



The Meadowlark Messenger

May 2013 • Volume 30, No. 4

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

Presidents' Column

Susan Stearns

Co-President of Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS)

When you think of a favorite time of the year, which month do you think of? Is it December with all the hustle and bustle of the holidays? Perhaps you prefer the outdoor activities associated with the summer months? Or, is it October when leaves begin to turn?

Spring is most definitely a special time of year. Not only do leaves begin to grow and flowers bloom but students wrap up the school year. And most importantly, masters and doctoral students finishing a degree breathe a sigh of relief that the work is done!

I bet you are wondering why I said that was most important. Did you know that some of those researchers are very important to CCAS?

Each spring, CCAS awards Kendeigh Grants to support ornithology research projects in Illinois. The best part? The grant recipients share their progress and/or results with CCAS the following year. Perhaps you attended last month's program when Jason Fischer presented additional updates on his study of the influence of urban development on the birds that visit and live in our back yards. Mr. Fischer had been a 2011 recipient of a Kendeigh Grant and most recently presented as a grant recipient in May 2012.

Now it is time for the 2012 grant recipients to have their turn.

MAY MEETING

Anita Purves Nature Center
Thursday, May 2, 7 PM

The 2012 recipients of Kendeigh grants
from Champaign County Audubon Society

Valerie Buxton

will discuss her research on
Grassland Birds in Illinois



Tyson Dallas

will discuss his research on **Habitat
Use and Demography of Red-
headed Woodpeckers**



Valerie Buxton will inform us about her studies of grassland quality and grassland birds while Tyson Dallas will present his studies on the ecology of Red-headed Woodpeckers. We do hope you will come out to support these researchers. You can count on hearing two informative and interesting presentations.

But before you go reaching for your calendar to write down this event, you need to know that it will be held at a different venue than our usual evening programs. We don't want you going to the Urbana Library out of habit and wondering where the rest of us are. Instead, you need to go to the Anita Purves Nature Center, located at 1505 N Broadway Avenue in Urbana, just north of Crystal Lake Park. You also need to be aware of the construction taking place in this area. The Crystal Lake Park Family Aquatic Center shares the parking lot with the nature center and is currently under renovation. The parking lot and areas in front of the nature center have become part of the construction zone. Please be careful and do not be alarmed by heavy equipment or bumps in the road. There will be plenty of parking and a safe path to the building.

As always, we thank you for your continued support and participation as a member of CCAS. Wishing you the best birding this spring and always.

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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

Warblers are arriving early with many species seen in Crystal Lake Park. Yellow-throated, Pine, Tennessee, Parula, Palm, both waterthrushes, Hooded, Black-throated Green, Black and White, Worm-eating, and Prothonotary. I may have missed some. Most surprising, Prairie and Wilson's Warblers. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are visiting feeders. Chimney Swifts are back as are Golden Plovers. Osprey and Great Egret at Homer Lake. A dead Whip-poor-will on Jim Smith's farm. Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Camargo. Time to get out there and look.

SPRING BIRD COUNT

Spring Bird Count is Saturday May 4 in all the counties of Illinois. I am looking for birders to spend the day or any part on the Champaign County Count. We organize in parties of 2 or 3 to cover specific assigned areas. I'm especially looking for help with Crystal Lake Park/Busey Woods and Homer Lake. Let me know if you are interested. Beth Chato, 344-6803 (ejchato@gmail.com)

MAY EVENTS AT HOMER LAKE

Friday, May 10: Warblers at Walnut Hill. *Walnut Hill Shelter, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 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, 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, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.*

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.

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

Great help in checking out those arriving spring Warblers- DVD Watching Warblers with songs and video. Also good for reference the new Crossley Bird ID guide. Variety of binoculars in stock.

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

Spring has sprung! And as I write this, it's raining still/again. Think of it as ground water recharge. Meanwhile, spring migration moves on; warblers are being sighted, as well as other migrants. (*Journey North* reports that the Monarch butterfly migration is a little behind schedule, but they are on their way.) It's good to know that Nature is still doing what she does in spite of what humans do to her.

In February, the "Great Backyard Bird Count", which no longer has anything to do with most people's backyards, was conducted all over North America and some other places as well--I'm not sure just what was actually included. However--a lot of birds were seen: Specifically, 4004 species were tallied. This is supposedly 39% of the world's species. This is a rather exciting result, since it means that people are actually paying attention to birds--and hence to the natural world.

The new National Audubon Society's (NAS's) "Citizen Science" program that I mentioned in last month's newsletter, "Hummingbirds at Home" is supposedly now up and running. Go to the NAS website--I have not yet tried to log into it so I don't know just what is involved, but the idea is to keep track of our smallest birds - the incredible hummers.

And, of course, the problem of oil pipelines transporting tar-sands crude remains. There was a major spill in Arkansas. Somehow, I doubt that the folks who had crude gunk in their streets and yards are great fans of the Keystone XL pipeline. What will happen on that is yet to be determined. Obama initially opposed it, which means that the Republicans automatically favor it. Our government has gotten so totally screwed up in partisan politics that it is a miracle if ANYTHING can be accomplished. All any of us can do is try to keep as small an environmental footprint as possible.



May at Walden Pond

“Early in May, the oaks, hickories, maples, and other trees, just putting out amidst the pine woods around the pond, imparted a brightness like sunshine to the landscape, especially in cloudy days, as if the sun were breaking through mists and shining faintly on the hillsides here and there. On the third or fourth of May I saw a loon in the pond, and during the first week of the month I heard the **whip-poor-will**, the brown thrasher, the veery, the wood pewee, the chewink, and other birds. I had heard the wood thrush long before. The phoebe had already come once more and looked in at my door and window, to see if my house was cavern-like enough for her, sustaining herself on humming winds with clinched talons, as if she held by the air, while she surveyed the premises.

We need the tonic of wildness- to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature.”

- Henry David Thoreau, from **Spring**, Chapter 17 of *Walden*

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.

May Field Trips

Sunday Morning Bird Walks **May 5 - 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, May 18, 7:30 AM. – **Beth Chato** will lead a trip to the **Urbana Park District's Weaver Park** on East Main in Urbana. The various habitats at Weaver Park - woodland, prairie and wetland - will be searched for late migrants. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot at 7:30.

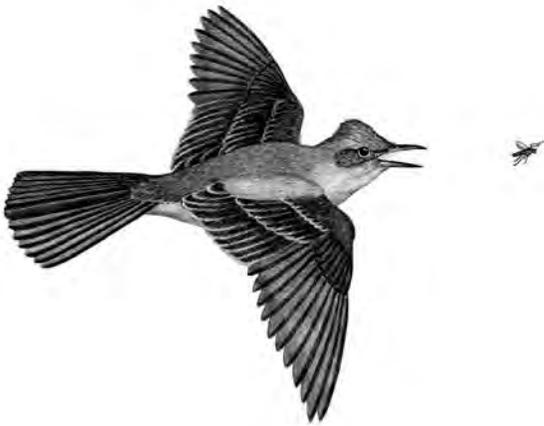
Field Trip Questionnaire

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.

BIRDATHON

See the enclosed flyer and pledge form. The Birdathon is our annual fundraiser for our Kendeigh Scholarships awarded to students studying bird projects in Illinois. The Birdathon is the week of May 5-May 12. An especially intense annual competition is between the Urbana Park District and Champaign Forest Preserve teams. Please choose a team and pledge your support.



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:**

May 11	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.

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



Membership for 2013

Friend of Champaign County Audubon Society \$15.00 _____ new
(includes CCAS newsletter only)

Friend of CCAS and National Audubon Society \$35.00 _____
(includes "Audubon" magazine & CCAS newsletter)

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: _____ C3ZG500Z

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ 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

sclementz@ccfpd.org

Be a Better Birder: Identification Webinars

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

This webinar series, written and presented by Dr. Kevin McGowan, is designed to help beginning birders develop bird identification skills. Each one-hour webinar consists of a live presentation using photographs, videos, sounds, and audience feedback, and is followed by a question and answer period where Dr. McGowan will address some queries from the audience. Each session will be presented twice within a week. Topics will be rotated on a seasonal basis, so be sure to check for availability.

• **Beginning Waterfowl ID 1: The most important things to know**

This webinar will introduce the diversity of waterfowl and point out the best ways to get started identifying them. It will concentrate on using the two most important characteristics for this group: shape and color pattern.

• **Beginning Waterfowl ID 2: What else can you use?**

This webinar will explore additional waterfowl identification methods beyond shape and color pattern, including size, behavior, habitat, range, and calls.

• **Beginning Waterfowl ID 3: The diversity of ducks**

This webinar will focus on the different species of ducks, pointing out the best ways to distinguish each one

• **Beginning Waterfowl ID 4: Not everything that swims is a duck**

This webinar will focus on identification of geese, swans, and other swimming birds. It will cover loons, grebes, gallinules, and others.

To register for the above webinars visit http://store.birds.cornell.edu/category_s/55.htm.

KENDEIGH GRANTS 2013

The Kendeigh Committee had a difficult time this year: We received ten grant applications, all of which were worthy of funding. The two that we selected were:

Christina Roy, for her study on **Vectors of Lyme Disease**

Tyson Dallas, for his study on **Ecology of Red-Headed Woodpeckers**



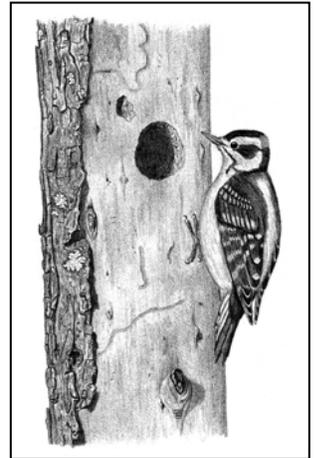
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Calendar of Events, May 2013

- Thursday** **May 2, 7 PM. General meeting at Anita Purves Nature Center. NOTE CHANGE IN MEETING LOCATION.** The 2012 Kendeigh Grant recipients will present their research findings. **Tyson Dallas: *Habitat Use and Demography of Red-headed Woodpeckers.***
Valerie Buxton: *Grassland Birds of Illinois.*
- Saturday** **May 4, all day. Annual Spring Bird Count.**
- Sundays** **May 5- May 26, 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.
- Sun - Sun** **May 5 - May 12. 2013 Birdathon**
- Saturday** **May 11, 9 AM- 4 PM. 5th Annual Bird Migration Festival.** Homer Lake Forest Preserve.
- Thursday** **May 16, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Saturday** **May 18, 7:30 AM. Beth Chato** will lead a trip to the **Urbana Park District's Weaver Park** on East Main in Urbana. The various habitats at Weaver Park - woodland, prairie and wetland - will be searched for late migrants. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot at 7:30.

