



The Meadowlark Messenger

February 2015 ♦ Volume 32, No. 1

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

Presidents' Column

Barbara Schleicher

President of Champaign County Audubon Society
(CCAS)

It's a new year and maybe a new name and face as President of the Champaign County Audubon Society. My name is Barbara Schleicher. I have been a Member at Large for CCAS since 2013. I have a particular interest in the group of birds known as raptors.

Professionally, I am a Landscape Architect and assistant manager of the University of Illinois' Plant Biology Conservatory and Collections. I am also a Champaign County Master Gardener.

The members of the CCAS community have my greatest respect in their efforts to promote conservation and natural habitats for not only birds but wild life in general. I hope that in the next year I can be a useful contributor to these efforts.

Just a few tips on providing much needed basics for birds during the winter:

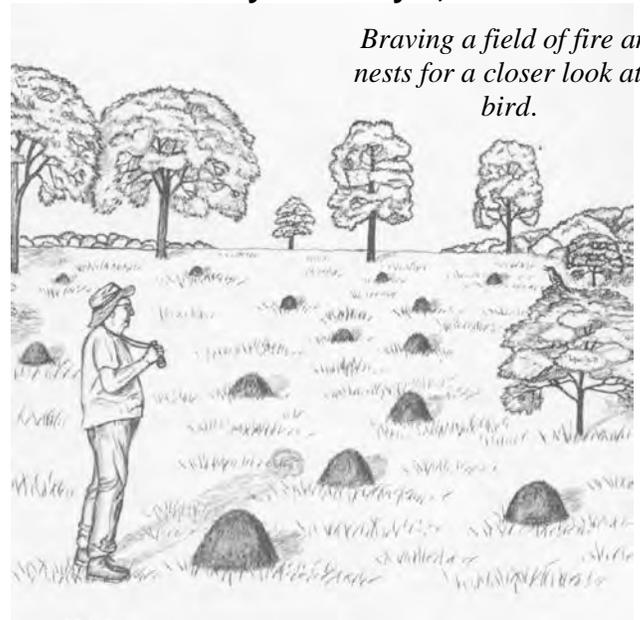
- Provide an accessible water source for birds. If you have feeders or bird baths at home, make sure they are clean and ice-free during the frigid cold temperatures.
- Provide a high-calorie and high-fat content food for the birds. This may include different options for food: seeds, suet, and fruit.
- Provide a sheltered feeding space that is protected from the harsh winds of winter. This may involve moving your feeder to the east side of the house.
- Place the feeder near easily reached perching spots (shrubs, trees, etc) for birds to survey the feeding area and to watch for predators.

I look forward to another great and productive year with CCAS. Next time you come to our monthly programs, please introduce yourself to me.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Anita Purves Natue Center

Thursday February 5, 7 PM



Braving a field of fire ant nests for a closer look at a bird.

“BIG YEARS: The Fun and Madness of Trying to See All the Birds in a Calendar Year”

presented by Joe Lill

will cover the history, rules and results of Big Years in North America and Illinois.

Joe Lill is a professional trumpeter and Professor of Music at Chicago's North Park University. On his “natural” side, he is the list compiler for the Illinois Ornithological Society, a former President of the Chicago Audubon Society and an avid birder whose “biggest year” in Illinois was 293 species in 2008.

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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

Winter raptors in the area include a Prairie Falcon in Coles County, a Peregrine on campus, Harriers, a Merlin over Busey Woods, and a Snowy Owl near Thomasboro. A Bald Eagle flew over the South Farms. Lots of Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs have been spotted on country roads. Riverbend had Trumpeter Swans and a Hermit Thrush. Pine Siskins are visiting feeders, so check those drab winter goldfinches for streaks. Keep reports of unusual sightings coming to Bird Notes for the New Year.

Great "Backyard" Bird Count: Friday February 13-Monday February 16

Champaign County Audubon Society birders will be counting the birds at Anita Purves Nature Center on Saturday, February 14 from 9am-3pm with a short hike through Busey Woods at 2pm. Come join us! The Great "Backyard" Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. It's free, fun and easy. I added the quotation marks because you can count birds anywhere you like, including local parks and preserves, for 15 minutes or longer. Keep track of all the kinds of birds you see, the numbers of each kind, and how long you watched. Then report your results online at www.BirdCount.org

EAGLE COUNT January 2015

On January 10, 2015 Beth Chato, Jim Smith and Barbara Schleicher ventured out in 16 degree F (with a wind chill of about zero) weather to count eagles along the Illinois River. The section of river they surveyed was from Havana to Beardstown, Illinois. Even though the sky was clear with plenty of sunshine, the river was 90% frozen. However, there were areas near the towns and in several of the wildlife conservation areas that had some open water. This allowed the eagles to gather fish and for the observers to survey the population along those stretches of river. In total the three eagle spotters saw 40 eagles: 22 adults eagles, 13 immature eagles and 5 eagles of unknown age (too far to really tell what age they were). Come and join the count next year!

AUDUBON NATURE SHOP for Unique Nature-Related Gifts

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

SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

A short report on 2014 sales: This past year we sold a little over \$5000 in merchandise. As a not-for-profit operation, all proceeds go to support conservation and environmental education. Many thanks to the Urbana Park District staff who do most of the selling. Think of the shop when looking for nature-related products of many types. To help out I encourage you to pay for your Nature Shop purchases by cash or check rather than Credit Card. You may not realize that we pay over 14% in fees on each credit card transaction. A more detailed account of the year's sales will appear in a coming month's newsletter.

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.)

2015 - The International Year of Soils

What do soils have to do with global warming - Audubon's great challenge of the present?

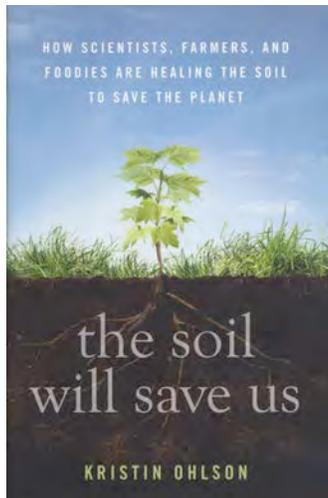
A few days before the beginning of 2015, National Audubon Society sent a video to members around the country. I watched this short but rousing "Story of Audubon" video, telling the story of how effective the voice of Audubon has been for over 100 years, meeting the many challenges of the past and facing the great challenge of the present – global warming. Evidence of global warming is everywhere. Funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation spend millions of dollars documenting its devastating effects on species of plants and animals. Governments worldwide are calling for cuts in emissions of greenhouse gases. However, the news is far from reassuring, and few voice great optimism about curbing or reversing the warming of our planet.



"Protecting birds from the worst ravages of global warming", the stated goal in this Audubon video, seemed rather hopeless until I came across a book this year that clearly points out how we can effectively counter global warming without resorting to elaborate new technologies but by simply changing our agricultural practices, by promoting organic soil as the solution to global warming. For every ton of organic carbon added to the soil, over three tons of CO₂ is removed from the atmosphere. *The Soil Will Save Us* instills optimism that we can halt, even reverse, global warming. In many countries organic farmers are not only practicing sustainable agriculture, they are practicing what they like to refer to as regenerative agriculture – adding to organic carbon in the soil, not just sustaining what is already present in the soil. By treating the countless creatures of the soil as partners in farming and by never leaving their soil habitat without some type of crop or cover crop, they are building up the carbon in their soils, increasing soil fertility without synthetic fertilizers, minimizing erosion, and improving the sponge-like structure of soil that holds water even during the worst droughts. By working with nature's complex food webs, they control weeds and crop pests without expensive and toxic pesticides.

The Green Revolution in agriculture started with much promise but has left us with industrial agriculture's legacy of agricultural deserts - poisoned soils, toxic waterways, ineffective pesticides, and now equally ineffective genetically modified crops (GMOs). Industrial agriculture has perpetrated the myth that organic agriculture simply cannot feed the world, and that is simply untrue as organic farmers on small and large farms around the world are now demonstrating. What seemed farfetched at one time is actually proving very practical.

Instead of treating soil as an inert matrix into which pesticides and synthetic fertilizers are poured, farming can be done far more economically with nature as our partner, improving habitat for all wildlife, even reversing global warming and improving the health of the Earth and its inhabitants.



Clearly, not everyone will agree with this opinion, but no one can deny that the way we treat our soils will influence the well being of all life on Earth - bees, birds, and humans alike.

- Jim Nardi. Publications Chair

Champaign County Christmas Bird Count

The Champaign County Christmas Bird Count was held Saturday, December 20, 2014. Nineteen people in 10 parties found 69 species of birds. They were:

Snow Goose (1); Cackling Goose (5); Canada Goose (1301); Wood Duck (2); Gadwall (2); American Wigeon (1); Black Duck (2); Mallard (624); Northern Shoveler (2); Green-winged Teal (2); Ring-necked Pheasant (32); Great Blue Heron (8); Bald Eagle (3); Northern Harrier (4); Sharp-shinned Hawk (1); Cooper's Hawk (12); Red-shouldered Hawk (3); Red-tailed Hawk (33); Rough-legged Hawk (1); Kestrel (17); Merlin (1); Peregrine Falcon (1); Rock Pigeon (661); Mourning Dove (160); Eastern Screech Owl (3); Great-horned Owl (8); Barred Owl (2); Belted Kingfisher (3); Red-headed Woodpecker (11); Red-bellied Woodpecker (89); Downy Woodpecker (59); Hairy Woodpecker (6); Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1); Flicker (20); Pileated Woodpecker (12); Blue Jay (131); Crow (484); Horned Lark (18); Carolina Chickadee (47); Black-capped Chickadee (5); Tufted Titmouse (38); Red-breasted Nuthatch (2); White-breasted Nuthatch (87); Brown Creeper (27); Carolina Wren (28); Winter Wren (2); Golden-crowned Kinglet (2); Eastern Bluebird (12); Hermit Thrush (5); Robin (20); Starling (1024); Cedar Waxwing (49); Yellow-rumped Warbler (1); Eastern Towhee (1); American Tree Sparrow (60); Song Sparrow (41); Swamp Sparrow (11); White-throated Sparrow (28); White-crowned Sparrow (167); Junco (290); Lapland Longspur (2); Cardinal (211); Red-winged Blackbird (3); Brown-headed Cowbird (25); Purple Finch (13); House Finch (189); Pine Siskin (64); Goldfinch (39); House Sparrow (373).

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – KENDEIGH GRANTS

The Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS) annually offers grants for research in ornithology in Illinois for a maximum of \$1000. We invite submissions for this year's grants. These must contain:

1. A description of the research to be carried out.
2. A proposed budget.
3. Evidence of your qualifications to do the research, including a brief C.V. and at least 2 references.
4. The applicant's name, mailing address, local phone number, and e-mail address.
5. After the completion of the research, the grantee must present the results in writing to CCAS. He/she will also be asked to give a presentation at a CCAS general meeting (typically the first Thursday in May, the year following grant award). Four copies should be submitted to

Helen Parker
103 W. Delaware
Urbana, IL 61801

OR

Champaign County Audubon Society
Attn: Kendeigh Grant Committee
P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803

Applications must be received before March 27, 2015. Notification of awards will be made in April. Since its beginning in 1982, the Charles S. Kendeigh Research Grant project has funded over \$30,000 of research on Illinois birds. Many grant recipients have gone on to prestigious careers in the natural history field.

Dr. Kendeigh, eminent ornithologist, was a renowned professor of zoology at the University of Illinois. He was a charter member, president, and board member of CCAS, president of the Wilson Ornithological Society, and the Ecological Society of America, vice-president of the American Ornithologists Union, and co-founder of the Nature Conservancy and Animal Behavior Society. Perhaps Dr. Kendeigh's most enduring contribution was a standard method for censusing birds.

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:**

February 14	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.
February 28	Meadowbrook	9 -11 am.	Meet at Race Street parking lot.
	Perkins Road	1 -3 pm.	Meet at Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Road

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

Champaign County Forest Preserve District, Homer Lake, leiterp@msn.com

Homeschool Kit from Cornell – Winter 2015 Special!

BirdSleuth: Science Investigator's Kit for Homeschoolers is a curriculum created especially for homeschoolers who want to get outside to observe nature and build science skills. A ready-to-go resource, the lessons propel your child to consider the local environment through creative thinking, the scientific processes, and **citizen science**. Now through February 28, buy this popular kit and get the Bird Cards and other great bonuses free! Visit www.birdsleuth.org for more information.



NEW and RENEWING MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new and renewing Champaign County Audubon Society members! We hope to see you soon at one of our events.

Joseph Morris

Thank you to our renewing members as well! Your continued support helps sustain programs and community outreach.

Jacquetta Hill, Linda Wessels, Tim Prescott, Dorothy Neumann, John Hlavna, Joyce Eisold, Marilyn Wojnar, Kathleen Weibel, Marvin Lukasik, Margaret Smith, Mary Stech, Todd Kinney, Peggy Patten, Steven Ogle, James Zivic, Dawn Schultz, Albert Willms, Van & Kathy Bowersox, Beverly Foote, Cindy Cahill, Bill & Shirley Walker

Don't see your name and think you should? E-mail Membership Chair Caitlin Lill at clklll@gmail.com to check on the status of your membership.



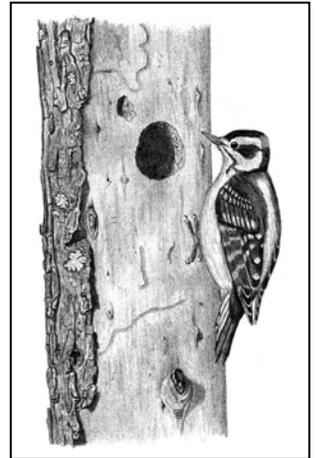
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Calendar of Events, February 2015



- Monday** **February 2. Groundhog Day**
- Thursday** **February 5, 7 PM. Monthly meeting at Anita Purves Nature Center:** A program on “**BIG YEARS:** The Fun and Madness of Trying to See All the Birds in a Calendar Year” will cover the history, rules and results of Big Years in North America and Illinois and will be presented by Joe Lill, former President of the Chicago Audubon Society.
- Fri.- Mon.** **February 13-16. The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC),** a nationwide project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.
- Saturday** **February 14, 9 AM - 3 PM. The Great Backyard Bird Count at Anita Purves Nature Center** Champaign County Audubon Society will record the number of birds at feeding stations and along trails in Busey Woods. Weather permitting, we will take a short (about 45 minutes) hike (2 pm) through Busey Woods to count birds:
- Thursday** **February 19, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.

