



The Meadowlark Messenger

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org

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

March Program

The Birds (and the Bees): The World of Avian Pollinators

Thursday, March 2, 7pm
Urbana Free Library Auditorium

Matt Candeias, creator and host of the popular In Defense of Plants blog and podcast, will lead a presentation about the fascinating world of avian pollinators.

In addition to hummingbirds, there are a variety of interesting ways birds have co-evolved with their botanical neighbors. Join us for a delightful look at the myriad ways birds and plants interact. You don't want to miss this meeting!

Non-members are always welcome and light refreshments will be provided.

For more information about In Defense of Plants: www.indefenseofplants.com



pat1479 (Flickr)

Birdnotes Listserve

Join our Birdnotes listserv 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.'

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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 the Newsletter

page on our website and enter your name and email address.



10% discount for CCAS members!

Monday–Saturday, 9am–4pm

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

Now is a great time for a new pair of binoculars or bird and wildflower guides as spring arrives. New, among much else at the shop, are brain shaped stress balls. We have a good choice of coloring books, singing birds, puppets, and much, much more. 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

LOCAL BIRD NOTES

Huge flocks of Snow Geese in the area, especially around Homer. Several sightings of Trumpeter Swans.

A Sandhill Crane in Crystal Lake Park, flying over my home, and at the Middle Fork Preserve. 20 Wild Turkeys near Homer.

A Northern Shrike at the Fairmont Quarry, and a Short-eared Owl from Vermilion County.

An Orange-crowned Warbler at a suet feeder by the Nature Center. Red-winged Blackbirds are back.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRDCOUNT REPORT

From 9am to 4 pm Audubon Members monitored the feeders at the Anita Purves Nature Center along with the public.

We led two walks for the public through Busey Woods at 10 am and 3pm.

We recorded 29 species of birds. That is one more than our records from past years. Most exciting was an Orange-crowned Warbler, which visited the suet feeder half a dozen times throughout the day. It had also been seen a week or so ago at the feeder. Rusty Blackbirds and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were new arrivals for this spring.

Kendeigh Grants: Request for Proposals

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 conducted
3. Proposed budget
4. Evidence of your qualifications to do the research, including a brief CV and at least two references

Submit to:

jbpeyton2@gmail.com

or

Champaign County Audubon Society

Attn: Kendeigh Grant Committee

P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803

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).

NEW! CCAS Member's Birdwalks

Submitted by: Brody Dunn

We are very excited to announce a new pilot program! This April we will be launching a Member's Birdwalk at exclusive locations in the Champaign-Urbana area! This bird walk will be much like our public Birdwalk program but for CCAS members only and at locations not accessible to the general public.

- Our first outing will be at 7:30 AM Saturday, April 1st at the Urbana Park District's Perkins project, a future park with excellent water, shorebird, and warbler habitat. We will meet at the Perkins road dog park and a UPD staff member will unlock the gates for us.
- The second Member's Birdwalk will be held at 7:30 AM Saturday, April 8th at two research plots maintained by the University of Illinois. Trelease Woods has strong promise for owls while the diverse Phillips Tract will surely be overflowing with warblers. We will meet at the back of the Urbana Meijer's parking lot on Philo road to see if carpooling is necessary. We'll then drive the short distance to the plots, where a U of I staff member will unlock the gates for us.

The member interest in this pilot program will help us decide the May schedule and whether or not to continue to pursue new, exclusive locations for the Fall migration period. Stay tuned for more and we hope to see you at the Member's Birdwalk!

Mini-Grants for Educators

We were able to fund seven educational projects this year! We were able to fund this many wonderful projects because of our members' generosity at the end of 2016, and because we are saving money by printing & mailing fewer newsletters. This has already freed up more funds to directly support environmental education in our community! Thank you!

Congratulations to our 2017 mini-grant recipients!

School	Project	Number Impacted per Year
Holy Cross Elementary School	Monarch Way Station: Kindergarten	24
Holy Cross Preschool	Sensory Garden: PreK	40
Little Lamb Preschool	Sensory Garden: PreK	25
Mahomet-Seymour High School Biology Department	Ecology iPad sensors (temperature & pH): 9th grade	260
Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana	Vegetable Gardens: 1st-5th grade	23
Orpheum Children's Science Museum	Butterfly Garden: All Ages	10,000
University Primary School	Dry River Bed: PreK – 5th grade	97

Each year, we offer mini-grants to educators in Champaign County to support environmental education. Educators can apply for up to \$250 toward expenses for projects or activities that help enhance students' learning about our natural world and environmental issues.

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

Sunday Morning Birdwalks Begin March 5!

Our most popular event! Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot, 1505 N. Broadway, Urbana, at 7:30 AM. Walks in the nearby Busey Woods and Crystal Lake Park officially last about 1 1/2 hours (though some intrepid birders stay later).

Walks continue each Sunday through the end of May. Starting now we will see an increasing number of bird species as spring arrives.

An adventure for any age and level of birding experience as we share our identification skills.



Conservation Spotlight: Grand Prairie Friends

Submitted by: Jeff Peyton

We are featuring an ongoing 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.

At one time, more than 60 percent of Illinois was covered in prairie. It was the dominant natural community of the region and supported an enormous number of grassland species. Over time, the fertile black soil prairies have been plowed and turned to farmland.

Now, less than one hundredth of one percent remains of the original prairie. The patches that do remain are small and fragmented, often clinging to survival in the few areas that escaped being farmed, like railroad rights-of-way and pioneer cemeteries.

It was to protect these rare and vanishing prairie remnants that Grand Prairie Friends (GPF) was created in 1984. In 2004, the group expanded its mission to include protection and management of other natural areas as well as prairie. Grand Prairie Friends now owns four remnant prairie sites as well as several other natural areas, including several hundred acres of high-quality forest in Coles county. Additionally, they assist in the management of a number of sites owned by other entities. Their efforts are vital in preserving this important habitat.

Management of this much land is not easy; it requires a substantial amount of labor and funding. Grand Prairie Friends needs your help, whether in the form of a membership donation or time spent volunteering at one of their sites.

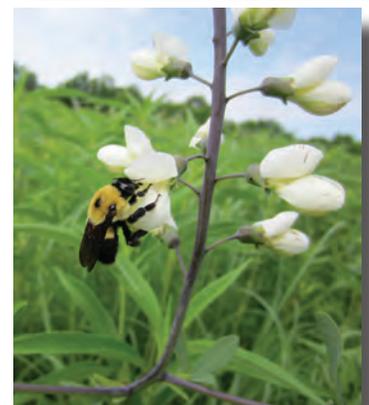
You can join Grand Prairie Friends at grandprairiefriends.org/join.php. When you join, you will receive the GPF quarterly newsletter, *A Prairie Rendezvous*, which is filled with articles on prairie resources, a calendar of upcoming events, lectures, and work days, and announcements of legislation and other political developments that affect prairie preservation efforts.

You can also stay informed of upcoming GPF workdays as well as announcements from other ecological stewardship groups in the area by joining the ecostewards email list at <http://lists.communitylists.org/listinfo.cgi/ecostewards-communitylists.org>.

At a time when so many important natural areas are in danger, your contribution can help protect some of the very important habitat remaining in Illinois.



GrandPrairieFriends.org



Calendar of Events

Thursday, March 2, 7pm

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Urbana Free Library Auditorium

Matt Candeias, creator and host of the popular In Defense of Plants blog and podcast, will lead a presentation about the fascinating world of avian pollinators.

Saturday, March 4, 7:30am

Field Trip: Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge

Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center at 7:30 am. This refuge is just across the Illinois River from Havana, about a 2 hour drive. It was established in 1993 to restore and protect wetland habitats at the confluence of the Illinois and Spoon Rivers. It attracts large numbers of waterfowl in early March and mid-November.

Sundays, March 5 - May 28, 7:30-9am

Sunday Morning Bird Walks

Meet in Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.

Saturday, March 11

9-11am Busey Woods; 1-3pm Weaver Park

Saturday, March 25

9-11am Meadowbrook; 1-3pm Perkins Road

Urbana Park District's Stewardship Days. Call Anita Purves Nature Center (384-4062) to register.

Thursday, March 16, 7pm

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

Saturday, April 1, 7:30am

CCAS Member's Birdwalk: Urbana Park District's Perkins Project

The Perkins Project is a future park with excellent water, shorebird, and warbler habitat. We will meet at the Perkins road dog park along with a UPD staff member, who will and unlock the gates.

Saturday, April 8, 7:30am

CCAS Member's Birdwalk: Trelease Woods & Phillips Tract

Trelease Woods has strong promise for owls while the diverse Phillips Tract will surely be overflowing with warblers. Meet at the back of the Urbana Meijer's parking lot on Philo road. We'll then carpool the short distance to the plots, where a U of I staff member will unlock the gates for us.

Visit our website for more information!

Local Woodcock Walks

Friday, March 10, 7-8pm

Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve

Join us in a search for the elusive wood snipe, AKA the American woodcock, as the males perform their amazing courtship display at dusk. A short presentation will be followed by a hike to look for the sky dancers. Meet at the Buffalo Trace Prairie parking lot on Rt. 47 / N. Lombard across the street from the Museum of the Grand Prairie. All ages welcome. \$2 per person. Registration required; ccfpd.org, (217) 896-2455 or cwalsh@ccfpd.org.

Saturday, March 11, 7-8pm

Homer Lake Interpretive Center

Join us in a search for the elusive wood snipe, AKA the American woodcock, as the males perform their amazing courtship display at dusk. A short presentation will be followed by a hike to look for the sky dancers. All ages welcome. \$2 per person. Registration required; ccfpd.org, (217) 896-2455 or cwalsh@ccfpd.org.

Wednesday March 22, 7-8pm

Meadowbrook Interpretive Center

Discover the secret life of the bird with an upside-down brain during a guided twilight stroll. FREE. Call (217) 384-4062 by March 20 if you plan to come.

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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Welcome & Thanks to Our New & Renewing Local CCAS Members!

Caitlin Lill, Carolyn Nixon, Shirley Walker, Stephanie Wagner, Betsy and Peter Kuchinke, Peter Hult, Richard Burkhardt, Ruth Walker, Susan Farnar, Pam Leiter, Loretta Dessen, Jane Myers, Bob Vaiden, Al Willms, Cheryl Pettus, Chris Johns, Judy Moll

Have questions? Contact Caitlin Lill, our Membership Chair, at cklill@gmail.com.

Join National Audubon Society!

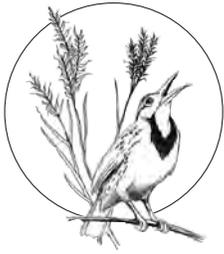
When you join National Audubon Society you receive one year of Audubon magazine. You also have the option to receive local birding and community events delivered to your inbox from CCAS.

- **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.



Audubon

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



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Urbana, IL 61803-0882

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Saturday, April 8, 7:30am: Trelease Woods & Phillips Tract

Visit our website for more information!

Woodcock Walks

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Meadowbrook Interpretive Center

**See Page 6 for
more details
about these
events.**