



The Meadowlark Messenger

share - remember to bring a CD or September 2014 • Volume 31, No. 6
Champaign County Audubon Society • A chapter of the National
Audubon Society

Presidents' Column

Susan Stearns

Co-President of Champaign County
Audubon Society (CCAS)"

I hope all of you have enjoyed your summer. It went by too quickly for me. As a public school teacher, I definitely enjoyed my summer off from going to work each day. Now that summer is coming to an end, not only am I back in the classroom but I'm also thinking about the numerous accomplishments of the CCAS board members during this summer.

Here's a list of things CCAS has done or been a part of: (1) The nominating committee started working on the slate of officers to recommend in November for the December election; (2) Information was sent out to area schools about mini-grants for educators (applications are due in October); (3) An educational sign project that was funded in part by a grant from the National Audubon Society for the Champaign County Forest Preserve District is nearing completion and accomplishing more than originally planned; (4) Brian Stearns, CCAS co-president, has continued to give his presentation on the birds at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve to various groups, further educating people about the numerous species of birds that can be found in our home county; (5) The Izaak Walton Cabin at Lake of the Woods is reserved for our annual members' slide show (hope you have pictures to

flash drive with you) and potluck (bring a dish to share, a beverage, and your own place setting) scheduled for Thursday, the 4th of September. (6) CCAS partnered with Grand Prairie Friends to bring Josh Engel a full-time research assistant at the Field Museum to the area as a special guest speaker to present a program entitled *Bird Conservation in the Great Lakes Region: Successes, Challenges, and Learning from the Passenger Pigeon* at the Urbana Civic Center, Friday, September 26, 7:00pm. (7) We're planning field trips starting with an insect walk scheduled for the 13th of September; (8) Regular Sunday morning bird walks at Busey Woods will resume the first Sunday in September (7th) preceded by a pre-season bird walk on Sunday, August 31 to celebrate the start of fall migration (usually starts about mid-August). (9) We send best wishes to Mike Iorio, who recently left central Illinois in order to continue his studies, and welcome Allen Penwell, a new CCAS member, to the Board of Directors.

Wow! I feel tired after just reading through that list. Nonetheless, as you can see, though our Board of Directors does not meet together during the summer, they have all continued to work hard towards our mission of promoting interest, enjoyment and understanding through education about all aspects of our natural environment and to actively encourage the

servation and restoration of native habitat.

I hope that as you transition from thinking about summer vacations and fun to thinking about what you want to accomplish this fall, you take a moment to reflect on all that you have already accomplished. Thanks for your continued support of the Champaign County Audubon Society. I hope to see you for our next program on September 4th.

SEPTEMBER MEETING POTLUCK

Izaak Walton Cabin at Lake of
the Woods
Thursday September 4
6:30 PM



drawing by Charles Tunnicliffe from
Mereside Chronicle (1948)

Please join us for the first monthly meeting of the fall. Bring a friend and up to 10 images of natural encounters and/or special places you visited this past summer. **Please bring your own table service, a beverage, and a dish to share.** Hope to see you there!

Champaign County Audubon Society
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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

Summer highlights: Many birders put away their binoculars when all the exciting spring migrants leave our area, but some years ago I was hooked by checking on those birds which stay to nest. This year we have some evidence of nesting in Champaign County for 105 species. The total list of species over past years is 139. Highlights this summer were Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Least Bittern, Hooded Mergansers, Acadian Flycatcher, Kentucky Warbler, and many Blue Grosbeaks. Now fall migration has begun. The campus Peregrine Falcon has returned. Canada and Wilson's Warblers have been seen, as well as Redstarts. Baird's Sandpiper, Least Flycatcher, and a Bobolink were also reported. Fall bird walks begin soon.



FALL BIRD WALKS at BUSEY WOODS and CRYSTAL LAKE PARK

August 31, 7:30 - 9:00 AM. Bird Walk Warm-Up. The Sunday morning Bird Walks officially begin on September 7. Since a few warblers have already been seen in our area, there will be a "warm-up" bird walk to see if we can find anything new before the official counting begins. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot at 7:30 AM. Audubon members will be present.

September Bird Walks: September 7, 14, 21, 28

September 13, 8:30 - 10:30 AM. Insect Walk. Meet at the U of I Pollinarium at 8:30. Nearby habitats will be searched. Insects that may be caught will be examined under microscopes later. The road to the Pollinarium can be accessed from the north side of Windsor Road a short distance west of Race Street and east of Lincoln Avenue. There is a sign.

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

Get ready for those confusing fall warblers with visual and audiohelps as well as bird guides. Binoculars, feeders and much more. Wide variety of children's story and activity books. Newly arrived puppets. 10% discount for all Audubon members. Remember us when gift shopping.

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.)*

Anniversaries

September 3 marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. This act, one of the landmarks of environmental protection, keeps areas designated as wilderness free from human disturbance or destruction. It states that in a designated wilderness, "Man is a visitor who does not remain". Wilderness areas must be designated by Congress, and such designations often provoke political battles, but we now have many places that, at least in principal, are forever wild. The Wilderness Act is one thing of which the USA can be truly proud.

Just as a side note: It's also the 50th anniversary of Fire Island National Seashore and Canyonlands National Park. Canyonlands, of course, contains large wilderness areas. Fire Island, in contrast, is an urban park.

This September it will be 100 years since Martha, the last passenger pigeon, died in the Cincinnati zoo. WILL radio has had mention of a scientist who is now trying to re-create this (& other extinct animal) species. Is this a good idea? Apparently there will be discussion about this later.

Critters of various sorts

It has been a good year for puffins. In 2012 & 2013, there was not enough food for successful breeding, but this summer things were much better, and in the two largest puffin colonies in Maine, 75 % & 66 % of the nests fledged healthy, well-fed young. The Wisconsin Whooping Cranes are doing well. In June, a Federal court upheld National Park Service rules on Cape Hatteras National Seashore restricting off-road vehicles during nesting season for plovers, terns, and other wildlife.

In contrast, bees are in trouble. People tend not to realize how important bees--wild, not just honeybees--are important pollinators of plants we value. Some of the newer pesticides such as neonicotinoids (neurotoxins that have been banned in Europe but not in the USA) are taking a serious toll on these important creatures.

The sports team called the Vikings are building a new stadium--which is to be enclosed in a glass dome. (If you are familiar with Minnesota winters, you understand why!) The problem with this is that unless they use special bird-safe glass, the toll from birds crashing into it will be horrendous. National Audubon & Minnesota folks are trying to convince the Vikings that the added cost of non-reflective glass is trivial in the total project budget. We wish them luck in this--I do not at the moment have a contact where we can weigh in from down here.

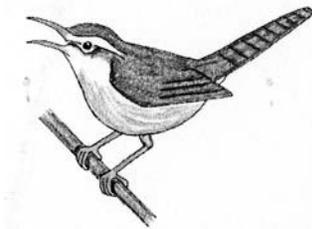
Mahomet Aquifer

Are we doomed to have mention of this in EVERY newsletter? The impression given in the newspaper is that the battle is over, but this may not be the case. Until BOTH the US and the ILLINOIS Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) deny or rescind the permits, or the owners of the company acquire a conscience, we'll keep watching & worrying.

FOR THE LOVE OF BIRDS

"If the bird has not preached to me, it has added to the resources of my life, it has widened the field of my interests, it has afforded me another beautiful object to love, and has helped me to feel at home in this world." - **John Burroughs**

"I hope you love birds too. It is economical. It saves going to heaven." - **Emily Dickinson**



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, Caitlin Lill, P.O.Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0882.

Passenger Pigeons

2014: Centennial of a Species' Passing

As large as a pileated woodpecker, but sleeker, the passenger pigeon was built for speed, grace and maneuverability. In the mid-1800s an estimated 3-5 billion birds wandered the eastern half of the United States in huge flocks, finding and descending upon localized abundant masts of beechnuts and acorns to fuel their massive numbers.

Even after 100 years the story of the passenger pigeon can still inform today's conservation challenges . . . and even its successes.



Special Speaker in September!

Bird Conservation in the Great Lakes Region: Successes, Challenges, and Learning from the Passenger Pigeon

Josh Engel, Field Museum

Friday, Sept 26, 7pm

Urbana Civic Center

How can we learn from the past to stave off future extinctions, in a world where the obstacles can seem insurmountable? Josh Engel, from Chicago's Field Museum, will give a presentation about passenger pigeons, extinction, and the human relationship with nature from a global perspective. He relates his own experiences in various places where he has seen both the destruction wrought by humans on natural systems as well as the attempts to save what remains. Mr. Engel will bring his global experience to the discussion to look at what has worked—and what hasn't—to protect biodiversity around the world.

Brought to you by CCAS and Grand Prairie Friends

Friday, September 5

FROM BILLIONS TO NONE – THE PASSENGER PIGEON'S STORY

Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

The centenary of the passenger pigeon's extinction offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to focus new attention on habitat conservation and species survival. This dramatic new film uses the passenger pigeon's story, of a billions-to-zero extermination in less than 50 years, to explore present day issues—and help other species avoid the same fate. FREE. For more info: (217) 896-2455 or pleiter@ccfpd.org

Special Exhibit at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center

To learn more, please visit the 2014 special exhibit at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center, which opened on Saturday April 5. The exhibit will commemorate the 100-yr anniversary of the passenger pigeon's extinction, and will celebrate its unique ecology, physiology, and its historical relation to America's peoples.

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:**

September 13 Weaver Park 1 – 3 pm. Turn right into park at entrance on East Main near Smith Road.

September 27 Meadowbrook 9 -11 am. Meet at Race Street parking lot.
Perkins Road 1 -3 pm. Meet at Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Road

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



Membership for 2014

		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>	\$20.00.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Donation to Champaign County Audubon Society

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: _____

C4ZG500Z

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(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

Audubon Adventures

Audubon Adventures is an educational kit for use in the classroom. It is a professionally developed nature program, sponsored by the National Audubon Society. This year, the Audubon Adventures Classroom Kit will be presented exclusively on the *Audubon Adventures* website where teachers can access all new student magazines, background information, hands-on activities, and much more! The new topics for 2014-15 to be presented on the *Audubon Adventures* website are:

- *Wild about Birds*, focused on the science of birds, including their characteristics and adaptations, habitat needs, migration, and life cycles.
- *The Buzz about Native Bees*, highlighting the natural history of native bees and their vital role in ecosystems as pollinators of native plants.
- *Birds & Other Wildlife of Our Towns & Cities*, featuring familiar urban/suburban birds and other wildlife, how they interact with the built environment, the resources they need for survival, and ways in which kids can help their wild neighbors.
- PLUS "Birds on the Move," a large, content-rich classroom poster about bird migration.

For more information on these kits please visit <http://education.audubon.org/audubon-adventures>.

Interested in a Free Audubon Adventures Kit?

The Champaign County Audubon Society sponsors a limited number of these kits each year so that Champaign County teachers can receive them FREE. If you would like to put your name in for a drawing to receive a kit for your classroom, please contact Stacey Clementz, CCAS Education Chair by September 13, at sclementz@ccfpd.org. Please include: teacher name(s), school name & address, email addresses, and grade(s) taught.

Audubon Adventure Sponsors Needed

Generous donations from our members allow CCAS to sponsor Audubon Adventure kits for local classrooms. If you would like to sponsor a kit for one or more classrooms, please send a check made out to CCAS to PO Box 882, Urbana, IL. 61803. Each kit costs \$16.00. Please have checks in by September 13.

\$100 Mini Grants Application Deadline: October 6

Each year, the Champaign County Audubon Society offers mini-grants to educators to support learning about the environment. Check the Educator's Resources page on our website for more information, or contact Stacey Clementz at 217-896-2455 or sclementz@ccfpd.org.



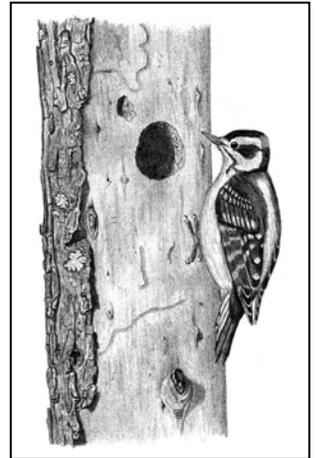
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Calendar of Events, September 2014

- Sunday August 31, 7:30 - 9 AM. Bird Walk Warm-Up.** The Sunday morning Bird Walks officially begin on September 7. Since a few warblers have already been seen in our area, there will be a "warm-up" bird walk to see if we can find anything new before the official counting begins. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.
- Thursday September 4, 6:30 PM. Annual Potluck at the Izaak Walton Cabin at Lake of the Woods.** Join us for the first monthly meeting of the fall. Bring a friend and up to 10 images of natural encounters and/or special places you visited this past summer. Cold drinks will be provided; **please bring your own table service and a dish to share**
- Friday September 5, 6-7:30 PM. A film shown at Interpretive Center, Homer Lake Forest Preserve. *From Billions to None – The Passenger Pigeon’s Story.***
- Sundays September 7- September 28, 7:30 - 9 AM.** Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods begin on September 7 and will continue every Sunday through October 26. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.
- Saturday September 13, 8:30 – 10:30 AM. Insect field trip at Meadowbrook Park.** Meet at the Pollinarium, turn north off Windsor Road between Lincoln Avenue and Race Street.
- Thursday September 18, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Monday September 22, 9:29 PM. AUTUMNAL EQUINOX.**
- Friday September 26, 7 PM. Urbana Civic Center. *Bird Conservation in the Great Lakes Region: Successes, Challenges, and Learning from the Passenger Pigeon*** presented by **Josh Engel, Field Museum**