



The Meadowlark Messenger

March 2013 • Volume 30, No. 2

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

Presidents' Column

Susan & Brian Stearns

Co-Presidents of Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS)

It's hard to believe that there has been such little snowfall in Champaign County two years in a row. And here we are, just weeks away from the Vernal Equinox at 6:02 AM (CDT) on March 20, 2013. For us, the birding highlights of this winter have been participating in the Christmas Bird Count, organized by the National Audubon Society, and The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), jointly organized by the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada. As spring arrives, we are sure to spend more time birding and will have to give eBird [<http://www.ebird.org>] a try. If you participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count and created an account with them to submit your sightings, then you already have an account for using eBird. Just like the GBBC, eBird is also a joint project between the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. This global project allows you to submit bird sightings anywhere at any time throughout the year. Now when we all get excited about hearing of a sighting of a particular bird somewhere in Champaign County, we can also share that information with the global birding community.

Speaking of bird counts, Helen Parker has done a wonderful job of organizing local birders when CCAS has participated in bird counts such as the Christmas Bird Count and Illinois Eagle Count for many years. However, Helen announced at the January board meeting that she would like to start training someone now who will be willing to take on this task when she is ready to retire from this leadership role. It takes quite a bit of organization and determination to round up people, keep track of who is going where and when to ensure that all the hot birding spots are covered, and take care of the compilation and reporting of the data collected afterwards. If you think you would be interested in taking on this level of

participation in a few years, please contact Helen directly.

Furthermore, CCAS is also looking for a volunteer to serve as the chairperson of our publicity committee. We already have a great team of people who work together to plan our events, create the newsletter, and keep the website up-to-date. However, we need someone to lead publicity in other ways who is also able to attend most board meetings (currently held the 3rd Thursday of each month). If you are interested in volunteering in this capacity, please contact one of our co-presidents.

Finally, CCAS needs help with another matter. Did you realize that each time CCAS publishes this newsletter, it is mailed out to about 550 addresses? Each newsletter is hand folded with care and prepared for mailing by a team of our board members. That is a lot of person-hours put into getting this newsletter to all of you; not to mention the cost of the photocopying and postage. Currently, the annual cost to produce and mail the newsletter is about the same as the amount of income we receive from membership dues (from both NAS members and CCAS Friends). That means we rely on other sources of income such as grants, donations, and our savings for other operating expenses, educational programs, and other special projects.

We know you appreciate the newsletter and we believe you are worth the time, effort and cost. But we need your help. There are two ways that you can help: (a) notify either our Webmaster Pam Leiter or our Membership Chair Janet Jokela that you would like to receive your newsletter electronically; (b) become a Friend of CCAS each year in January. Most of you who receive this newsletter in the mail are members of the National Audubon Society. When you join the National Audubon Society, you automatically become a member of CCAS. However, the National Society keeps most of the dues you send to them and passes on a small percentage to us, your local chapter. When you become a Friend of CCAS, we keep 100% of your

CCAS Friend donation. This support will help us to be financially self sufficient, while sharing the same goals as the National Audubon Society and focusing our efforts locally here in Champaign County. We thank each of you for your dedication and support of CCAS. (See bottom of page 3.)

MARCH MEETING

Urbana Free Library Auditorium

Thursday, March 7, 7 PM

GREG LAMBETH

will present

**BIRDING SOUTHERN
ECUADOR**



Greg Lambeth is a birder and wildlife photographer who lives in Urbana. He leads the Busey Woods bird walks during spring and fall migration as well as field trips for Champaign Audubon Society and the Illinois Ornithological Society. Greg recently took a 3-week birding and photography tour of Southern Ecuador with his father, David Lambeth.



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

Red-winged Blackbirds are back. Homer Lake had a Common Merganser (Feb 12). Red Crossbills were seen in Urbana at 714 W. Vermont (Feb 13), and near Leal School (Feb 16) where there was also a Redpoll. A group of Tundra Swans was hanging out in a field near Race and Church Streets on February 16. Sandhill Cranes flew over Meadowbrook Park on February 21.

**FEBRUARY BIRD COUNT
Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), February 16
at Anita Purves Nature Center**

Audubon conducted our share of the Great Backyard Bird Count. Ten Audubon members were there in shifts from 10 am to 4 pm counting the birds and interacting with the center visitors. Bryan Stearns and Jim Hoyt led a hike through the woods at 3 pm. A total of 23 species were seen for the count. Highlights were 4 Eastern Bluebirds seen in the sumac bush behind the center, and 3 Red Crossbills reported from the adjacent cemetery. The highest numbers of individual birds went to the House Sparrows, a flock of 100 takes advantage of the Center's feeders. Also high were 2 flocks of American Robins for a total of 47. In the wider picture, Champaign County watchers have so far reported 54 species. You can still add your sightings between February 15 & 18 at the GBBC website or view lists from all over the world.

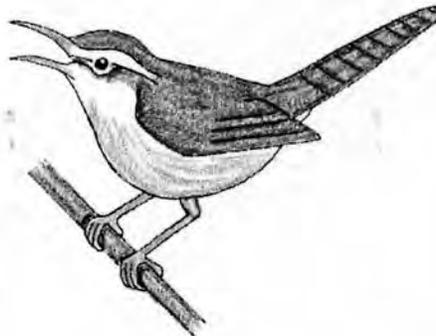
AUDUBON NATURE SHOP

Unique Nature-Related Gifts

ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER, 1515 NORTH BROADWAY, URBANA, IL
9-4 MONDAY-SATURDAY

SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Extensive restocking is underway after a good year of sales. Final figures aren't put together yet but our sales slip total was about \$7,300. New items in stock are folding pocket guides by Sibley on Owls, Raptors, and Trees, and an intriguing Butterfly Fun kit.



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
IDNR LAND PURCHASE

The state of Illinois has purchased 547 acres of land for preservation, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation. The largest parcel is in Pike County where there is presently little public land. There is also some forest land in Ogle County and 72 acres to debut the Hackmatack Wildlife Refuge in McHenry County. Finally there is a minuscule addition to Kickapoo State Park in Vermilion County. According to the article in the News-Gazette, these land purchases were made possible with “capital construction program” money that was set aside in 2009 for long-term infrastructure improvement and is not available for state government operating expenses.

ENERGY

In his State of the Union address, President Obama discussed energy issues and needs fairly extensively. He managed to avoid completely mentioning the Keystone XL pipeline, whose omission from the address was not surprising since no matter what he could have said about this proposed pipeline, a large number of people would have been angry

Meanwhile in Illinois, a regulatory bill dealing with hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) is being negotiated. Leases have been signed on thousands of acres in southern Illinois where there is believed to be potential for considerable yield in the New Albany shale formation. As yet, industry has held off on drilling until ground rules are in place. Once the terms have been decided, we can expect to see fracking come to Illinois.

THE JOYS OF BIRD WATCHING

Take the first step in ornithology, procure one new specimen, and you are ticketed for the whole voyage. There is a fascination about it quite overpowering. It fits so well with other things,--with fishing, hunting, farming, walking, camping-out,--with all that takes one to the fields and woods. One may go a-blackberrying and make some rare discovery; or, while driving his cow to pasture, hear a new song, or make a new observation. Secrets lurk on all sides. There is news in every bush. Expectation is ever on tiptoe. What no man ever saw before may the next moment be revealed to you. What a new interest the woods have! How you long to explore every nook and corner of them! You would even find consolation in being lost in them. You could then hear the night birds and the owls, and, in your wanderings, might stumble upon some unknown specimen.

In all excursions to the woods or to the shore, the student of ornithology has an advantage over his companions. He has one more resource, one more avenue of delight. He, indeed, kills two birds with one stone and sometimes three. If others wander, he can never go out of his way. His game is everywhere. The cawing of a crow makes him feel at home, while a new note or a new song drowns all care. Audubon, on the desolate coast of Labrador, is happier than any king ever was; and on shipboard is nearly cured of his seasickness when a new gull appears in sight.

One must taste it to understand or appreciate its fascination.
– **John Burroughs**



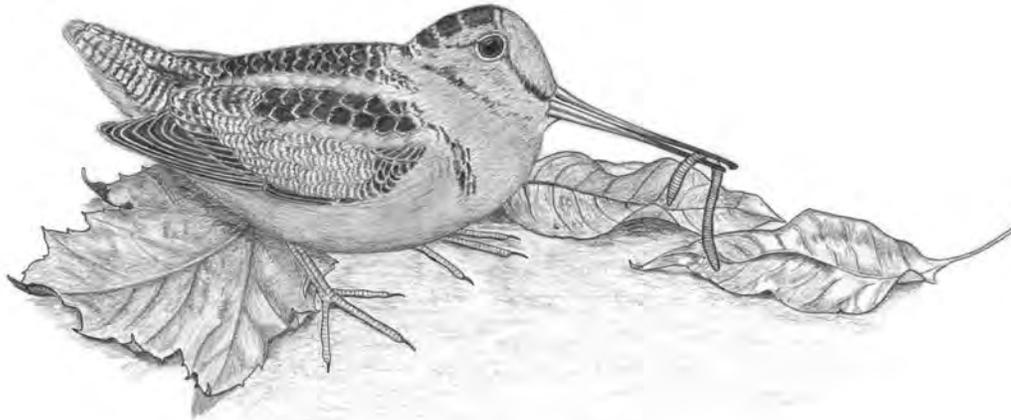
Friends of Champaign County Audubon, a reminder: All local Friends membership fees were due as of January 1. Your contribution of \$15 supports the local Chapter. Please renew or consider signing up on page 5 of this newsletter or send dues and membership information to our membership chair, Janet Jokela, 1701 Gentry Square, #101, Champaign Il 61821.

March Field Trips

Annual Woodcock Walk at Meadowbrook Park

Wednesday, March 13, 7-8pm

Meet at the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center south of the Race Street parking lot, 7 pm.
Please call the nature center at 384-4062 to register.



March 16, 7:30 AM. – Peabody-Universal Mine Area east of Paris, IL. This mixed habitat of grasslands, ponds, wetlands and pastures will be searched for birds. Most of birding will be done by car with little walking. Time is open-ended. Scopes will be useful. Meet at the Nature Center parking lot and bring a lunch. Led by Marilyn Campbell of Illinois Audubon.

March 23, 9:00 AM. Boardwalk area of Heron Park, Danville. Herons should be working on nests by then. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot at 9:00 AM. Might want to bring snacks.

Sunday Morning Bird Walks **March 4 - May 27, 7:30 - 9 AM.**

Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods begin on March 4 and will continue every Sunday through May 27. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot. Bring binoculars if you have them. Audubon members will be present to help beginners.

Take A Child Outside Week

Champaign County Audubon Society Supports Community Forum – Will You Help Too?

CCAS is excited to support the upcoming Take a Child Outside Week, being planned for Sept 24-30, 2013 by the Forest Preserve District, the Champaign and Urbana park districts, and the Office of Recreation & Park Resources, and Landscape and Human Health Lab at University of Illinois.

The week is slated to include a screening of the documentary *Mother Nature's Child*, followed by several days of outdoor programs and workshops at area parks, and culminating with a community forum during which child and nature experts will share their research and insights on the topic. Planned to headline the forum will be critically acclaimed author Richard Louv, famous for his landmark book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*.

We Need Your Help!

CCAS has been approved for grant funds from the National Audubon Society, and will match those funds from our budget to support this effort. The planning committee still needs to raise \$8700 to make Take a Child Outside Week a success. Please consider supporting this project through your tax-deductible donation. Individual donations can be made out to CCAS and sent to P.O. Box 882, Urbana, Illinois, 61803-0882; please note "Take a Child Outside" on your check. Businesses interested in being a sponsor should contact Mary Ellen Wuellner at hq@ccfpd.org. Thank you!

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



Membership for 2012

		new	renewal
Friend of Champaign County Audubon Society	\$15.00 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>(includes CCAS newsletter only)</i>			
Friend of CCAS and National Audubon Society	\$35.00 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>(includes "Audubon" magazine & CCAS newsletter)</i>			

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: _____ C3ZG500Z 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

sclementz@ccfpd.org

Tox Town Environmental Health Science Units

Tox Town—six new curriculum units produced by the NIH—introduces middle level students to environmental health science issues in the community. Designed for either classroom or after-school science club use, the units emphasize social action and address the topics of water quality; air quality; chemicals in the home; food safety; runoff, impervious surfaces, and smart development; and bottled water versus tap water. Each unit presents real-world scenarios along with hands-on experiments exploring each topic in more depth. Visit <http://www.toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/>.

Online Courses from the American Museum of Natural History

Are you interested in learning about evolution? Do you want to know more about Earth or the solar system? Are you looking for graduate or professional development credit? If so, check out the Seminars on Science program from the American Museum of Natural History. Online courses run from March 18 to April 28 and include *Earth: Inside and Out*; *The Ocean System*; *Water*; *The Diversity of Fishes*; *The Solar System*; *Evolution*; and *Genetics, Genomics, Genethics*.

Each course is available for graduate credit and is co-taught by an experienced educator and a scientist. For more information, or to register, visit www.amnh.org/learn or call 800-649-6715.

Registration deadline is March 4.

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:

March 9	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.
March 23	Meadowbrook	9 -11 am.	Meet at Race Street parking lot.
	Perkins Road	1 -3 pm.	Meet at Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Road.



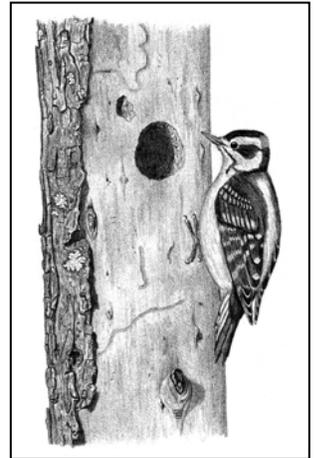
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(217) 367-6766

Return service requested



Calendar of Events, March 2013

- Sundays** **March 3- March 31, 7:30 - 9 AM.** Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods begin on March 3 and 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.
- Thursday** **March 7, 7 PM. General meeting** at Urbana Free Library Auditorium. **Greg Lambeth** will present “**Birding Southern Ecuador**”.
- Wednesday** **March 13, 7- 8:00 PM. The annual Woodcock walk** will be at Meadowbrook Park. Meet at the Meadowbrook Interpretive Center south of the Race St. parking lot.
- Saturday** **March 16, 7:30 AM. Peabody-Universal Mine Area east of Paris, IL.** This mixed habitat of grasslands, ponds, wetlands and pastures will be searched for birds. Most of birding will be done by car with little walking. Time is open-ended. Scopes will be useful. Meet at the Nature Center parking lot and bring a lunch. Led by Marilyn Campbell of Illinois Audubon.
- Thursday** **March 21, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Saturday** **March 23, 9:00 AM. Boardwalk area of Heron Park, Danville.** Herons should be working on nests by then. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot. Might want to bring snacks.

