



The Meadowlark Messenger

December 2013 • Volume 30, No. 9

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

Presidents' Column

Susan Stearns

Co-President of Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS)

I write just days after meeting Tony McGuigan. Thank you to those who joined us November 7th. Tony definitely challenged us to think about gardening from a different perspective.

I don't know about you, but when I think of a garden, I think of either a vegetable garden or a flower garden. Go to parks or drive through nice neighborhoods and you see sophisticated landscaping with beautiful, flowering bushes arranged in a very strategic way for visual appeal throughout the year.

Tony, on the other hand, enjoys gardening from a different perspective – that of the animals. He shared how he creates in-ground habitats for all the little critters – you know – the frogs, salamanders, snakes, spiders, and the like – creating routes to moisture and protection from predators. He digs 6-10 foot holes in his yard to create habitats - all just because he wanted to plant a tree. Most people clean out debris to keep the garden looking nice. Tony uses the debris to create habitat. It is, after all, the dead stuff that attracts bugs for the critters, woodpeckers, and the like.

So if you now regret missing the program, seek out an Audubon member, Master Naturalist, or Master Gardener who attended. I'm sure they'll be happy to fill you in!

Before I forget - Happy Thanksgiving! I hope your holiday weekend is filled with love and laughter. Keep in mind that our December program is only one week after Thanksgiving. We will meet back at the Urbana Library at 7:00 PM on Thursday, December 5th. This is our annual business meeting so we will begin the evening by voting on the slate of officers. Then Ray Boehmer will share highlights from his Colombia birding trip.

Later in the month is the 114th Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Contact Helen Parker if you plan to help out. While we need as many people as possible to brave the weather and go out into the field, you can participate from the comfort of your home if you live within the count circle.

To do this, first check with Helen to see if you live within the count circle; let her know you'd like to participate from home. Then on our designated day, sit back in your rocking chair with a warm blanket, sip on some hot cocoa, and count the birds that visit your feeder. Then send your count info to Helen. Wow! I bet after reading that, no one will want to go out into the field.

If you are able to get out, we'd appreciate your help. First timers are welcome – you will be partnered with an experienced birder or two. It's always helpful to have an extra set of eyes, so don't be hesitant to join us if you've never participated in a bird count before. To learn more: <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>

As always, thank you for your continued support and participation in CCAS. Please remember that local friends' membership dues are due in January for the 2014 year. **Happy Holidays!**

DECEMBER MEETING

Urbana Free Library

Thursday,

December 5, 7 PM

Ray Boehmer

will present

A Week of Birding in Colombia- Unsurpassed Avian Diversity (and Other Interesting Adventures)



Champaign County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803
217-367-6766
www.champaigncountyaudubon.org

Officers

Co-Presidents: Brian Stearns, 595-5052
brian@sbstearns.us
Susan Stearns, 595-5052
susan@sbstearns.us
Co-Vice Presidents: Cleo D'Arcy, 344-3639
cdarcy@uiuc.edu
Steve D'Arcy, 344-3639
s-darcy@uiuc.edu

Secretary: Charlene Anchor, 359-8214,
charleneanchor@msn.com

Treasurer: John Dunkelberger
344-4973, jdunkel@hotmail.com

Committee Chairs

Conservation: Helen Parker, 367-3130
h-parker@illinois.edu

Education: Stacey Clementz, 896-2455,
sclementz@ccfpd.org

Field Trip: Charlene Anchor, 359-8214,
charleneanchor@msn.com

Mary Stech, 621-3492
mkstech@mchsi.com

Finance: Astrid Berkson
356-4647, astrid@insightbb.com

Habitat: Robert Vaiden, 344-9042
vaiden@isgs.illinois.edu

Membership: Janet Jokela, 352-3632
jjokela59@hotmail.com

Nature Shop: Beth Chato, 344-6803
ejchato@gmail.com

Program: Dorothy Neumann, 344-1427
djneumann07@gmail.com

Publications: James Nardi, 333-6590
j-nardi@illinois.edu

Publicity: Caroline Mallory
344-2297, mallory.caroline@gmail.com

Members at Large 2012-2013

Beez Gordon, 355-3402
Brian Threlkeld, 384-5164
abt5@columbia.edu

Mike Iorio, 954-1818
michael.iorio@yahoo.com

Members at Large 2013-2014

Jim Hoyt, 352-6733
Caitlin Lill, 773-951-4900
clkilill@gmail.com

Barbara Schleicher, 377-8586
bschleic@life.illinois.edu

Newsletter Coordinator: Ruth Walker,
328-1530

Webmaster: Pam Leiter, 344-9163,
leiterp@msn.com

BirdNotes Listserve Manager:
Dan Olson, 586-4389, dolson@ccfpd.org

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

Waterfowl are moving through. October 17 the remains of the Urbana swine ponds had Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, and Ring-necked Duck as well as a Mockingbird. On the 15th of October, a Hooded Merganser and a Pied-billed Grebe were photographed at the Target retention pond. Trumpeter Swans and Cackling Geese were reported from Coles County. Other winter visitors were a flock of hundreds of Lapland Longspurs along County Roads 1900 or 1800 E from 2100 to 2500 N. They move around. This week Rusty Blackbirds and a **Fox Sparrow** were in Crystal Lake Park.



A Rufous Hummingbird is visiting a feeder near Indianapolis, so don't take down your hummingbird feeders just yet. Look closely at and report any visitors.

November 16. Just returned from our all-day Clinton Lake field trip led by Greg Lambeth. Highlights included 10 Loons, Pied and Horned Grebes, a variety of ducks, Hooded and Common Mergansers. We ended the day with a large flock of assorted shorebirds, Snipe, Dunlin and one Least and one Pectoral Sandpiper as well as some American Pipits. We saw a total of 52 bird species, and the rain held off.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS (CBCs)

Saturday, December 14, all day. It's approaching that time of year - Bird Count season! As a reminder: The CBC is a program of the National Audubon Society and provides a long-term database on bird populations. CBCs are held all over North America, and have begun to be held in Central & South America as well. A count takes place on a day between December 14 and January 5 in a 15-mile diameter circle. Champaign County has been participating in this program for more than 50 years. Our count is always the first Saturday of the count period; hence this year it will be December 14. There are other counts in this area that some CCAS members participate in as well. Some information on these might be found on the National Audubon website, although I found it singularly unhelpful.

See page 4 for information on other Christmas Bird Counts in this area as well as the **January Eagle Count** on the Illinois River.

Saturday Dec. 14: Champaign County. Centered at Deers, IL, our count circle runs roughly from Busey Woods to Homer Lake.

Compiler: Helen Parker, h-parker@illinois.edu, phone 367-3130.

CONTACT ME IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE!

AUDUBON NATURE SHOP for Unique Nature-Related Gifts

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

SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Audubon Engagement Calendars are here - a good gift for those hard to shop for. Last month's speaker Tony McGuigan's book, *Habitat It and They Will Come* takes a light-hearted approach, along with very practical suggestions, for making your yard more wildlife friendly. Come shop and save with your 10% member discount.

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

TANSTAAFL! That is an acronym (familiar to many science fiction fans) for "There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch". It was what came to my mind when I read the article in the *News-Gazette* about some of the ill effects of growing corn for ethanol production. Ethanol is good, right? It will cut greenhouse gas emissions from your car when added to gasoline, so the government decided to encourage - and even require it. The result has been growing corn in places where corn should not be grown, leading to soil erosion, hence stream pollution and diminished wildlife habitat - "unintended consequences." (The biochemist in me says ethanol is the wrong product, but that is much more chemistry than is appropriate for this newsletter.)

We need more oil and natural gas, right? So Shell Oil wants to drill for oil in the Chukchi Sea. That's in the Arctic. Do we need to be reminded of the potential problems with that? "Fracking" has the potential for producing gas domestically that beats importing it from distant places - but also has the potential for really nasty consequences to our water supply. Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has proposed rules for the process in Illinois; I have not read them and probably would not be competent to evaluate them if I did; but I'm sure that TANSTAAFL applies.

On the "good news" front: California is now requiring non-lead ammunition for hunting. This should help Condors and any other critter that picks up lead shot.

Miscellany: Many of the Monarch butterflies have made it to their wintering grounds. Polar bears are gathering in Churchill, Manitoba preparing for their winter on the ice. Six tons of illegal ivory products were crushed into small particles as a discouragement to poachers.

The PILEATED WOODPECKER

Next to the rare Ivory-billed, this is the largest of all North American Woodpeckers. Formerly the birds were of wide distribution in the heavily wooded sections of the country, but they have now disappeared from many parts of the eastern United States. When found, they are usually in regions of original forest growth, rarely being seen where the woods have been cut over. The nest of this species is excavated in a dead tree or tall stump; occasionally a living tree is used if a knot-hole or dead spot affords a convenient place in which to begin to dig. Not infrequently the hole is dug to a depth of three feet or more. To perform such a task requires time, and often as much as a month must pass before the two birds working alternately are able to complete their enterprise. I have found their nests at distances varying from 18 to 70 feet from the ground. These holes, after being abandoned, are a great boon to hole-nesting birds that are not able to excavate hollows of their own. Screech Owls, Sparrow Hawks, and Wood Ducks thus prosper by the industry of their woodpecker neighbors. From three to six pure white eggs are laid on a bed of fine chipped-off fragments of wood.

Pileated Woodpeckers frequently show an absence of fear of man that one would not expect in a bird that is so distinctly a forest dweller. Thus when there are heavy growths of original woods near a village, they will at times come close about houses provided these are surrounded by large old trees.As this Woodpecker seems not to possess the faculty of adapting itself to the new conditions created by civilization, it is quite possible that it will not survive the passing of our primeval forests.

- *T. Gilbert Pearson (1917), Founder of the National Audubon Society*



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.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTs (CBCs)
in addition to the Champaign County Count.
Helen Parker, h-parker@Illinois.edu, phone 367-3130.

Sunday, December 15: Clinton Lake. Contact Rhetta Jack, lupewinku@lanscape.net

Wednesday, December 18: Forest Glen. Contact Marilyn Campbell, owlwatcher@egix.net

Middle Fork: I have no information at this time. It's often held on New Year's Day.

ANNUAL EAGLE COUNT

Not a Christmas count, but another count that we do each year: the Eagle Count on the Illinois River, from Havana to Beardstown. I have not received any information on this yet for this year, but I expect that we shall do it on January 4. Contact me (h-parker@Illinois.edu) for more information later in the year.



The Nominating Committee is putting forward the following slate for our annual meeting and election of officers in December 2013.

Co-Presidents: Susan Stearns & Brian Stearns

Vice President: Pam Leiter

Secretary: Charlene Anchor

Treasurer: John Dunkelberger

Members-at-Large (2-year terms): Beez Gordon, Janet Jokela, Germaine Light

Submitted by: Janet Jokela, Charlene Anchor, Pam Leiter,

Jim Nardi (members of the Nominating Committee)

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:**

December 14 Busey Woods 9-11 am. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center

Weaver Park 1 -3 pm. Turn right into park at entrance on East Main near Smith Road.

The 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 <i>(includes CCAS newsletter only)</i>	\$15.00.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friend of CCAS and National Audubon Society <i>(includes "Audubon" magazine & CCAS newsletter)</i>	\$35.00.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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: _____

C3ZG500Z

7XCH

(Please provide 9-digit zip code)

To receive newsletter electronically, please provide e-mail address:

Send this application and your check to: Champaign County 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, Homer Lake

sclementz@ccfpd.org

Illinois Audubon Society Announces Latest Illinois Bird Series Poster

Illinois Audubon Society, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural resources, announces the release of the latest poster in the Illinois Bird series, "Illinois Birds: Volume 3, Species of Concern." The poster features 25 species in greatest need of conservation in Illinois. This poster is now available to teachers in Illinois schools recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education. It will also be distributed through upcoming ENTICE workshops and at fall teacher conferences attended by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Education. To order online, go to <http://dnr.state.il.us/teachkids>.

Another Environmental Education and Habitat Restoration Project of Champaign County Audubon

Champaign County Audubon Society invited the author of *Habitat It and They Will Come*, Tony McGuigan, to present an evening program for our November monthly meeting and a daytime program of his choosing at a local school. The activity that Tony chose for the 4th grade class at Carrie Busey School was the creation of wildlife habitat in their own schoolyard. The children of Mrs. Elizabeth Slifer's class were enthralled with the event and created a beautiful landscape with trees, logs, boulders, tree trunks, shrubs, prairie grasses and prairie forbs that will grow, endure and offer multiple habitats for creatures large and small. Audubon thanks Dr. Lesley Deem, Director of the University of Illinois' Pollinitorium, for her contribution of prairie forbs, her persistence, and her hard work during the planting and landscaping of the schoolyard habitat.

Check out the schoolyard on the east side of the new Carrie Busey School the next time you are in Savoy or visit one of these web sites

<http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2013-11-09/habitat.html>

<http://nativeplantwildlifegarden.com/school-habitat-garden-in-illinois-prairie-country/>



The Meadowlark Messenger

Dec. 2013, Vol.30: No.9

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Urbana, Illinois
Permit No. 58

Champaign County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 882
Urbana, Illinois 61803-0882

Return service requested



Calendar of Events, December 2013

- Thursday** December 5, 7 PM. Monthly meeting at Urbana Free Library. Ray Boehmer will present *A Week of Birding in Colombia – Unsurpassed Avian Diversity (and Other Interesting Adventures)*.
- Saturday** December 14, all day. Christmas Bird Count. Champaign County. Centered at Deers, IL, our count circle runs roughly from Busey Woods to Homer Lake. For information on **other Christmas Bird Counts (Clinton Lake, Forest Glen, Middle Fork) and the Illinois River Eagle Count**, see page 4.
- Saturday** December 21, 11:11 AM. Winter Solstice.

