



# *The Meadowlark Messenger*

December 2012 ♦ Volume 29, No. 9

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

## **President's Column**

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

It is hard for us to believe that our term as Co-Presidents of the Champaign County Audubon Society is at an end. We have enjoyed representing the society and are grateful for the opportunity to serve the past two years. One of our favorite duties has been to write this column. We wish our successors as much enjoyment in the post as we have had.

As the year-end approaches, we are preparing our annual report for the National Audubon Society, and thought that we would share some of this information with you. The mission of CCAS is to “promote interest, enjoyment and understanding through education about all aspects of our natural environment, and to actively encourage the protection of wildlife and the preservation and restoration of native habitat.” CCAS addresses the educational mission through a number of activities and projects, and through supporting other community organizations with similar goals. These include educational programs such as monthly speaker presentations, field trips, and bird walks.

We also sponsored projects by the Urbana Park District, the Champaign County Forest Preserve, and Grand Prairie Friends. This year we helped fund the new water

feature that was installed at the Anita Purves Nature Center and contributed funds to the Natural Playscape at Homer Lake. For the first time this year, the CCAS was a sponsor of the Rattlesnake Master 5k/10k runs, hosted by Grand Prairie Friends. This gave us the opportunity to meet a new group of people and to introduce them to our society and our programs.

The Society funds research and K-12 competitive grant education projects, including two proposals to our Kendeigh Memorial grant program, totaling \$1,952. and five mini-grants to educators in Champaign County to encourage bird-and nature-related educational activities. We also provided funding for eight Audubon Adventures kits to local elementary school classrooms. CCAS organizes three bird counts each year as part of citizen science efforts that are reported to the Cornell Ornithology Laboratory as part of national efforts to better understand the natural world.

Society activities are funded by annual dues from local friends of the CCAS and a portion of dues from the National Audubon Society. We fund raise through events such as the spring Birdathon and through calls for support of programs like the Audubon Adventures program. We are grateful to those who have remembered the society in their wills or through memorial contributions. The society currently has assets of \$49,797, mostly in an endowment supporting the Kendeigh grant

program. As of November, our estimated income for 2012 was about \$5,000, and our expenditures were about \$7,400. The board decided to apply some of our assets to the park district and play-scape projects mentioned above.

In all, this has been an active year for the Champaign County Audubon Society, and our organization is stable and fiscally sound. It has been a privilege to serve as the Co-Presidents of the society, and we look forward to continuing to be active members of the society in the years ahead.

## **DECEMBER MEETING**

Urbana Free Library  
Auditorium

Thursday, December 6, 7 PM

## **DEREK LIEBERT**

**Natural Areas Coordinator and  
Project Manager for the Urbana  
Park District**



**will present a program on  
Urbana Park District  
Natural Areas**

**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 and migrating birds are gone and winter birds are here. Tree Sparrows and Juncos are back. Red Crossbills have been seen at Meadowbrook and other local spots. Pine Siskins, and Common Redpolls have also been seen. Both Red and White-winged Crossbills were seen at Allerton Park. A Bald Eagle flew over town on November 10, and a Golden Eagle found locally is undergoing treatment at the U/I Wildlife Ward. There was a sighting from Willard Airport by Mike Ward of Lapland Longspurs, Snow Buntings, and a Golden Plover. Also another eagle was spotted feeding in a field near Broadlands.

**BIRD COUNTS**

The Champaign County Christmas Bird Count is set for Saturday, December 15. Remember, the object of a Christmas Bird Count is to count all the birds in a 15-mile diameter circle on a single day. Ours is centered at Deers, IL and basically goes from the Busey Woods area (including the cemetery & Crystal Lake Park) to Homer Lake, with everything in between. If at all possible, I like to have parties of between 2-4 people. Inexperienced birders will be sent with somebody with more experience. If you are willing and able to participate, please let me know by December 12. You can phone me (367-3130) and talk to my answering machine (I rarely pick up the phone unless I am SURE that the caller is somebody I want to talk to.) or e-mail me (<mailto:h-parker@illinois.edu>h-parker@illinois.edu).

At the end of the day, we gather at the home of Beth Chato (714 West Vermont, Urbana) for a chili supper & compiling the results.

If you enjoy the counts and want to do more, there are others in the area. There is a count at Clinton Lake, traditionally the day after ours; I have no word about this one at all. Contact person is Rhett Jack, <mailto:Lupewinku@lanscape.net>Lupewinku@lanscape.net. There is one at Forest Glen, this year set for December 19. Contact person is Marilyn Campbell, <mailto:owlwatcher@egix.net>owlwatcher@egix.net. I plan to be on that one. Finally, there is one in Vermilion County north of Forest Glen, known as "middleforK", run by Steve Bailey; I have no word about that one. It may be on the National Audubon CBC website.

Finally--each year we participate in the annual Eagle Count, coordinated by Illinois Audubon. We count the eagles on the Illinois River between Havana & Beardstown. My plan is to do our section January 5 this year. Contact me if you are interested in participating.

**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**

Get ready for winter with one of our carefully selected birdfeeders. Suet cakes also available. Audubon's colorful Engagement Calendar makes a great gift for \$13.99. See enclosed flyer on p.4.



**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](http://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 A RETROSPECTIVE

This is the last newsletter of 2012, so it seems a good time to look back on the past year as well as forward to the future. The year, of course, has been dominated by politics, as is always the case in a presidential election year. In all the zillions of dollars spent and words spoken, very little mention was made of environmental matters--global warming was mentioned in passing, but there was no indication of the profound impact it will have on our planet. Election is now over and we have "status quo ante", with for the most part the same people or their ideological clones in office, meaning that we will be fighting the same battles.

We still have the threat of PCBs buried over our drinking water supply. The risks associated with such efforts to meet our energy demands as "fracking" and the proposed XL pipeline are still with us. Politicians talk as though environmental protection is somehow incompatible with the need for jobs--forgetting that many jobs can be gained by projects that PROTECT the environment. One could perhaps be forgiven for thinking that the tremendous damage caused by Hurricane Sandy was the Earth's way of striking back at us.

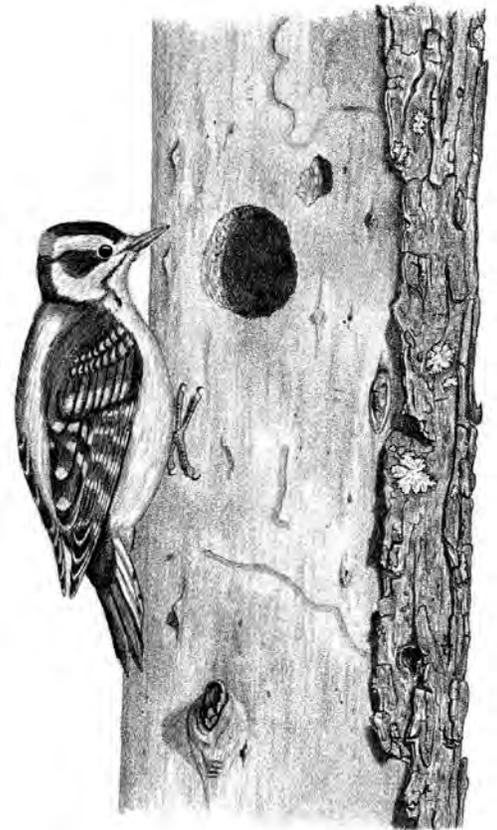
However, the world goes on--the birds migrate, the leaves turn beautiful colors, the frost sparkles in the early morning light. The monarch butterflies have returned to their winter roosting sites in Mexico. Enjoy the beautiful aspects of the earth while respecting Nature's power.

### Downy Woodpeckers and the Arrival of Winter

"It always gives me a little pleasurable emotion when I see in the autumn woods where the downy woodpecker has just been excavating his winter quarters in a dead limb or tree-trunk. I am walking along a trail or wood-road when I see something like coarse new sawdust scattered on the ground. I know at once what carpenter has been at work in the trees overhead, and I proceed to scrutinize the trunks and branches. Presently I am sure to detect a new round hole about an inch and a half in diameter on the under side of a dead limb, or in a small tree-trunk. This is Downy's cabin, where he expects to spend the winter nights, and a part of the stormy days, too.

When he excavates it in an upright tree-trunk, he usually chooses a spot beneath a limb; the limb forms a sort of rude hood, and prevents the rainwater from running down into it. It is a snug and pretty retreat, and a very safe one, I think. I doubt whether the driving snow ever reaches him, and no predatory owl could hook him out with its claw. Near town or in town the English sparrow would probably drive him out; but in the woods, I think, he is rarely molested, though in one instance I knew him to be dispossessed by a flying squirrel.

On stormy days I have known Downy to return to his chamber in mid-afternoon and to lie there till ten in the morning."



**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:**

**December 8** 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

# AUDUBON NATURE SHOP

ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER 1505 North Broadway, Urbana

Hours: Mon-Fri 9-4 pm, Sat 9-4 pm

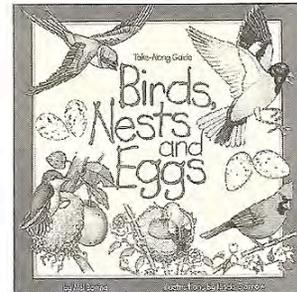
## GIFT SUGGESTIONS

10% member discount

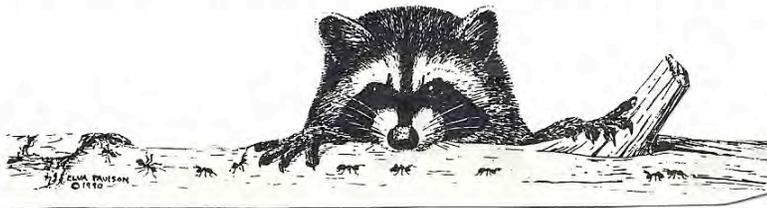
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IFLYER BIRDSONG KIT-Wand and bar code booklet with 217 birds



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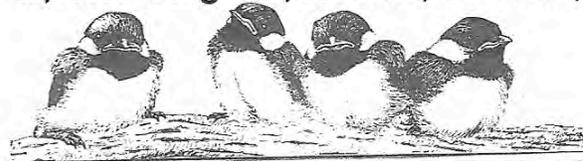
bird waterer \$23

BIRD BATH HEATER

ADULT BOOKS: Remarkable Woodpeckers, Intriguing Owls \$14.95, many more.  
Wide choice of bird guides including the new Crossley ID Guide

CHILDREN'S BOOKS: Wide selection- popular choices are Whose Butt?, Feathers for Lunch, Bugliest Bug. Also coloring books, stained glass, stencils, stickers, origami kits.

BUTTERFLY CROSS-STITCH KITS \$12.50



AUDIO/VISUALS of nature sights  
and sounds for adults and children

JIGSAW PUZZLES

PUPPETS- All creatures great and small.

SINGING BIRDS-Cardinal, Loon, Owl, many more \$6.50-\$7.00

LITTLE THINGS-Magnifiers, bug boxes, dinosaurs, whistles, silly bands, etc.

ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION  
& WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

# 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, 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  
Advocate for conservation  
causes

## Education Corner, Stacey Clementz

Education Program Specialist, Champaign County Forest Preserve District 2573 S. Homer Lake Rd.

Homer, IL. 61849; (office) 217-896-2455; (fax) 217-896-2361

Certified Interpretive Guide, <<http://www.interpnet.com/>>NAI

Public Relations Co-Chair, <<http://www.eeai.net/>>EEAI

### **Congratulations Mini-Grant Recipients!**

We received five great mini-grant applications this year and were able to fund them all.

This year's recipients are:

- Kay Grabow with Thomas Paine School in Urbana for a environmental education field trip to Homer Lake Forest Preserve
- Deborah Poblano with Leal Elementary School in Urbana for seeds to increase their school garden
- Isaac Stewart with Fisher High School for seeds to diversify their school prairie
- Rusty Clevenger with Prairie Elementary to fund busing for the 3rd grade students from Prairie and Wiley to visit the Wandell Sculpture Garden at Meadowbrook Park in Urbana
- Kate Carnahan with Washington Early Childhood in Urbana to fund an IPEVO Point 2 View USB Document camera

It is always a privilege to support environmental education projects in this county, and it is exciting to see how many teachers are including it in their classrooms. Thanks again to everyone who helped with mini-grants this year, and to all the educators who applied for funds.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Election of new officers will occur at our December 6th meeting.**

**The following are Champaign County Audubon's nominees for the coming year:**

**Co-Presidents:** Susan Stearns & Brian Stearns

**Co-Vice Presidents:** Cleo D'Arcy & Steve D'Arcy

**Secretary:** Charlene Anchor

**Treasurer:** John Dunkelberger

**Members-at-Large** (2-year terms):

Mike Iorio, Jim Hoyt, Barb Schleicher

(1-year term): Caitlin Lill

**Submitted by:** Janet Jokela, Charlene Anchor, Pam Leiter, Jim Nardi (members of the Nominating Committee)



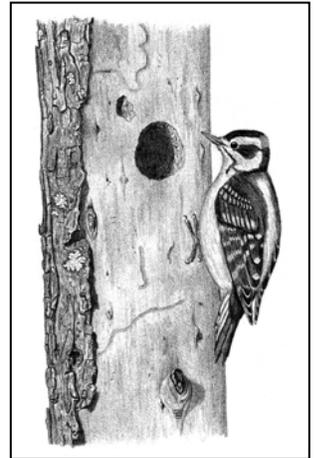
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## Calendar of Events, December 2012

**Thursday December 6, 7 PM. General meeting** at Urbana Free Library Auditorium. **Derek Liebert**, Natural Areas Coordinator and Project Manager for the Urbana Park District, will present a program on Urbana Park District Natural Areas.

**Saturday December 15, Annual Christmas Bird Count for Champaign County.** See p. 2.

**Wednesday December 19, Annual Christmas Bird Count for Forest Glen.** See p. 2.

**Thursday December 21, 5:12 AM. Winter Solstice, the earliest arrival of winter since 1896.**

### Coming in January:

**Saturday January 5. Annual Eagle Count**, coordinated by Illinois Audubon. We count the eagles on the Illinois River between Havana & Beardstown.

