



The Meadowlark Messenger

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

President's Column

Darin Eastburn & Caroline Mallory
Co-Presidents of Champaign County
Audubon Society (CCAS)

Great Backyard Bird Count

Have you ever wanted to participate in a large-scale research study? Well, now is your chance, because it is time for the 2012 Great Backyard Bird Count (or GBBC), which is scheduled from February 17 - 20. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint project of Audubon, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada. The goal of the GBBC is to take a snapshot of where birds are across North America, and everyone, from novices to experienced birders, is invited to participate. Audubon Chief Scientist, Gary Langham says "The Great Backyard Bird Count is a perfect example of Citizen Science." This is a project that would not be possible without the help of thousands of volunteers, and it is a great way to learn more about the birds in your area.

So what do you have to do to participate in the GBBC? According to the GBBC web site (www.birdsource.org/gbbc) "it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!"

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist

per day if you count in other locations on that day.

2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. You may find it helpful to print out your regional bird checklist to get an idea of the kinds of birds you're likely to see in your area in February, and note the highest number of each species you see on the checklist.

3. When you're finished, enter your results through our CCAS web page. You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" on the home page beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission.

Counts can be taken in backyards, parks, along trails, and in urban settings. You can conduct either a "standing count" where you stay in one place, or a "traveling count" if you are hiking along a trail or walking through a park. The methods used for these two types of counts are slightly different, so check the instructions on the GBBC web site.

Champaign County Audubon Society will conduct a count at the Anita Purves Nature Center (1505 North Broadway Avenue, Urbana) on Saturday, February 18, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Local Audubon members will be on-hand to help identify bird species and to answer questions about bird habitat and behavior. The bird observation room at the nature center is accessible, and a great place to participate in the count while staying warm. We hope to see you there!

FEBRUARY MEETING

at the Urbana Free Library
Auditorium
Thursday, February 2 at 7 PM

The Amazing Diversity of Ecuador's Birds

presented by

Greg Lambeth

**Greg and his father spent
three weeks in Ecuador in
2011, observing 422 species of
birds (56 of those were
hummingbirds) and
photographing many of them.**



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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

Highlight of the winter must be Snowy Owls, probably at least 4 in Champaign County. One now resides at the U/I Wildlife Clinic where it is being treated for a broken wing. A close tie with the Snowy Owls is the late lingering Baltimore Oriole in the Forestry. Others of note include Trumpeter Swan, Ross' Goose, Orange-crowned Warbler, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls, Brewer's Blackbird, and Redpolls.

Champaign County Christmas Bird Count - 2011

67 species, 6488 individuals: Snow Goose, blue phase 1; Cackling Goose 2; Canada Goose 896; Mute Swan 1; Trumpeter Swan 6; Wood Duck 2; Mallard 314; Common Merganser 4; Pheasant 60; Great Blue Heron 4; N.Harrier 1; Sharp-shinned Hawk 1; Cooper's Hawk 8; Red-tailed Hawk 29; Rough-legged Hawk 1; Kestrel 11; Peregrine Falcon 1; Rock Pigeon 465; Mourning Dove 194; E. Screech Owl 10; Great Horned Owl 6; Barred Owl 2; Long-eared Owl 1; Short-eared Owl 1; Kingfisher 3; Red-headed Woodpecker 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker 56; Sapsucker 5; Downy Woodpecker 60; Hairy Woodpecker 13; Flicker 9; Pileated Woodpecker 5; Blue Jay 66; Am. Crow 1300; Horned Lark 15; Carolina Chickadee 43; Black-capped Chickadee 4; Tufted Titmouse 20; Red-breasted Nuthatch 2; White-breasted Nuthatch 41; Brown Creeper 1; Carolina Wren 14; E. Bluebird 18; Hermit Thrush 4; Robin 54; Starling 1145; Cedar Waxwing 16; Yellow-rumped Warbler 12; ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER 2; Am. Tree Sparrow 136; Field Sparrow 6; Savannah Sparrow 3; Fox Sparrow 1; Song Sparrow 27; Swamp Sparrow 12; White-throated Sparrow 43; White-crowned Sparrow 90; Junco 168; Cardinal 189; Red-winged Blackbird 27; Com. Grackle 2; Cowbird 21; (Blackbird, sp. 11); Purple Finch 9; House Finch 183; Pine Siskin 11; Goldfinch 190; House Sparrow 427.

BALD EAGLE DAYS at Havana - 2012

Saturday January 14

Our eagle count had 24 eagles at the Havana City Park on Jan. 14. For more info contact the Havana Nature Center, 309-543-1031.

The following eagles were seen on the Illinois River, Havana to Beardstown: 32 eagles -- 19 adults, 12 immature, 1 unknown. They were probably still migrating, since we saw a kettle at Havana. It's good to have a success story--it was only a few years ago that they were endangered.

AUDUBON NATURE SHOP

Unique Nature-Related Gifts

ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER, 1515 NORTH BROADWAY, URBANA, IL

9-4 MONDAY-SATURDAY

SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Sales for the past year were about \$5,800. This income will provide \$1,500 for Audubon's conservation activities plus our share to the Urbana Park District's environmental programs. Inventory and restocking are underway. Shop often and tell your friends. We can special order your needs.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Helen Parker, Conservation Chair

Tar Sands Oil Pipeline

By now everyone has heard that Obama refused to sign off on the XL pipeline that would carry tar sand oil from Alberta to Texas over the Ogallala aquifer. This does not mean that this proposal is dead--the oil companies will do all they can to keep it going, but maybe enough sanity will prevail for an alternate, less hazardous route to be determined. Meanwhile--another alternate has been proposed called Northern Gateway pipeline. This would transport the same tar sands crude to the British Columbia coast to be loaded onto tankers bound for Asia & the U.S. Just imagine the potential for spills from that one.

Mines vs Parks

Here in Illinois, a company wants to put a sand-mining operation on the edge of Starved Rock State Park, which would certainly have an adverse impact on one of the jewels of the Illinois park system. This is to be approved because somebody uttered the sacred word "jobs". No account taken of the jobs that would be LOST if fewer people visited Starved Rock. Now take this same type of proposal and ratchet it up to a national scale: this time the mine is for coal and the park is Bryce Canyon. Yes, the state of Utah and the Obama administration seek to expand a coal mine located 10 miles from Bryce Canyon to cover 3500 acres and have heavy-duty diesel trucks rumbling down a 2-lane highway 24 hours a day. Is nothing sacred?

Much of the information in this column was obtained from the Natural Resources Defense Council

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



Membership for 2012

Friend of Champaign County Audubon Society \$15.00 _____ new renewal
(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: _____ C2ZG500Z

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ 7XCH

(Please provide 9-digit zip code)

Send this application and your check to: Champaign Co. Audubon Society, Membership Chair, P.O. Box 882, Urbana,

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

CCAS Offers \$100 Mini-Grants! Due March 5th

Our annual Mini-Grant program offers help to Champaign County educators who wish to enhance teacher and student knowledge of, and concern for, the environment. A limited number of mini-grants up to \$100 each are available. In the past, we have funded items such as: classroom materials, special books, guest speakers, registration fees for environmental conferences. Check out the Educator's Resources page on our website for more information or contact me at 217-896-2455 or sclementz@ccfpd.org.

Help support Champaign County educators!

If you would like to donate funds to support the Mini-Grant program, please send a check to PO Box 882 Urbana IL. 61803 by March 1. Make checks out to CCAS.

-----Seeking

Volunteers!

Please give us a hand with membership duties. Someone is needed to maintain the membership rosters, the e-newsletter list, and print out mailing labels for the monthly newsletter. The estimated time commitment is approximately 2 hours per month. If you are interested, please email Janet Jokela at jjokela59@hotmail.com, or Darin Eastburn at eastburn@illinois.edu. Thank you.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES at Urbana Parks, Bob Vaiden Habitat Chair

Help rebuild our shattered environment! 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:**

Jan. 28th & Feb.25th: Busey Woods 9 -11 am. Meet at Anita Purves Nature Center
Weaver Park 1 - 3 pm. Turn right at entrance on East Main near Smith Road.

February 11 th: Meadowbrook 9 -11 am. Meet at Race Street parking lot.



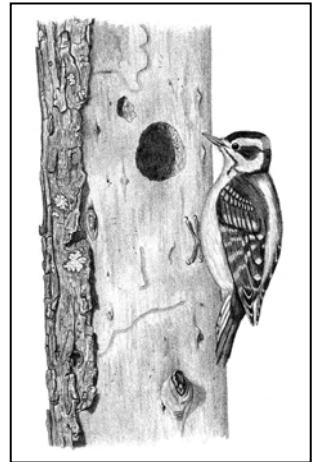
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Calendar of Events, February 2012

- Thursday February 2, 7 PM. General meeting** at Urbana Free Library Auditorium. Greg Lambeth will present a program on “The Amazing Diversity of Ecuador’s Birds”.
- Thursday February 16, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Saturday February 18, 9 AM – 4 PM. Great Backyard Bird Count** at Anita Purves Nature Center.



Coming in March - Sunday Morning Bird Walks begin March 4.