



The Meadowlark Messenger

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

Being Green

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

It's not easy being green, if you really think about it.

As I write this, Earth Day is only a few days away, a time when we should think about our environmental footprint and the impact that we humans have on the ecosystem of which we are a part. I have actually been thinking a lot about environmental impact lately. A few weeks ago I gave a presentation on pesticide use in agriculture to the Alpha Zeta agricultural leadership fraternity. In preparation for that talk I reviewed material on the history and environmental impacts of pesticides, including a retrospective on Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, another book with the intriguing title of *Saving the Planet with Pesticides and Plastic*, and several video clips on YouTube showing kids in the 1950s being sprayed with DDT. The DDT story is an example of how something that initially appears benign can cause a great deal of environmental damage in ways that no one expected. And from that environmental mistake it would be fairly easy to reach the conclusion that all pesticide use is bad for the ecosystem. However, things are not that simple. If you dig deeper and consider the environmental and human consequences of eliminating the use of all agricultural pesticides, you would find that such a policy would have negative consequences of its own. What may seem like an environmentally friendly decision may not be so simple

when all of the risks and benefits are considered.

The struggles of trying to be eco-friendly hit home for Caroline and me in a discussion we had over, of all things, our kitchen trash can. A few years back we reluctantly switched from using paper grocery bags to plastic trash bags for lining our trash can. We did this for several reasons. One being that we had started using reusable grocery bags, and we no longer had a ready supply of paper bags. Caroline, in particular, has not been happy about the idea of using plastic trash bags, and she decided to stop buying them. She says that we discussed this, but I honestly don't remember. So when I mentioned that we needed to put trash bags on the shopping list, Caroline reminded me that we weren't buying plastic trash bags anymore. The sometimes emphatic discussion of what we were going to use instead of plastic bags, including buying paper bags, using biodegradable plastic bags, or reusing leftover plastic bags, seems somewhat silly in retrospect, but it illustrates how difficult it can be to do the right thing when you are really interested in evaluating the consequences, rather than just making a statement. None of the alternatives we have investigated so far are free of environmental consequences.

Some "green" actions are relatively simple and straightforward. Turning off the lights when leaving the room and using the bicycle instead of the car save energy and benefit the environment. However, with many companies hopping on the green bandwagon, it can be challenging to determine what is really environmentally friendly and what is just advertising. As Kermit the

frog sings, "It's not easy being green" - especially if you consider all of the consequences.

May Program Urbana Free Library Auditorium

Thursday May 5, 7 pm
The two 2010 recipients of
Kendeigh grants from CCAS
will present their research on
BIRDS and SEX

How polygamous mother wrens invest in daughters and sons

E. Keith Bowers, Graduate Student
at Illinois State University



Immune function, physiology and reproductive success in Illinois songbirds

Dr. Travis E. Wilcoxon,
Assistant Professor of Biology
at Millikin University

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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

Migration is heating up. Statewide a Mountain Bluebird was reported near Towanda 4/12. Open fields have reports of Golden Plovers, 4/11; American Pipits, 4/2; and Smith's Longspurs, 4/12. Variety of shorebirds at Point Pleasant, Middle Fork Preserve, including a Baird's Sandpiper, 4/9. Great Egret at Weaver Park, 4/19. Red-tailed and Cooper's Hawks are nesting. Broad-winged Hawks are overhead. Chimney Swifts over Urbana April 10. House Wren at Meadowbrook, 4/9. Early warblers are back: Parulas at Meadowbrook & Busey. Yellow-throated Warblers at Busey and Lake of the Woods. Pine, Palm, Black-throated Green Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrush, Busey Woods. Northern Waterthrush at Meadowbrook, 4/18. Sparrow species are appearing in odd places - a Savannah, 4/3, and a Henslow's, 4/10 in Busey Woods. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in an Urbana yard 4/19.

SPRING BIRD COUNT

Saturday May 7. This statewide census is done county by county, and lots of eyes are needed. It runs all day, but you can participate for any amount of time and even in your own backyard. To help in Champaign County, contact Beth Chato, 344-6803.

FIELD TRIP

Saturday May 21. Sangamon Preserve Field Trip: Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center 7:30 AM or at the Lake of the Woods Museum parking lot at 8 AM. This newest Forest Preserve should be a good spot for observing the peak of spring warblers. Bring lunch if you can stay past noon. Contact: Beth Chato 344-6803.

BIRDATHON

See enclosed flyer and pledge form. This is our annual fundraiser for our Kendeigh Scholarships. Please contribute.

Remembering our Field Trip Chair, Elaine Regehr



Champaign County Audubon lost a dedicated Board Member earlier this year with the passing of Elaine Regehr. Elaine served for many years as CCAS's Field Trip Chair. Elaine also helped put together Meadowbrook's checklist of birds and was the Spring Bird Count compiler for Piatt County. She volunteered many hours working in Meadowbrook's Herb Garden. Elaine was passionate about nature and shared these feelings with all who joined her.



SUNDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS

March 6 – May 29, 7:30 - 9 AM. Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods continue. Meet at Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.

CONSERVATION CORNER Helen Parker, Conservation Chair

Well, it's been a year now since the big oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico. Have we learned anything? Oil prices are high and the oil companies are chafing at the bit to resume drilling--without any pesky regulations, please. Gas prices are high and people just want to fill up the tank without paying anything more than they must. Dead birds, plants, sea life are out of sight and mind. But nature is slowly recovering, and the coast is "greening up"--just try not to use more petroleum products than you really need, OK? For more coverage--National Audubon has a special site on Facebook.

Meanwhile, in Illinois, there are those who think the right place for a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) disposal facility is in Lake Michigan, just a short distance off the Chicago lakefront. (Never mind that an on-land site had already been approved, with all necessary permits). The result would be a 14-acre peninsula with contaminated sediment on public lake bottom outside of Waukegan. The artificially created land would be turned into a recreation area, including a parking lot for boats and cars. This extraordinary proposal is being pushed forward with very little debate. The language for this bill was introduced on Monday, April 11, passed through committee on Tuesday, April 12, and the Illinois Senate is being asked to vote on this proposal this week. I'm not sure if there is a chance that contacting your state senator at this point would have any effect. However, if it does pass, the governor would be able to veto it--so he's probably the one to contact.

The EPA survived the 2011 budget crisis that just ended in Congress without too much damage. Of course, the 2012 budget debate is now beginning, and the usual suspects will again be gunning for this horrible agency that actually wants to enforce the law. Keep watching. Oh--the gray wolves did NOT survive the budget debate--Congress says they are to be removed from the endangered species list. Science was not considered--only the wishes of some important politicians.

Earth Day, 2011. April 22. It will be past by the time this newsletter comes out. Did anybody notice?

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The Perfection of Early May Weather



“How green the grass, how happy the birds, how placid the river, how busy the bees, how soft the air! – that kind of weather when there seems to be dew in the air all day, - the day a kind of prolonged morning, - so fresh, so wooing, so caressing! The baby leaves on the apple trees have doubled in size since last night.

These days the song of the toad – *tr-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r* - is heard in the land. At nearly all hours I hear it, and it is as welcome to me as the song of any bird. It is a kind of gossamer of sound drifting in the air. Mother toad is in the pools and puddles now depositing that long chain or raveling of eggs, while her dapper little mate rides upon her back and fertilizes them as they are laid. As I look toward the fields where the first brown thrasher is singing, I see emerald patches of rye. The unctuous, confident strain of the bird seems to make the fields grow greener hour by hour.”

- John Burroughs

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

Think Spring! We have a wide selection of bird and wildflower guides as well as binoculars. *Illinois Wildflowers* by Don Kurz is outstanding. We can special order your needs.



with text, photos, sounds, range maps and more. Go to our website www.champaigncountyaudubon.org for a link to this valuable resource.



KENDEIGH GRANT RECIPIENTS for 2011

Kelly R. VanBeek

Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois, awarded \$1,000.

Sarah Cleeton

Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois, awarded \$1,000.

Evan Glynn

Department of Biological Sciences, Eastern Illinois University, awarded \$200.

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 _____
(includes CCAS newsletter only)

new renewal

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: _____

C1ZG500Z

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

7XCH

(Please provide 9-digit zip code)

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

Send this application and your check to:

Champaign Co. Audubon Society, Membership Chair, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0882. Thank you!

3rd ANNUAL BIRD MIGRATION FESTIVAL AT HOMER LAKE FOREST PRESERVE

Saturday, April 30

Homer Lake Forest Preserve, 2573 S. Homer Lake Rd, Homer

Bring your family and friends to Homer Lake to experience the sensations of spring and celebrate the migration season.

- Mist Netting Demonstration: 11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M., Homer Lake Interpretive Center
- Main Event & Live Raptors: 1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M., Walnut Hill Shelter*
- Live Performance by Dan Keding: 2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M., Walnut Hill Shelter*

We will have live raptors (birds of prey), crafts, hikes, and more! Acclaimed storyteller and musician Dan Keding will perform from 2-3pm. Before the main event, experience a live demonstration of mist netting—temporarily capturing wild birds to gather valuable scientific information on local populations—at the Homer Lake Interpretive Center from 11am-1pm. All activities are FREE. For more information, (217) 896-2455 or shampson@ccfpd.org.

*In the event of rain, activities at Walnut Hill will be relocated indoors to the Salt Fork Center.

Children will have the opportunity to make and take home their own bird kites that really fly! The event will also offer free giveaways, a prize drawing, games and exploration stations. Guided bird hikes through the preserve's restored wetland will depart at 3pm and 4pm.

Event sponsors include the Champaign County Audubon Society; The News-Gazette; TCF Campus Banking; First Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust; Wild Birds and More Store; and the Law Offices of Evans, Froehlich, Beth & Chambley. For more information contact Savannah Hampson, Environmental Education Public Program Specialist, at (217) 896-2455 or shampson@ccfpd.org.

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OLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES Bob Vaiden, Habitat Chair

Join other volunteers and the Urbana Park District (UPD) 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. 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:**

- May 14th: Busey Woods 9 -11 am. Meet at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Weaver Park 1-3 pm. Turn right into park on grass "apron" on East Main near Smith Road
- May 28th: Meadowbrook 9 -11 am. Meet at Race Street parking lot.
- Perkins Road 1 -3 pm. Meet at Dog Park parking lot on Perkins Road.



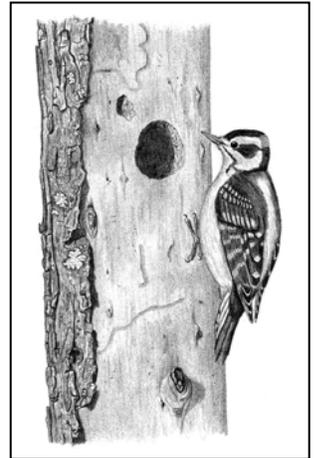
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Calendar of Events, May 2011

- Saturday April 30, 11 AM – 5 PM.** Third Annual Bird Migration festival at Homer Lake Forest Preserve.
- Thursday May 5, 7 PM. General meeting** at Urbana Free Library Auditorium. Recipients of 2010 Kendeigh grants will present their research findings.
Travis Wilcoxon: Immune function, physiology and reproductive success in Illinois songbirds.
E. Keith Bowers: Sex allocation in a polygamous bird: the House Wren.
- Saturday May 7. Annual Spring Bird Count.**
- Sun – Sat. May 8 – May 14. Birdathon.**
- Thursday May 19, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.
- Saturday May 21, Sangamon Preserve Field Trip:** Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center **7:30 AM** or at the Lake of the Woods Museum parking lot at **8 AM**. This newest Forest Preserve should be a good spot for observing the peak of spring warblers. Bring lunch if you can stay past noon.
- Sundays March 6 - May 29, 7:30 – 9 AM.** Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods. Meet at Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.