



The Meadowlark Messenger

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

President's Column

Barbara Schleicher, President of
Champaign County Audubon
Society (CCAS)

I hope your summer has been productive whether it was getting some projects done, vacations and/or just relaxing. The CCAS is gearing up for a great fall birding season with: Sunday morning walks beginning on Sunday, September 6th; members' potluck on September 3rd, many superb monthly programs and, of course, intriguing articles in our monthly newsletter.

During the early part of August, I had an opportunity to visit down in New Mexico for several days. While the original purpose was for a family wedding and reunion, I took some time to visit several wildlife refuge areas.

As many of you may know, New Mexico is in the Central Flyway. Birds may use this flyway from the Arctic Ocean to Patagonia. Sierra and Socorro counties were the specific areas I was birding in. Within these counties, you can find four different bio-life zones. A brochure I picked up boasted that you could find 400 of the 502 species that can be found in the state there. I visited the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge and the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. Both are maintained by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in cooperation with the University of New Mexico (UNM). The UNM has several observation field stations in

these refuges; and at the Sevilleta Refuge, they have a fairly large laboratory and research facility.

Since it was quite warm in that part of the country (100-108° F) I made sure to get out early. My first stop was the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (57,300 acres) which straddles the Rio Grande. At the visitor center, I met with volunteers who were Audubon club members from Socorro County. They provided me with 'tons' of information about the refuge and which birds were migrating now. At the visitor center observation window I saw quite a display of the birds passing through, especially hummingbirds. During my 20 minutes of observing, there were over 50 hummingbirds (Black-chinned, Calliope, Broadtailed and the majority were Rufous). One of the volunteers was very excited about seeing a Red-faced Warbler.

'The Bosque' is an important wintering home for Sandhill Cranes, and will host as many as 14,000 during the winter months. Cranes will begin arriving in November and will leave as late as the end of February, heading for Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge and Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge for a month or two before migrating onwards to Greys' Lake, Idaho, their breeding grounds.

Before heading back to Albuquerque and home, I stopped at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (360 square miles) also bisected

by the Rio Grande. I was there later in the day and being a 'flat lander' and not fond of three digit temperatures, I walked the wildflower trail. However, I did get to see several Roadrunners, California Quail, Swainson's Hawks and many lizards darting into the shade along with me!!

If you are ever in that area of the country, I strongly recommend visiting these two National Wildlife Refuges.

SEPTEMBER MEETING POTLUCK

Izaak Walton Cabin at Lake of the
Woods

**Thursday September 3
6:30 PM**



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!

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Champaign County Audubon publishes
The Meadowlark Messenger nine times
per year. Comments regarding the news-
letter or articles for submission are
welcome by the President.

Recent Bird Sightings: FIELD NOTES from Beth Chato

Fall migration has begun. Pine, and Black & White warblers and Redstart have been seen, as well as an Olive-sided Flycatcher. The campus Peregrine Falcon has returned. Homer Lake had two Caspian Terns. Looking back to summer's breeding season, I am beginning to tally up results. So far I have 100 different species for all of Champaign County. The highest Forest Preserve total is the Middlefork with 78. The highest Urbana city park is Meadowbrook with 54. The Bald Eagles nested successfully again on the Middlefork. Perhaps the most unusual were apparently two families of Black-crowned Night Herons in Champaign. I have few records from Champaign Parks. Someone want a project for next year? Do send me any interesting summer records that you have from Champaign County.

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, September 5. Emiquon Waterfowl restoration, across the Illinois River from Havana. Some distance but well worth the trip. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center at 8:00 am to car pool. Bring lunch or eat in Havana. Helen Parker will lead this trip.

Saturday, September 19, 8:30 - 10:30 AM. Insect Walk. Meet at the U of I Pollinarium at 8:30. Nearby habitats will be searched for insects, and many of the live insects that are caught will be examined under microscopes before releasing them. 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 on the north side of Windsor.



AUDUBON NATURE SHOP for Unique Nature-Related Gifts
ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER, 1515 N BROADWAY, URBANA, IL
9-4 MONDAY-SATURDAY

New stock of puppets includes Great Horned Owl, Porcupine and Rattlesnake. New singing birds include Puffin. Your source for nature related items for young and old. All proceeds go for environmental programs.

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.)*

**Autumn bird walks begin on Sunday September 6
and continue every Sunday morning through October 25
7:30-9am**

Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods begin on September 6 and will continue every Sunday through October 25. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot. Bring binoculars if you have them. Audubon members will be present to help beginners.



The very idea of a bird is a symbol and a suggestion to the poet. A bird seems to be at the top of the scale, so vehement and intense his life. . . . The beautiful vagabonds, endowed with every grace, masters of all climes, and knowing no bounds -- how many human aspirations are realised in their free, holiday-lives -- and how many suggestions to the poet in their flight and song!

[John Burroughs](#), *Birds and Poets*, 1887

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 12 | 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. |
| September 26 | Meadowbrook | 9 -11 am. | Meet at Race Street parking lot. |
| | Perkins Road | 1 -3 pm. | Meet at Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Road |

Bobcat Hunting Signed into Law

A bill passed in May by the Illinois Assembly allowing for the hunting and trapping of bobcats was signed into law by Governor Bruce Rauner on July 14. The law enables the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to establish a hunting season and issue permits to take bobcats by gun, trap, bow, or dog. The law limits bobcats to one per person, but places no limit on the number of permits that can be issued per season. Bobcats were previously listed as threatened in Illinois, but were removed from the list in 1999. The IDNR estimates their population in Illinois to be between 3000 and 5000.



Environmental Groups Oppose New Madrid Levee Project

The Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, Prairie Rivers Network, and other environmental groups are seeking to stop a \$165 million project in southeastern Missouri. Proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers, the St. John's Bayou-New Madrid Levee Project would close a 1500-foot gap in the Mississippi River levee system near Cairo, Illinois, in order to block a federally designated floodway in Missouri. The floodway is intended to fill with water during heavy rain events in order to provide flood relief, and the floodwater creates 53,000 acres of wetland habitat that would be destroyed by the project. The Corps' plan is a result of pressure from a group of Missouri landowners, who seek to end the periodic overflow into the floodway in order to allow for increased development and agricultural use. In 2011, landowners took legal action to attempt to block the opening of the floodway during a flooding event, and the delay resulted in the destruction of fifty homes in the town of Olive Branch, Illinois. Citing flood danger and habitat destruction, opponents are encouraging the Environmental Protection Agency to veto the plan under the authority of the Clean Water Act, and for lawmakers to block funding for the levee project.

Budget Cuts Cause Conservation Officer Layoffs

Due to the state's ongoing budget crisis, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources was forced to issue layoff notices to 33 of its conservation police officers, effective September 30. The conservation police force, already reduced by previous budget cuts, is responsible for protecting natural resources and enforcing conservation laws, as well as conducting river and wilderness rescues and keeping safe those who engage in outdoor recreation. The cuts leave a force of 80 conservation police officers to cover 102 counties in Illinois. An IDNR spokesperson has confirmed a total of 107 layoffs in the department, overall.

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

Membership for 2015

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

Friend of CCAS and National Audubon Society \$20.00.....
(includes "Audubon" magazine & CCAS newsletter)

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: _____ C5ZG500Z

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

Pam Leiter, leiterp@msn.com

Educators: Apply Today for These Great Resources!

Audubon Adventures Classroom Kits: "Action for Planet Earth"

Deadline: September 11

Understanding why and how to protect our natural resources has never been more important. The 2015-16 Audubon Adventures Classroom Kit, *Action for Planet Earth*, will focus on three components of our vital and vulnerable natural heritage: habitat, water, and energy. We're also happy to announce the return of *Audubon Adventures* student newspapers in print! The classroom kit includes online components for students and teachers, digital or print copies of three student newspapers, and much more! Visit champaigncountyaudubon.org for more information.

Teachers, Are You Interested in an Audubon Adventures Kit?

CCAS sponsors FREE kits for a limited number of classrooms each year. Please contact our Education Chair, Pam Leiter, by **September 11**, and include: teacher name(s), school name & address, email addresses, and grade(s) taught, and whether you prefer digital or printed student newspapers.

Mini-Grants

Deadline: October 2

Each fall, the Champaign County Audubon Society offers mini-grants to educators in Champaign County to support environmental education. Educators can apply for up to \$100 toward expenses for projects or activities that help enhance students' learning about our natural world and environmental issues. Visit champaigncountyaudubon.org for more information and to download the application form.

Sponsors: We Need Your Help!

You can help bring a valuable Mini-Grant or Audubon Adventures Classroom Kit to local classrooms. Your donation of \$50 toward Audubon Adventures Kits or \$100 toward Mini-grants will help nurture the next generation of environmental stewards. Please write "Audubon Adv" or "Mini-Grants" on the memo line of your check. Donations are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!!



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Calendar of Events, September 2015

- Thursday September 3, 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, a beverage, and a dish to share.**
- Saturday September 5, 8 AM.** Emiquon Waterfowl restoration, across the Illinois River from Havana. Some distance but well worth the trip. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center at 8:00 am to car pool. Bring lunch or eat in Havana. Helen Parker will lead this trip.
- Sundays September 6 – September 27, 7:30 - 9 AM.** Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods begin on September 6 and will continue every Sunday through October 25. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot. Bring binoculars if you have them. Audubon members will be present to help beginners.
- Thursday September 17, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Saturday September 19, 8:30 -10:30 AM.** Insect Walk. Meet at the U of I Pollinarium at 8:30. Many of the live insects that are caught will be examined under microscopes before releasing them. 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 on the north side of Windsor.
- Wednesday September 23, 3:21 AM. Autumn arrives.**