



The Meadowlark Messenger

June 2013 • Volume 30, No. 5

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

Presidents' Column

Susan Stearns

Co-President of Champaign County
Audubon Society (CCAS)

History in the Making

We've had some special highlights this spring and hope you have had some too. In fact, one of our highlights was history in the making.

About a month ago, Brian led the CCAS field trip at Middle Fork River Forest Preserve just north of Penfield, Illinois. There were four of us there for the field trip. We'd been hanging out for a while and had begun to walk around. Lo and behold, we heard Sandhill Cranes calling. Brian recognized it as the kind of calling that is associated with nesting behavior. Brian knew where they were calling from, and we ran! We took too long to see the one bird return to the nest, but were in time to see one of the cranes foraging. We all looked for a nest but couldn't find the other crane, or the nest. Susan decided to snap some pictures of the area where Brian thought the nest would be hidden before we took off to continue our field trip.

Later that night, Susan looked through those pictures and spotted the red found on the head of a Sandhill Crane. The next day, we returned to the area and confirmed the location of the nest where Brian was able to get some definitive photos of a crane on a nest.

Given the time of year, the egg(s) may have hatched or become someone's dinner. Given that Brian

have a colt. Perhaps we'll see a third crane later this summer. It is so exciting to have the nesting of Sandhill Cranes in Champaign County confirmed for the first time in over 100 years.

As summer approaches, not only does nesting and other bird activity slow down, but CCAS winds down to avoid the heat and humidity of summer. Our final event for spring is the annual swallow watching and potluck at Homer Lake. The end of the lake by Walnut Hill Shelter is a fabulous place for passing the time by watching swallows. There is a water overflow with a bridge where the swallows like to hang out. It's quite a site to see the swallows swoop out from underneath the bridge, and return with a small snack. We do hope you will join us Thursday, June 6th to watch the swallows at 6 pm and enjoy a potluck at the Walnut Hill Shelter afterwards around 6:30. Just like in years past, we ask you to bring your own table service, your own beverage, and a dish to share.

Our first fall event will be in September at Lake of the Woods. We invite all of you to participate in the September program by bringing your birding photographs for the annual members' slideshow. So, be sure to get to work on those photographs and look for more details in the September newsletter. Meanwhile, we hope each of you has a wonderful summer filled with your own historical highlights.

JUNE POTLUCK & SWALLOW WATCHING

Thursday June 6
At Homer Lake
Walnut Hill Shelter
(next to dam)

Please bring your own table service, your own beverage and a dish to share.

Watching begins at 6 pm
Potluck at 6:30 pm



"The Swallow"
Wood engraving by Thomas Bewick
from
A History of British Birds (1797)

heard no sounds, no calls, and Brian could no longer find the cranes, he is guessing they had a colt with them. Sandhill Cranes typically stay very

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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.

SPRING BIRD COUNT

On Saturday May 4, forty volunteers surveyed Champaign County as part of the statewide Spring Bird Count, recording not only species of birds seen but also the numbers of each. The total number of species was 161, and included an unusual mix of spring migrants and late lingering winter visitors. Among the latter were Red-breasted Nuthatches and Pine Siskins. There were 31 species of warblers. The earliest birders began at 3:45 am, and the latest ended at 8 pm. The total of miles walked was 54, driven 562. This statewide effort gives a good snapshot of the state of migration on this certain day as well as the numbers of each species of bird.

BIRDATHON (May 5 - May 12)

The results are in from most official teams. 1. Oldtimers – 104, including eagles, loons and a lingering Bufflehead. 2. Maggie & Me - 35 on a dog walk through Blair, Meadowbrook, and Carle Parks. 3. Urbana Park Rangers outdid themselves and the Forest Preserve District with 119, including 29 warbler species. 4. Forest Preserve Rangers – Complete total is not in. Their highlights so far have included Bald Eagle, Great Egret and Sandhill Crane. 5. Busey Woods Walk 5/5 - 55 species, 28 warblers. 5/12 - 59 species, 25 warblers. 6. Krazy Kayakers (Betsy & Peter Kuchinke) were foiled by high water, so hiked Allerton, Kennekuk and Homer Lake for 62 species. Still to come is the report from the Executive Team. The teams have done their job, now we encourage you to support Audubon's Scholarship program with your donations!

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

New DVDs from Better Birdwatching with sounds and sights of birds. *Birds of Illinois & Indiana*; *Eastern Birds*; and *Birds for All Seasons* to the music of Vivaldi. Also a good selection of field guides to birds, wildflowers and more.



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

Urbana-Champaign Sanitary District (UCSD) asked for water: The CU sanitary district normally discharges its treated wastewater to the Saline branch of the Salt Fork. They have been asked to sell some of this water to a commercial company, whose specific use is not publicly known, as far as I am aware. The UCSD held a public hearing at which many people spoke; I missed the beginning where facts and figures were presented but was there for the public comments. The overwhelming opinion was the stream needs that water. No decision has been reached as yet; people are referred to the UCSD website.

Good News for Louisiana Birds: Four of the Gulf Coast barrier islands most heavily damaged by the BP oil spill will be restored. With an investment of \$320 million, these restoration projects will create thousands of acres of dune and marsh, and restore miles of Louisiana's eroded barrier island beaches, providing key habitat for many species of birds and fish. Barrier islands are also the first line of defense against storm surge.

Tongass Ancient Forest Targeted for Logging: Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski continues to push hard to pass misguided legislation (S 340) in Congress to allow the Sealaska Native Corporation to cut some of the best remaining forest, including the rarest and largest ancient trees in the Tongass.

Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act: On April 18th, two U.S. senators, one Democrat and one Republican, reintroduced a widely supported bill that would reduce energy costs for consumers and businesses. If enacted, the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (S.761) would, by 2030, save America billions in energy costs, create thousands of jobs, and cut emissions equivalent to taking millions of cars off of the road.

The bill, sponsored by Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio), would enhance building energy codes, improve private commercial building efficiency financing, accelerate deployment of efficient industrial technologies and practices, and reduce federal energy waste. According to the bill's sponsors, it has garnered the support of some 250 businesses, consumer groups, industry and trade organizations, and nonprofit advocacy groups.

Just last week, S.761 received almost unanimous bipartisan support from the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. To maintain momentum and to reinforce the message that energy efficiency continues to be an area in which policy makers from both political parties and a broad coalition of stakeholders can agree, the Shaheen-Portman bill should be approved by the Senate. **We urge you to write your Senators and ask Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) to schedule a Senate vote on S. 761 as soon as possible.**



Two Views of the Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)

“The Kingbird is not quarrelsome—simply very lively. He is the very picture of dash and daring in defending his home, and when he is teaching his youngsters how to fly. He is one of the best of neighbors, and a brave soldier. An officer of the guild of Sky Sweepers, also a Ground Gleaner and Tree Trapper killing robber-flies, ants, beetles, and rose-bugs. A good friend to horses and cattle, because he kills the terrible gadflies. Eats a little fruit, but chiefly wild varieties, and only now and then a bee.

- Elliott Coues (1842-1899).

“The exquisite of the family, and the braggart of the orchard, is the Kingbird, a bully that loves to strip the feathers off its more timid neighbors like the Bluebird, that feeds on the stingless bees of the hive, the drones, and earns the reputation of great boldness by teasing large hawks, while it gives a wide berth to the little ones.”

- John Burroughs (1837-1921)

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.

For those who encountered the Barred Owls of Busey Woods this spring, Thoreau's observations will sound very familiar.

“One afternoon I amused myself by watching a barred owl (*Strix nebulosa*) sitting on one of the lower dead limbs of a white pine, close to the trunk, in broad daylight, I standing within a rod of him. He could hear me when I moved and crouched the snow with my feet, but could not plainly see me. When I made most noise he would stretch out his neck, and erect his neck feathers, and open his eyes wide; but their lids soon fell again, and he began to nod. I too felt a slumberous influence after watching him half an hour, as he sat thus with his eyes half open, like a cat, winged brother of the cat. There was only a narrow slit left between their lids, by which he preserved a peninsular relation to me; thus, with half-shut eyes, looking out from the land of dreams, and endeavoring to realize me, vague object or mote that interrupted his visions. At length, on some louder noise or my nearer approach, he would grow uneasy and sluggishly turn about on his perch, as if impatient at having his dreams disturbed; and when he launched himself off and flapped through the pines, spreading his wings to unexpected breadth, I could not hear the slightest sound from them. Thus, guided amid the pine boughs rather by a delicate sense of their neighborhood than by sight, feeling his twilight way, as it were, with his sensitive pinions, he found a new perch, where he might in peace await the dawning of his day.”

- **Henry David Thoreau** from *Walden*, Chapter 14



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



Membership for 2013

Friend of Champaign County Audubon Society \$15.00 _____ new
(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: _____ C3ZG500Z

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, Stacey Clementz

Education Program Specialist, Champaign County Forest Preserve District

sclementz@ccfpd.org

New Book: *Crossley ID Guide: Raptors* by Richard Crossley, Jerry Liguori and Brian Sullivan.

Part of the revolutionary *Crossley ID Guide* series, this is the first raptor guide with lifelike scenes composed from multiple photographs--scenes that allow you to identify raptors just as the experts do. Experienced birders use the most easily observed and consistent characteristics--size, shape, behavior, probability, and general color patterns. The book's 101 scenes--including thirty-five double-page layouts--provide a complete picture of how these features are all related. Even the effects of lighting and other real-world conditions are illustrated and explained. Detailed and succinct accounts from two of North America's foremost raptor experts, Jerry Liguori and Brian Sullivan, stress the key identification features. This complete picture allows everyone from beginner to expert to understand and enjoy what he or she sees in the field.

Check out Live Nest Cams:

Visit Explore.org to see live nature cams, world-class wildlife photos, and educational films. This website includes Long-eared Owls, Common Terns and Osprey nest cameras.

Field Trip Questionnaire

Nowadays people are busier than ever. The Field Trip Committee wants to make our field trips as appealing and accessible as possible. To do this we need to know your preferences. So we are asking you to take a few minutes and let us know what you think. Here are a few items to consider:

1) Days of week? 2) Times preferred? 3) Length of trip? 4) Places you'd like to go? 5) Kinds of trips?...strenuous, easy, etc.....OR, anything you want to tell us. Send by e-mail to Charlene Anchor at

<<mailto:ckanchor@comcast.net>>

If you don't have e-mail jot it down and send to CCAS, Field Trip Committee, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0082.

Any feedback will be appreciated. Thanks, The Field Trip Committee.



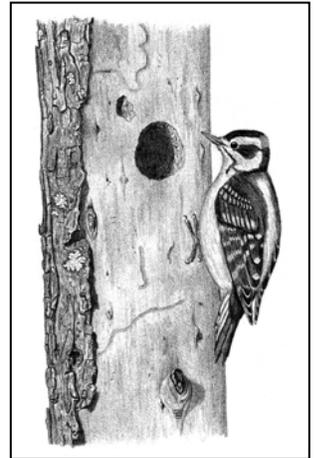
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Calendar of Events, June 2013

- Thursday June 6, 6 PM. JUNE POTLUCK & SWALLOW WATCHING** at Homer Lake Walnut Hill Shelter. Please bring your own table service, your own beverage and a dish to share. Watching begins at 6 PM, potluck at 6:30 PM.
- Saturday June 15, 4 PM- dusk. Urbana Park District's "STRAWBERRY JAM" at Meadowbrook Park.**
- Friday June 21, 12:04 AM. SUMMER SOLSTICE.**

The next *Meadowlark Messenger* will be the September newsletter.

