April Program

Sax-Zim Bog
Thursday, April 12, 7pm
Urbana Free Library

Presenter: Deanna Uphoff

Sax-Zim Bog, located in northern Minnesota, is renowned for the rare birds that can be found in this barren and brutal bog country during the winter.

Old growth black spruce and tamarack trees are mixed in with grassy meadows across 150,000 acres of marshy bog habitat which is a sanctuary for secretive birds like the great gray owl and mammals like the gray wolf.

Deanna will speak about her recent trip to this rare gem. Light refreshments will be served.

Field Trip to Heron Park
Saturday, April 14, 7am

Join us for a trip to Heron Park in Vermilion County. Meet 7am at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot on North Broadway, Urbana to carpool.

We may stop at Kennekuk Cove Park on the way home. Bring lunch.

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10% discount for CCAS members!
Monday–Saturday, 9am–4pm
Anita Purves Nature Center
1505 N. Broadway, Urbana, IL

The shop has a choice of bird and wildflower guides to help identify what you see. Also the usual selection of children’s books and nature related toys. As always all proceeds support environmental education programs.

Field Notes
Submitted by: Beth Chato
Spring is on the way but winter Common Redpolls still at Woodlawn Cemetery and juncos are still here. A Snowy Owl was reported near Paxton. A Long-eared Owl was at Homer Lake Forest Preserve.

Phoebes, woodcock and snipe are back. Ducks are going through, Ring-necked, Green and Blue-winged Teal, Pintail, Widgeon, Ruddy and Wood Duck seen on local wetlands.

Homer Lake had a Loon and Rusty Blackbirds.

Field Trip Report: Emiquon
Submitted by: Beth Chato
The field trip to Emiquon Preserve was Saturday March 17. Three intrepid birders braved cold and showers and were rewarded by good birding.

Thousands of Snow Geese flew over, but the most exciting sighting was a Ross’s Goose sitting on the ground with a few Snows, for a good comparison. Lots of White Pelicans, 2 immature Bald Eagles, Snipe, and many species of duck.

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.’
Special Events in April

April Member Walk
Saturday, April 7, 7:30am
Our April member walk will be at the University-owned Phillip’s tract. Meet at the Urbana Meijer parking lot at 7:30am, Saturday April 7th to carpool to the location a few miles away.

Field Trip to Heron Park
Saturday, April 14, 7am
We are going to Heron Park in Vermilion County. Meet 7am at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot on North Broadway, Urbana to car pool.

We may stop at Kennekuk Cove Park on the way home. Bring lunch.

Low-mobility Bird Sit
Saturday, April 14, 8am
The second low-mobility bird sit will be Saturday, April 14th 8-9am. It will be held at the Magic bridge parking lot in Crystal Lake park.

To find the lot, use the N. Broadway entrance to the park and look for the CCAS event sign. Bring a folding chair and your binoculars, or borrow a pair from CCAS. This event is wheelchair accessible.

Field Trip to Allerton Park
Saturday, April 21, 9am
The April field trip will be held at Allerton park in Piatt county on April 21st. We'll meet at the Allerton visitor’s center at 9am and will be checking out Allerton’s newly renovated southern trails.

Champaign county residents who want to carpool to the location can meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center Saturday morning. The carpool group will depart for Allerton promptly at 8:30am.

Birds and Breakfast
Saturday, April 28, 9am
CCAS will be hosting an event called “Birds and Breakfast” at Lodge Park in Monticello on April 28th. At this family-friendly event, we’ll enjoy breakfast and coffee while discussing spring migration before heading into the park for a guided bird walk.

CCAS will provide coffee and doughnuts. Binoculars are available for borrowing on a first-come first-served basis. We meet in the park at 9 AM and will start the bird walk at 9:30am.
From the time European immigrants first settled the rich prairies of Central Illinois, the area has offered its inhabitants a livable environment with diverse flora and fauna, highly productive farmland, space for development, and abundant clean water. But the ecosystem that has sustained both the human and natural community is increasingly threatened. This seminar series will explore some of the threats and consider how citizens can engage to reduce them.

**Sunday, April 8 – Threatened and Endangered Amphibians and Reptiles in Illinois:** Who are they, what habitat changes imperil them, and why does their status matter?

Chris A. Phillips, Herpetologist, Illinois Natural History Survey, Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois; former member of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board.

**Sunday, April 15 – The Mahomet Aquifer, Our Source of Abundant Fresh Water:** Does a growing human population, increasing agricultural and industrial use, and contamination threaten sustainability of the aquifer?

Allen Wehrmann, former head of the Groundwater Section of the Illinois State Water Survey and currently a Senior Groundwater Engineer with INTERA Incorporated.

**Sunday, April 22 – Development in Champaign County:** Does the county’s Land Resource Management Plan protect the long-term viability of agriculture and the land resource base, ensure urban development that is compact and contiguous to already-developed areas, and guarantee social and economically desirable use of these resources?

Frank DiNovo, retired Director of Planning and Community Development with the Champaign Regional Planning Commission and currently a member of the Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals.

In the Fellowship Hall of First Presbyterian Church at 602 West Green Street, Urbana
Parking available in a church lot across Orchard Street from the hall.

www.firstpresurbana.org
Why We Bird: Brody Dunn

Why we bird is a new part of our newsletter. It’s meant to explore why birders do what they do and what keeps them coming back for more. CCAS has asked some local birders to share their stories and their motivations. Some will highlight the past and others the future, some will be short and others will be long. Taken as a whole, hopefully they’ll shine a light on why birds and birding is so important to us.

This month’s Why We Bird is from Brody Dunn, the leader of the Sunday morning bird walks.

It’s incredibly difficult to confine your motivations for doing something you love into just a few boxes. There are so many tangential joys to knowing the birds; from being able to appreciate a fine John James Audubon print to the uniquely personal experience of being alone, deep in the wilderness, with some rare and majestic bird. There seems to be no end of little things that birding seems to touch in my life.

When my hand is forced and I must boil my motivations down to those few drives I could not bird without, I come up with the following: birding as an investment in my future and birding as an investment in my community.

I have folks in my life who have aged out of their passions. It is heartbreaking to watch and, no doubt, worse to experience. Knee surgery put a stop to long-distance hiking. Arthritis to elaborate needlework. A slow but steady loss of vision ceased a longtime love of racing cars semi-professionally. Birding seems to be a solitary refuge in a sea of hobbies that eat their own. That’s not to say I won’t be hiking or skiing or fixing up my jeep in the future. I’ll just be doing those things while also spending a few hours a week listening to birds on tape or reviewing a good bird guide, hedging my bets for the old man I’ll one day become.

My second major motivation, an investment in my community, is much more cheerful than the morbid reality of genetics and age. When I began leading the bird walks, I did so very tentatively. It didn’t feel quite right to be the face of the bird walks for newcomers and I felt downright uncomfortable as a young, relatively inexperienced birder telling folks who had been birding longer than I had been alive where they might point their binoculars.

Sometime last winter though, I picked up a Peterson 4th edition at a local used book store. It was a special edition; a little bigger than a standard version and with a thicker cover. Without looking through it much, I put it in my basket.

I would come to find writing in the margins a few hours later. There were notes much like the ones in my personal copy – dates next to species denoting a first sighting, along with a location. The earliest dates were from the spring of 1986 at Busey woods, and always on a Sunday. Beyond Sundays in ‘86 the dates branch out and so do the locations. They birded at local parks and ponds, friend’s houses in Iowa, and vacations in North Carolina. It could be coincidence that they birded on Sundays at Busey woods. The book never says “CCAS bird walk” in it. That possibility seems remote to me; I think they came to the bird walk on a whim and cultivated an interest (dare I say a passion?) that lasted the rest of their life. The scribbled notes in the margins of that book changed my outlook on the walks, and since then I’ve seen it as a personal duty to be as good as I can be for the sake of all the folks who very well could find a lifelong passion hidden in the canopy of Busey woods, just like I did.
Help Us Support Busey Woods

As birders, there are many places in Busey woods that we linger, eagerly searching for our favorite birds. On the Sunday morning bird walks, we always seem to linger longest at the “overlook,” a wooden platform that dips down into a perennally wet area of the park. It’s known as the “West Pond area” to the park district, and it’s a perfect place to find Northern and Louisiana waterthrush, Swamp sparrows, Herons, and Ducks.

In recent years, much of Busey woods has seen gaps open up in its canopy as the Emerald Ash Borer decimates the Ash tree population in the park. The loss of Ash trees has impacted the West pond area significantly and today, what was once a shady and open vista has become sunny and overgrown.

In our April board meeting CCAS voted to approve a plan, developed with the consultation of the Urbana Park District, to raise funds to plant a diverse, native mix of trees that will grow to replace the canopy in the West Pond area.

In the coming months, we’ll be asking CCAS membership for donations so UPD can execute a fall planting.

Please help us conserve this area of Busey woods so future generations can linger there too.

Thank You Donors!
Thank you to all who have donated beyond membership dues: Nancy Coombs, Eric Freyfogle, Edward Schneider, Edmund Sutton, and Shirley Walker

Thank You New & Renewing Members!
Welcome New Members: Nancy Coombs & Cindy Kempke

Thank You Renewing Members: Eric Freyfogle, Pam Leiter, Carolyn Nixon, Jane Quinlan, Edward Schneider, Edmund Sutton & Shirley Walker

Questions? Please contact our Membership Chair, Rachel Vinsel (Rachel.Vinsel-at- gmail.com)
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: ______________ - __________

☐ 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!

Our Mission:

Promote interest, enjoyment, and understanding of all aspects of our natural environment, and actively encourage the protection of wildlife and native habitats.

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."

Calendar of Events

Sunday Morning Bird Walks
Sundays, March 4 - May 27, 7:30-9am
Meet in Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.

April Member Walk
Saturday April 7, 7:30am
Meet at the Urbana Meijer parking lot at 7:30am to carpool.

Monthly Program: Sax-Zim Bog
Thursday, April 12, 7pm
Urbana Free Library

Field Trip to Heron Park
Saturday, April 14, 7am
Meet 7:00 am at the Anita Purves Center parking lot to car pool. Bring lunch.

Low-mobility Bird Sit
Saturday, April 14, 8am
Magic bridge parking lot in Crystal Lake park.

CCAS Board Meeting
Monday, April 16, 7pm
Anita Purves Nature Center

Field Trip to Allerton Park
Saturday, April 21, 9am
Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center by 8:30am to carpool.

Birds and Breakfast
Saturday, April 28, 9am
Lodge Park in Monticello

Visit our website for more information!

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org