send an email to hq@ccfpd.org. We hope to see you on a trail soon!

The district is always looking for reliable, consistent volunteers and has a wide range of tasks available, including maintaining trails as a trail steward, helping in the Museum and Education Department, gardening, photography, volunteer workdays in natural areas, and more.

The new Kickapoo Rail Trail project will provide additional volunteer opportunities in the coming months, as will the district's Frog Call Monitoring program. Training for frog call monitoring will be held in the coming weeks; contact the district at volunteer@ccfpd.org for specific dates or for more information about volunteering.

You can fill out a volunteer application at www.ccfpd.org to be placed with a task that fits your interests and expertise. Volunteering at forest preserves is a great way to help do your part in protecting your natural resources.

Photo Exhibit Open House

Sunday, February 12, 1-4pm

Kennekuk Environmental Education Center

By Tom Marriage

Enjoy over 40 nature photographs from Tom Marriage's collection at the Kennekuk Environmental Education Center. Visitors will be able to meet with Tom and enjoy his photos, most of which were photographed in Vermilion County. The Kennekuk Environmental Education Center is located at Kennekuk County Park, north of Danville, Illinois. For questions, please call Lara Darling at 217-442-1691.



A Financial Note

Susan Stearns, Past Treasurer

It's been no secret over the past few years that printing and mailing our newsletter is our biggest expense. In 2016, we spent \$2,483.97 on newsletter related expenses and we received \$2,005 in membership support and \$2,482 in additional donations.

Did you notice the amount of additional donations received was only \$2 less than expenses for newsletters and that membership dues alone did not cover the expense? By making the change to default to an e-newsletter and greatly reduce the number of newsletters printed and mailed in 2017, we anticipate our newsletter expenses will fall under \$1,000 in 2017.

Thanks to your generous support, 2016 turned out to be a good year for us financially. With such a great reduction in our largest expense plus an increase in financial support from you, we look forward to improving our programs and increasing our support of local conservation efforts.

Thank you for helping us get there!

Thank You Donors!

Thank you for your generous support!!!!!!

Wow! You are a supportive and generous group. Over the course of the last 2 months, 109 of you have chosen to support our efforts by submitting local chapter dues and 62 of you have given an additional \$2,407 in donations. And many of you did this in addition to the financial support you already give directly to the National Audubon Society; 32 of you did just that in November and December.

While we love to thank you by listing your names in the newsletter, this is just too many to list. If you would like to confirm your membership, please contact our membership chair, Caitlin Lill (clklill@gmail.com, 773-951-4900).

If you would like a receipt of your donation for your records, please contact our new treasurer, Allan Penwell (a.penwell@comcast.net, 217-359-3720).



Join Champaign County Audubon Society!

Yes, I'd like to become a member!

When you join the Champaign County Audubon Society, 100% of your dues and donations support our efforts (and they're tax deductible!).

\$ _____ CCAS Membership (\$15 due each January).

\$ _____ Additional donation to CCAS

\$ _____ **TOTAL**

I am a new member I am renewing my membership

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone # (_____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - _____

Beginning in 2017, CCAS members will be automatically enrolled to receive our newsletter by e-mail; check this box if you would prefer to receive a **paper** copy.

Checks should be made payable to CCAS. Send this form and your payment to: CCAS Membership Chair, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0882. Thank you!

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*The Champaign
County Audubon
Society is a Chapter
of National Audubon
Society, Inc.*

Join National Audubon Society!

When you join National Audubon Society you receive one year of Audubon magazine. You also have the option to receive local birding and community events delivered to your inbox from CCAS.

- **New members:** Go online to <http://bit.ly/nas-g50> or call 1-844-428-3826. Please tell them Champaign County Audubon Society sent you using our chapter code "G50."
- **Renewing members:** Go online to <http://bit.ly/renew-nas> or call 1-844-428-3826.



Champaign County Audubon Society
PO Box 882
Urbana, IL 61803-0882

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar of Events

Thursday, Feb 2, 7pm

February Program: Yellow Warblers to Willow Flycatchers: Using Social Behavior to Protect Songbird Populations

Urbana Free Library Auditorium

Discover how social behavior in songbirds may be influencing habitat selection, and how land managers can utilize these unique behaviors to help protect and manage songbird populations.

Saturday, Feb 11: 9-11am Busey Woods; 1-3pm Weaver Park

Saturday, Feb 25: 9-11am Meadowbrook; 1-3pm Perkins Road

Urbana Park District's Stewardship Days

Call Anita Purves Nature Center (384-4062) for more info and to register.

Thursday, Feb 16, 7:15pm

Board Meeting: At Anita Purves Nature Center. Members are welcome.

Saturday, Feb 18, 9am-4pm; Guided Hikes at 10am and 3pm

Great Backyard Bird Count

Anita Purves Nature Center

Help with bird conservation by counting birds for as little or as long as you like.

Visit our website for more information!