



# The Meadowlark Messenger

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org

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

## Birds Online: Cornell Ornithology Course

Cornell Bird Academy has just released its new online course, *Ornithology: Comprehensive Bird Biology*, which is college level learning for birders!

It is a series of lessons and videos that touch all aspects of birds which allow you to test your knowledge with periodic short quizzes for immediate feedback. Sample lessons and quizzes are available at Cornell's website.

The third edition of the Handbook of Bird Biology accompanies the course and is used as a reference along with many online tools.

Explore more about this unique way to learn about birds at <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org>.

Cost of the course is \$239 and the book is \$135, but discounts are available if you are a member of The Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



## November Program

**Thursday, Nov 3, 7pm**  
*Urbana Free Library Auditorium*

### Let's Play!

The Urbana Park District is planning a "Playscape" at Anita Purves Nature Center. Come hear what playscapes are and what they are hoped to provide for our children!

## The next newsletter may be your last paper copy, unless . . .

Unless you let us know that you'd like to continue to receive it via snail mail. *Thank you for your understanding as we move to a greener solution!*

See page 3 for more info.

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Champaign County Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803  
ChampaignCountyAudubon.org  
mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org

Officers

- President: Brian Stearns (595-5052)
- Vice President: Allan Penwell
- Secretary: Charlene Anchor
- Co-Treasurers: Susan Stearns, John Dunkelberger

Members at Large, 2015-2016

- Jim Hoyt
- Beth Chato
- Carie Nixon

Members at Large, 2016-2017

- Janet Jokela
- Caitlin Lill
- Jeff Peyton

Committee Chairs

- Bylaws: Allan Penwell
- Conservation: Jeff Peyton
- Education: Pam Leiter
- Field Trip: Beth Chato
- Finance: Allan Penwell
- Habitat: Bob Vaiden
- Hospitality: Astrid Berkson
- Membership: Caitlin Lill
- Nature Shop: Beth Chato
- Program: Helen Parker
- Publications: Vacant
- Publicity: Carie Nixon

Newsletter Coordinator: Ruth Walker

Webmaster & BirdNotes Listserve  
Manager: Pam Leiter

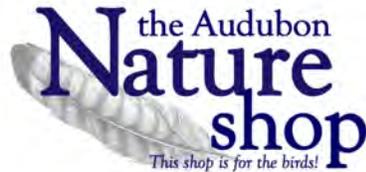
Champaign County Audubon publishes *The Meadowlark Messenger* nine times per year. Comments regarding the newsletter, or articles for submission, are welcome.



**Get this newsletter delivered right to your inbox—in color!**

Would you like to go paperless and help our funds go further? Please

visit our website and look for the link "Get your Meadowlark Messenger via email."



**10% discount for CCAS members!**

Monday–Saturday, 9am–4pm

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

I have juncos and White-throated Sparrows in my yard so winter is coming. It's time to set out feeders. The shop has a carefully selected variety, as well as a wide selection of guide books, children's books, puppets, stuffed singing birds, geodes, children's toys, feeders, binoculars, coloring books, and much more. Spread the word! A portion of the proceeds support CCAS!



## Field Notes

*Submitted by: Beth Chato*

An Osprey visited the St. Joe wetlands on September 10. September 27 saw a flock of 100 or so Broad-winged Hawks over Urbana. Slate-colored Juncos were seen on September 29. Weaver Park had Nelson's Sparrow, a Bittern and a Sora rail on October 9. Yellow-rumped Warblers have arrived in large numbers and ducks are coming back - Pintail, Gadwall, and Wood Duck at the Moorman Ponds October 10. On October 15 a White Pelican flew over Weaver Park.

You don't have to go far from home to see exciting things!

## Field Trips

*Middle Fork River Forest Preserve*

Saturday, November 12.

Meet at 7:30am at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot. Our largest county preserve has a variety of habitat and the possibility of interesting waterfowl.

We will return by noon.

## Call for Nominations and Volunteers

CCAS is looking for volunteers to serve on the Board of Directors and help with committees in 2017. Please contact Caitlin Lill (clkllil@gmail.com) if you are interested in more information.

## CCAS Newsletter to go (Mostly) Paperless in 2017!

Our biggest expense at CCAS is paper newsletters. Right now all new members (through NAS and CCAS) automatically receive a paper newsletter. We send approximately 450 newsletters out for nine months of the year, which has a high cost with printing and bulk mail. We're also concerned about the environment; being good stewards probably doesn't include printing almost 10,000 sheets of paper a year!

Instead, starting February 2017 we're switching our "default" enrollment. All members who provide an e-mail address will be sent the e-newsletter.

But fear not! If you strongly prefer the paper copy we will send it upon request to those who have paid the \$15 annual membership dues for CCAS. This is in addition to any dues paid to NAS and directly funds our local programs, research and conservation efforts. We will be sending out CCAS renewal notices beginning in November and you can let us know then that you would like to continue receiving the paper copy.

Thank you for your understanding as we move to a greener solution!

## Membership Form Changes

National Audubon Society has recently changed their process for how local chapters forward membership dues to them. It is much more time intensive for our treasurers to manage this system, and in researching the issue we've found that NAS encourages all members to join and renew online. They also offer an extensive renewal program for all NAS members and ask chapters to refrain from offering renewal services to any member in order to avoid confusion and the creation of multiple memberships.

Because of the switches at NAS, CCAS has decided that we will no longer accept membership dues on behalf of the National Audubon Society for 2017 memberships. Instead, we encourage you to follow the links to online membership forms and the phone number for NAS Member Services department on both our forms and website. NAS will also continue to mail renewal forms to members.

CCAS will continue to accept dues and donations intended for Champaign County Audubon Society. We are available to answer any questions you may have about your memberships with Champaign County Audubon Society and National Audubon Society.

## Please Remember CCAS in Your Charitable Donations

Each year CCAS reaches hundreds of people of all ages through bird walks, programs, field trips, bird counts, mini-grants, research grants and more! It is with great excitement that we get to see people introduced to the many joys of bird watching . . . and know that they will share it with others in their lives!

Your support is an important investment in local bird advocacy and education about birds and their habitats. Please consider supporting us in your end-of-year charitable giving. Checks can be made out to CCAS and sent to PO Box 882, Urbana IL 61803. All donations are tax-deductible.



## \$100 Mini-Grants for Educators

This fall, we funded 3-D Printing Pens for Gail Beck's elementary classroom at Leal Elementary School. Gail states "While our class is learning about all the different kinds of birds, their wonderful characteristics, and their habitats, as well as comparing them to other animals, I will also be teaching the students how important it is to preserve our wildlife and habitats. Each student will be able to create a bird of their choice with a 3D Printing Pen that allows each child to draw it in 3 dimensional plastic. Actually, I plan to have the students use this 3D Pen in all of the science units. We can have so much delightful fun!"

We received very few applications for mini-grants this year - please help us spread the word for next year!

*Our annual \$100 Mini-Grant Program offers help to Champaign County educators with bringing environmental education to students.*

## Conservation News

*Submitted by: Jeff Peyton*

### ***Coal Ash Ponds Threaten Middle Fork River***

The Middle Fork of the Vermilion River in is the only National Scenic River in Illinois. It is a favorite of paddlers and runs through some of the most unique and important natural areas in East Central Illinois. According to a report from Prairie Rivers Network, it is also under threat from leaking coal ash impoundments that are perilously close to the river.

The ash is the byproduct of Dynegy Inc.'s Vermilion Power Station. The plant is no longer in operation, but millions of cubic yards of ash, which contains mercury, arsenic, and other toxic materials, have been left behind in the unlined ponds, which leech into groundwater and contaminate the river. Additionally, erosion from the river is destabilizing the banks and encroaching further on the impoundments. The National Park Service, which has authority over the National Scenic Rivers program, has approved a bank stabilization project proposed by Dynegy, but this is only a temporary solution. The NPS recommends that the ponds be completely removed. The Illinois EPA has the authority to follow through on this recommendation and order the removal of the coal ash to a safer site, but so far has failed to do so.

The full report and additional information on Dynegy's coal ash pits can be found at [prairierivers.org](http://prairierivers.org).

### **Birds, Bites & Brews**

**Nov 10, 6:30-8pm at Pizza M**

Come out for a drink, a snack, and some good conversation with your fellow birdwatchers at our informal monthly get-together. You don't need to be a member to attend! Please RSVP to [cklill@gmail.com](mailto:cklill@gmail.com).

Pizza M: 208 W. Main St., Urbana (meet in the back room)

### **Birdnotes Listserve**

Join our Birdnotes listserve to get the latest local bird sightings in your inbox!

Here's how: go to [ChampaignCountyAudubon.org](http://ChampaignCountyAudubon.org) and click on 'Join Birdnotes.' Enter your info, then click 'Subscribe.'

# 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!

## Welcome New Members!

*Charles Monson, Jean Haley, Herschel & Harriet Cline, Jason Keagy, Mr. Daniel Curtis, Michelle Hartman, Dan Wetmore, Laura Zick-Bottorff*

## Thank You Renewing Members!

*Virginia Satterlee, Ruth Walker, Theresa Feller, Craig Pond, Ashley Genter, Leslie McClintock, Helen Parker, Marcia Richards, Sarah McDougal, Warren Compton, Nora Love Miller, Donna Beck, Martha Milas, David Bales, Richard & Linda McPhee, Winfred Gerber, Louise Dreher, James Smith, Nancy Boma, Brad Knishey, Bruce Barnard, Robert Espeseth, Roger Digges, Darcy Gentner, Sharon Donovan, Charlene Anchor, Michael McCulley, Loretta Dessen*



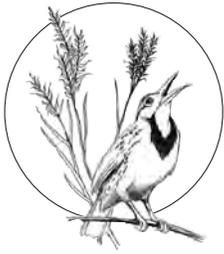
*The Champaign County Audubon Society is a Chapter of National Audubon Society, Inc.*

Have questions? Contact Caitlin Lill, our Membership Chair, at [cklill@gmail.com](mailto: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.



Champaign County Audubon Society  
PO Box 882  
Urbana, IL 61803-0882

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## Calendar of Events

**Thursday, Nov 3, 7pm**

**November Program: Let's Play!**

Urbana Free Library Auditorium

**Thursday, Nov 10, 6:30-8pm**

**Birds, Bites & Brews**

Pizza M (in the back room); Come out for a drink, a snack, and some good conversation.

**Saturday, November 12, 7:30am-Noon**

**Field Trip: Middle Fork River Forest Preserve**

Meet at 7:30am at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.

**Saturday, Nov 12 & Dec 10**

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

**Urbana Park District's Stewardship Days**

Call Anita Purves Nature Center (384-4062) for more info and to register.

**Thursday, Nov 17, 7:15pm**

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

*Visit our website for more information!*