



The Meadowlark Messenger

February 2011 • Volume 28, No. 1

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

Welcome

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

Welcome to a new year of birding and conservation with the Champaign County Audubon Society! We are your new co-presidents for the coming year, and we are pleased and excited to begin our work with CCAS and the communities our society serves.

First, thanks to everyone for your continuing support of CCAS. This is the season of renewal, membership renewal that is. We know that during times of economic hard-ship it is difficult to continue charitable giving, and we appreciate the support of our members. Rest assured that we are committed to ensuring that your dollars are spent in a thoughtful and frugal fashion to support the mission of CCAS. The Champaign County Audubon Society is dedicated to promoting the interest, enjoyment and understanding of our natural environment, the protection of wildlife, and the preservation and restoration of native habitat. Your contributions are used to support this mission through educational efforts.

We thought that you might want to know a little bit about us. Caroline is a registered nurse and Associate Professor of Nursing at Illinois State University in Normal, where she teaches in the PhD program and is the Associate Dean for Research.

February Program

**Urbana Free Library
Auditorium**

Thursday, February 3
7 pm

BIRDS OF THE WORLD



Photographs of his
travels presented by

Ivan Petrov

Darin is a plant pathologist and an Associate Professor in Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois. His specialty is in fungal diseases affecting plants. We started birding in the 80s influenced by our love of the outdoors and Darin's dad and step-mom who are avid birders. We never have enough time for all of our hobbies, but we also enjoy cooking, dancing, camping and hiking.

The Champaign County Audubon Society is a vibrant and active organization. As new co-presidents, our plan for the coming year is to continue promoting the mission through education, and we look towards ensuring a sustainable future of CCAS. Toward these ends, we want to reach out to new members, engage the next generation of bird enthusiasts, and consider avenues for ensuring the economic viability of the organization.

For the next year, we plan to bird the natural areas around Champaign County and write about our experiences in this column. This is one way we hope to call attention to the importance of natural habitats in Champaign County for the protection of wild plants and animals and for the quality of life of the humans who also live here. We invite you to join us in the programs, field trips, and bird walks sponsored by CCAS. Please let us know how CCAS may improve or what kinds of programs you would like CCAS to support.

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 Darin Eastburn

The cold and snowy conditions have kept many of us indoors for the past few weeks, but there have been a few hearty souls who have braved the weather in search of winter birds. Here are some of the highlights of recent bird sightings. At Meadowbrook Park and the U of I Forestry area there have been reports of American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, Northern Harrier, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, and Eastern Bluebirds. At the First Street pond, Canvasbacks, Mallards, and Canada Geese were observed. In addition to Red Foxes, birders at Weaver Park have seen Northern Flickers, Red-tailed Hawks, a Great Blue Heron, Tree Sparrows, and Juncos. Many waterfowl and other species were reported at Riverbend/Lake of the Woods, including Canada, White-fronted, and Snow Geese; Common Merganser, Gadwall, Mallard, Pintail, and Ruddy Ducks; Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker; Black-capped Chickadee; Tufted Titmouse; White-breasted Nuthatch; Red-breasted Nuthatch; Hermit Thrush; American Robin; Cedar Waxwing; American Tree, Song, White-throated, and White-Crowned Sparrows; Dark-eyed Junco; Cardinal; Purple Finch; Pine Siskin; American Goldfinch; House Sparrow; Starlings; and Cooper's Hawks. At the Middlefork River Forest Preserve, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawks, and a Screech Owl were seen. Some of the backyard bird sightings have included Dark-eyed Juncos, House Sparrows, Cooper's Hawks, Downy Woodpecker, Starlings, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, and a Eurasian Collared-Dove. In the general area over the past several weeks there have been sightings of Lapland Longspurs, Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Wild Turkeys; and the U of I campus Peregrine Falcon makes regular appearances around 4th and Green Streets.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2010

The Champaign County count was held Saturday, December 18. Twenty-two observers in 10 parties in the field + 3 people at feeders found 62 species of birds, plus 1 during count week. Thanks to all who helped.

EAGLE COUNT 2010

On January 2, three people counted the eagles on or near the Illinois River from Havana to Beardstown. We found 45 eagles that day.



The GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT is coming February 18-21.

Sponsored by National Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology, this is a nationwide count. Locally, Audubon people will be at ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER from 9AM-3PM on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19 to count our birds. Please join us. Weather permitting, we will take a short hike through Busey Woods/Crystal Lake Park at 2 PM to count those birds. You are also encouraged to count on your own, any place, and on as many days as you like, sending in a separate checklist for each day. Call 344-6803 for details.

CONSERVATION CORNER Helen Parker, Conservation Chair DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED ELECTRONIC DEVICES

For those who have electronic devices that they no longer want--it's not legal to send them to the landfill. Mervis Industries will accept them for recycling at Marco Recycling, 302 South Market Street, Champaign, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (information from Prairie Rivers Network.)

Also from Prairie Rivers Network: The Tenaska coal-fired power plant project at Taylorville appears to be dead, as a bill to secure a market for their electricity failed in the Illinois Senate.

MANY DEAD BIRDS

An article in the *New York Times* estimates that 100 million birds are killed annually in collisions at windows and similar things. Another 100 million are believed to be killed by cats. Keep your cats indoors!

AUDUBON ONLINE BIRD GUIDE

This convenient online guide features 750 species. Search and identify hundreds of North American birds with text, photos, sounds, range maps and more. Go to our website www.champaigncountyaudubon.org for a link to this valuable resource.



Become a new Friend or renew your present membership in CCAS

On January 1, 2009 a new membership policy for Champaign County Audubon Society began: The membership fee of \$15 for the local chapter is due at the beginning of each year. See membership form at the top of page 5. And please indicate if your membership is new or a renewal. Thanks!

CALL FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

We are wondering if you would be able to help us out with a research study being conducted this semester at Muhlenberg College. Many birds are killed each year by various forms of human technology and activity. Some of these human-made hazards attract much more attention than do others. We are interested in how various factors contribute to peoples' perceptions of various hazards to birds. This information will be useful in helping us strategize in campaigns to raise awareness with regards to different kinds of threats to birds and other natural systems. We would greatly appreciate it if you could fill out the survey found at the following link:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22BDFEUIJWXT>. Your participation will remain anonymous and confidential. The survey takes about 25 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you will be re-directed to a separate page upon which you can request a summary of what we find. This research project has met Muhlenberg College's Institutional Review policy requirements. If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact **Dr. Jeffrey Rudski at rudski@muhlenberg.edu, Professor of Psychology, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA 18104.**

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



ART EXHIBITION AT ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER

Meadowbrook: A Visual Diary

by local artist Tom Kovacs

Feb 5 - May 27, 2011, Anita Purves Nature Center

Opening Reception February 12, 2011 from 1-3 pm.

pencil drawings taken from Tom's diary.

From the artist: "Regardless of season and weather, each of my many walks through Meadowbrook Park brings at least one memorable moment, almost always unexpected, and always rewarding. I record these moments with camera, and later reinterpret them with pencil and paper, thereby revisiting each moment. Thus, using my graphite shorthand, I feel and touch tree bark, metal insects and live bird feathers, and dip my fingers in the icy waters of McCullough Creek."

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.)*

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

Membership for 2011

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: _____ C0ZG500Z

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

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 Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS) Offers \$100 Mini-Grants!

Due March 4th

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 1st. Make checks out to CCAS.

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES Bob Vaiden, Habitat Chair

Help rebuild our shattered environment! Join other volunteers and the Urbana Park District for **Stewardship Saturdays**. Help remove invasive weeds, plant natives, improve trails and restore the native landscape. Please dress accordingly; gloves, tools and refreshments are provided.

Stewardship work days:

February 12th: Busey Woods 9 -11 am. Meet at Anita Purves Nature Center
Weaver Park 1 - 3 pm. Pull off East Main Street just west of Smith Road

February 26th: Meadowbrook 9 -11 am. Meet at Race Street parking lot
Perkins Road 1 -3 pm. Meet at Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Road



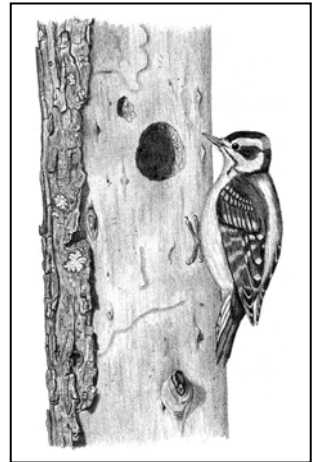
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Return service requested



Calendar of Events, February 2011



- Thursday** **February 3, 7 PM. General meeting** at Urbana Free Library Auditorium. **Birds of the World.** photographs of his travels presented by Ivan Petrov.
- Thursday** **February 17, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Fri-Mon** **February 18-21. Nationwide Great Backyard Bird Count** sponsored by National Audubon Society and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
- Saturday** **February 19, 9 AM-3 PM.** Audubon people will be at Anita Purves Nature Center to mark this year's **Great Backyard Bird Count**

Sunday morning bird walks through Busey Woods and Crystal Lake Park begin in March.