



The Meadowlark Messenger

April 2013 • Volume 30, No. 3

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

Presidents' Column

Susan & Brian Stearns

Co-Presidents of Champaign County
Audubon Society (CCAS)

Happy Spring, Everyone! On the first day of spring, Wednesday, March 20th, Susan, who is a special education teacher, was walking students to the door at the end of the school day when a student looked up at her and asked, "If this is the first day of spring, why is it so cold?" This cold entrance of spring may rekindle memories and spark the discussion of past springtime and significant winter weather events over the years. Meanwhile, as this article is written, Brian and Susan are looking forward to the CCAS field trip to Heron Park north of Danville and awaiting the winter storm expected to arrive on Palm Sunday.

Early spring in central Illinois requires a bit of an adjustment for Susan. Having grown up in Georgia and attended college in Florida, she is accustomed to seeing green leaves on the trees and flowers blooming by now. While living in southern Illinois, she always worried the dogwoods wouldn't be in bloom by Easter. So to her, it seems like she has to wait forever for the arrival of fresh green leaves and blooms. But what amazes her, are the birds. Unlike Susan, the birds don't seem as bothered by what feels to her like a mismatch between the weather and the time of year. For example, during the Backyard Bird Count event at Anita Purves, Beth Chato and Susan

birds at the feeders. Beth shared her enjoyment of some birds announcing that spring was coming. Susan's response was, "Don't they know how cold it is?" Despite this winter-like introduction, the birds are making their spring arrivals. The best part? We all get to celebrate this special time by welcoming our favorite birds! Your favorite may be a migratory bird that passes through or a summer resident.

Speaking of migratory birds, how much do you, as a birder or nature lover, know about migration? What triggers it? How do birds know when it's time to follow the stars and the landscape to their seasonal homes? What factors affect the timing and paths of migrations? Do you ever ponder the awesomeness of birds returning to the same region spring after spring?

To answer some of these questions for ourselves, we took a quick moment to search online and take a look at eNature [http://www.enature.com/birding/migration_home.asp] the first website listed in the search results. This website answered some of those migration questions. While the website is not a comprehensive resource, it does provide suitable information for the beginning backyard birder seeking general information about spring migration and various birds to watch for at your backyard feeders.

We hope all of you enjoy the birds around you this spring and take a little time to learn something new

better way to celebrate the arrival of spring than by welcoming the birds and enjoying their morning song.

As always, we thank all of you for your continued support. Without you, programs such as the Kendeigh Grants, mini-grants, Audubon Adventures and CCAS's sponsorship of various local educational events would not be possible.

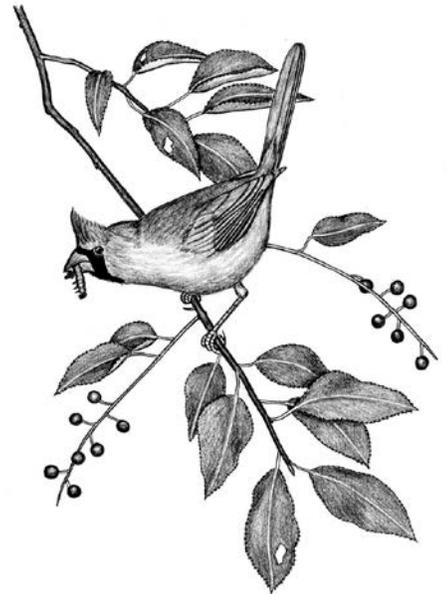
APRIL MEETING

Urbana Free Library Auditorium

Thursday, April 4, 7 PM

JASON FISCHER

will present a program on the ecology of an Urbana backyard as reflected in the birds that visit and live there.



Jason Fischer has been a recipient of multiple Kendeigh Grants from Champaign County Audubon Society, a testament to his passion for the study of ecology and birds.

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

Recent Bird Sightings: FIELD NOTES from Beth Chato

A good variety of ducks are passing through many of our local ponds, even in town and especially Homer Lake, which also had an immature Bald Eagle. The warm winds Saturday evening of March 9 brought a wave of our early spring migrants: Wood Duck, Phoebe, Towhee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Rusty Blackbirds, all seen on our Sunday, March 10 Busey Woods Walk. A group of 14 Woodcock were also flushed up in Busey Woods and were abundant on the Meadowbrook Park Woodcock Walk the following Wednesday evening. Heron Park in Vermilion County continues to be an exciting spot. The Great Blue Heron rookery is up and going. Sandhill Crane and Eagle are there as well as the year's first Tree Swallow.

PEABODY MINES FIELD TRIP

Saturday, March 16

Audubon had a tour of the Peabody Mine area led by Marilyn Campbell. This is a large area with a variety of strip mine ponds large and small. We saw a total of 47 bird species, the most exciting of which were a flock of 30 Trumpeter Swans, trumpeting as they flew over. Ducks seen were Gadwall, Mallard, Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked, Lesser Scalp, Bufflehead, and Hooded and Red-breasted Mergansers. Also seen were Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, and a staked-out Bald Eagle on its nest. We also enjoyed a nice lunch at the Covered Bridge Restaurant.

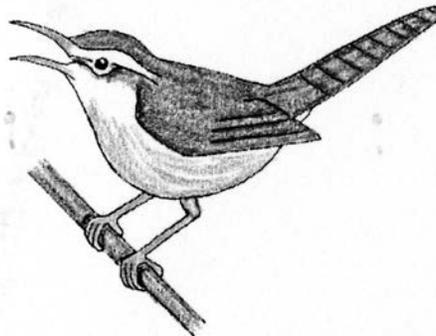
AUDUBON NATURE SHOP

Unique Nature-Related Gifts

ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER, 1515 NORTH BROADWAY, URBANA, IL
9-4 MONDAY-SATURDAY

SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Now's the time for a new Bluebird Box if you have suitable habitat. Shop has one left. Get ready for spring with new binoculars, bird guide, or bird song identifier.



Get Your Meadowlark Messenger Delivered Right to Your Inbox!

Would you like to go paperless and receive your newsletter earlier? You can receive all the information you depend on from this newsletter in your inbox! Please visit our website (www.champaigncountyaudubon.org) and look under "What's New" for a link to a page where you can enter your email address. *(Please be patient with us as we work out the kinks of this system; you may still receive a printed newsletter for a limited time after signing up.)*

CONSERVATION CORNER -- Helen Parker, Conservation Chair

ENERGY: For the past 8 weeks, I have been taking an OLLI course called "Solving the Energy Challenge." Energy is pretty much key to much of what we do and what is needed to keep our planet on an even keel. A variety of topics were covered--but I can summarize the whole course in a couple of sentences: 1) There are no easy answers; and 2) there is no such thing as a free lunch. That said, there are a few things that ordinary people can do to help. The most important single thing is to cut your gasoline use. If you are buying a new car, get one that is gas-efficient. Adjust your driving habits to be more efficient (don't speed, keep a steady pace, etc.). Otherwise, you can do little things that will make your life more energy efficient; no one thing will do very much, but a lot of little things add up. Not only will you help your planet--you will also help your finances!

CRANES: Windmills are a great way to produce electricity without fossil fuel--BUT they need to be sited properly. Word from the International Crane Foundation (ICF) is that a large wind farm is scheduled to be built in North Dakota right on the migratory route of the Whooping Cranes. This is an obvious recipe for disaster. At the moment I have no idea at all what, if anything can be done about it. We will have to trust the ICF to take the lead on this one.

MORaine VIEW: It seems that IDNR wants to sell 5 acres of Moraine View State Park to permit expansion of an adjacent cemetery. Now, Moraine View is a big park and as long as the 5 acres is not in a critical area, the effects would be minimal--but this is a bad precedent. It is not at all clear that such a sale would be legal. I'm sure there are other directions in which the cemetery could expand.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY (NAS) TO LAUNCH NEW PROGRAM: In another project that they call "Citizen Science", NAS is planning something called "Hummingbirds at Home", starting April 10. This will seek to gather data on hummingbird feeding and migration habits. There will be a film called "Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air", made available to chapters. I plan to request this as soon as I finish this column. I assume this project will be much like "Project Feeder Watch", but centered on hummingbirds.



AUDUBON'S REVERENCE FOR LIFE

"The crow is an extremely shy bird, having found familiarity with man no way to his advantage.... Wherever within the Union the laws encourage the destruction of this species, it is shot in great numbers for the sake of the premium offered for each crow's head. You will perhaps be surprised reader, when I tell you that in one single state, in the course of a season, 40,000 were shot, besides the multitude of young birds killed in their nests. Must I add to this slaughter other thousands destroyed by the base artifice of laying poisoned grain along the fields to tempt these poor birds? Yes, I will tell you of all this too. The natural feelings of one who admires the bounty of Nature in providing abundantly for the subsistence of all her creatures prompt me to do so. Like yourself, I admire all her wonderful works and respect her wise intentions even when her laws are far beyond our limited comprehension."

- from *The American Crow* by **John James Audubon**.

In several of his bird biographies, Audubon pleads with his readers to spare the lives of species of birds such as Crows and Carolina Parrots that were treated as vermin because they fed on farmers' crops.

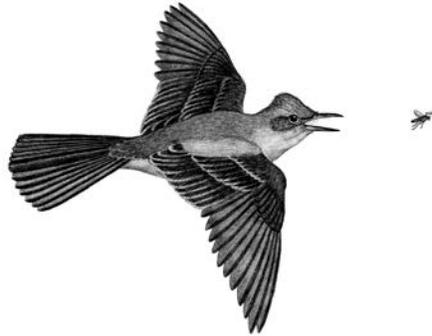
- from *The Audubon Reader* edited by **Richard Rhodes** (2006).

Friends of Champaign County Audubon, a reminder: All local Friends membership fees were due as of January 1. Your contribution of \$15 supports the local Chapter. Please renew or consider signing up on page 5 of this newsletter or send dues and membership information to our membership chair, Janet Jokela, 1701 Gentry Square, #101, Champaign Il 61821.

April Field Trips

Sunday Morning Bird Walks April 7 - May 26, 7:30 - 9 AM.

Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods will continue every Sunday through May 26. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot. Bring binoculars if you have them. Audubon members will be present to help beginners.



Saturday, April 6, 7:30 AM. – Homer Lake Forest Preserve Jim Smith will be leading this half-day trip looking for migrants and any new arrivals. Meet at the Nature Center parking lot at 7:30 AM or just inside the entrance at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center at 8:00.

Saturday, April 20, 12:15 PM. Middle Fork River Forest Preserve north of Penfield. Brian Stearns will be leading this field trip. Various habitats will be searched, both water and land. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.

Field Trip Questionnaire

Nowadays people are busier than ever. The Field Trip Committee wants to make our field trips as appealing and accessible as possible. To do this we need to know your preferences. So we are asking you to take a few minutes and let us know what you think. Here are a few items to consider:

1) Days of week? 2) Times preferred? 3) Length of trip? 4) Places you'd like to go? 5) Kinds of trips?...strenuous, easy, etc.....OR, anything you want to tell us. Send by e-mail to Charlene Anchor at <mailto:ckanchor@comcast.net> If you don't have e-mail jot it down and send to CCAS, Field Trip Committee, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0082. Any feedback will be appreciated. Thanks. The Field Trip Committee

The Great Garlic Mustard Hunt!

Garlic mustard is an invasive weed that takes over areas where it grows--crowding out native plants. Without wildflowers and replacement trees, we won't have insects, birds and other wildlife. So throughout April and May, people will gather (or work solo) to eradicate garlic mustard at sites throughout the Urbana Park District, the Champaign County Forest Preserves, and even Allerton Park.

People can register at <<https://webs.extention.uiuc.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=7849>>. For more information, contact Marilyn Leger at marilyn_jim@hotmail.com or 217-417-2304.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES : Join other volunteers and the Urbana Park District (UPD) for **Stewardship Saturdays**. Help collect seeds, remove invasive weeds, plant natives, improve trails and restore the native landscape. Please dress accordingly; gloves, tools and refreshments are provided. Call Anita Purves Nature Center (384-4062) to notify the UPD you are coming, and so you can be notified if the work session has to be canceled! **Stewardship work days:**

April 6 Crystal Lake Park 9-11 am. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center.
Boneyard Creek Clean-up Day at Saline Creek by the Nature Center

April 27 Perkins Road 1 -3 pm. Meet at Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Road.
Meadowlark Messenger *Page 4*

Join Audubon. Yes, I'd like to join! Please enroll me as a member



Membership for 2013

		new	renewal
Friend of Champaign County Audubon Society	\$15.00 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>(includes CCAS newsletter only)</i>			
Friend of CCAS and National Audubon Society	\$35.00 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>(includes "Audubon" magazine & CCAS newsletter)</i>			

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed, made **payable to Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS)**. Your information and NAS contribution will be forwarded to National.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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7XCH

(Please provide 9-digit zip code)

Send this application and your check to: Champaign Co. Audubon Society, Membership Chair, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0882. Thank you!

CCAS Member Activities

& Benefits:

14 Audubon Adventures
 Classrooms
 Mini-grants to educators
 Kendeigh grants for scientific studies
 Great Backyard Bird Count
 Youth Bird Count Day
 Nature Shop at the Nature Center
 Meadowbrook prairie restoration
 Field trips, Annual Bird Counts
 Annual Birdathons
 Monthly member meetings
 Meadowlark Messenger

Education Corner, Stacey Clementz

Education Program Specialist, Champaign County Forest Preserve District sclementz@ccfpd.org

Saturday, April 13: Nature Hike: Spring Wildflowers. Anita Purves Nature Center, 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Take a guided hike with nature center staff through Busey Woods in search of spring wildflowers. This program takes place rain or shine, so dress for the weather. \$9 for Urbana residents, \$14 for non-residents

Friday, May 10: Warblers at Walnut Hill. Walnut Hill Shelter, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 2573 S. Homer Lake Rd, Homer, 8 – 9:30 a.m. Join a naturalist to look for migrating birds. Warblers, orioles, waterfowl, and more are commonly found at Homer Lake's beautiful Walnut Hill. Novice and experienced birders alike are welcome. Binoculars provided, or bring your own. FREE. For more info: (217) 896-2455 or pleiter@ccfpd.org.

Saturday, May 11: Bird Language 101 Workshop. Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 2573 S. Homer Lake Rd, Homer, 9 – 11 a.m. Why do the wren and robin scold? What might they see that we can't?

Understanding bird 'language' can help us see more wildlife. We will learn the keys to understanding bird voices and body language, and spend some time outside observing. Come learn more about connections in nature - anyone can learn this process! \$10 per person. Register by May 10; (217) 896-2455 or pleiter@ccfpd.org.

Saturday, May 11: 5th Annual Bird Migration Festival. Homer Lake Forest Preserve,

Bird Language 101 Workshop: 9 – 11 a.m., Interpretive Center (see workshop description above)

Mist Netting with Jason Fischer: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Interpretive Center

Main Event & Live Raptors: 1 – 4 p.m., Walnut Hill Shelter*

Bring your family and friends to Homer Lake to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day and experience the sensations of spring! We will have live raptors, crafts, hikes, live entertainment from 2 – 3 p.m. and more. FREE. For more info: (217) 896-2455 or sdonovan@ccfpd.org. *In the event of rain, activities at Walnut Hill will be relocated indoors to the Interpretive Center.

Thursday, April 25, 6-8pm: Green Politics Social Event. Come celebrate Earth Week with fellow earth-friendly folks on Thursday, April 25. We will be gathering in the bar lounge at Escobar's Restaurant (6 E. Columbia, Champaign). During the evening, we will hear updates on Champaign's possible bag ordinance (Councilwoman Deb Feinen), the Mahomet Aquifer Sole Source Aquifer Petition (Champaign Assistant Attorney Joe Hooker), the Urbana Climate Action Plan and other sustainability initiatives (Urbana Mayor Prussing), and the state bill to establish hydro-fracking regulations. In addition to our special-topic guests, we will also be inviting members of the Urbana and Champaign city councils and General Assembly representatives. This is a great opportunity to meet our local policymakers and have conversations about important, local environmental issues. Free appetizers will be provided but drinks are on your own. Co-sponsored by Sierra Club, Prairie Rivers Network, Faith in Place, and the Champaign County Audubon Society. Hope you can join us!



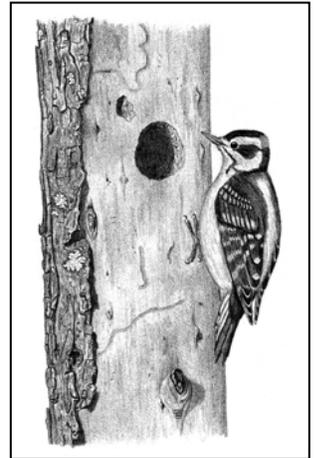
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Calendar of Events, April 2013

- Thursday** **April 4, 7 PM. General meeting** at Urbana Free Library Auditorium. **Jason Fischer** will present a program on the ecology of an Urbana backyard as reflected in the birds found there.
- Saturday** **April 6, 7:30 AM. Homer Lake Forest Preserve** Jim Smith will be leading this half-day trip looking for migrants and any new arrivals. Meet at the Nature Center parking lot at 7:30 AM or just inside the entrance at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center at 8:00.
- Sundays** **April 7- April 28, 7:30 - 9 AM.** Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods began on March 3 and will continue every Sunday through May 26. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.
- Thursday** **April 18, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Saturday** **April 20, 12:15 PM. Middle Fork River Forest Preserve** north of Penfield. Brian Stearns will be leading this field trip. Various habitats will be searched, both water and land. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.
- Monday** **April 22, Earth Day 2013.**
- Thursday** **April 25, 6-8 PM. Green Politics Social Event.** Come celebrate Earth Week with fellow earth-friendly folks on Thursday, April 25. We will be gathering in the bar lounge at Escobar's Restaurant (6 East Columbia, Champaign).

