



# The Meadowlark Messenger

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

## President's Column

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

Recently in Meadowbrook Park, we came upon a group of people following an Urbana Park District employee. When we inquired, they told us that they were going to pull up garlic mustard, an invasive weed species, in the natural areas of the park. This is a great example of people volunteering in their community to help protect and improve the natural environment.

Champaign County Audubon Society is committed to conservation and habitat protection for the benefit of humans and other organisms sharing our planet. Such efforts are wholly dependent on those willing to donate their time, money, and effort. For the foreseeable future it is unlikely that governments will be able to expand current initiatives or develop new projects. However, when governments partner with non-profit and community-based organizations, which are dependent on volunteers, considerable progress can be made.

The Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge and Emiquon Nature Conservancy project is an excellent example of government and non-profit collaboration for habitat restoration. Situated at the confluence of the Spoon and Illinois Rivers between Havana and Peoria, the project is focused on restoring the flood plain. A recent visit in March revealed large flocks of waterfowl, white pelicans, and a variety of woodland and grassland bird species. None of the restoration work there would be possible without citizen volunteers.

Locally, there are many opportunities to work on nature related projects. Grand Prairie Friends, <http://grandprairiefriends.org>, is an organization whose mission is preservation and restoration of tallgrass prairie and woodlands in east-central Illinois. They sponsor regular work days: the second Saturday of every month at Busey Woods, 9-11 am, at Weaver Grove, 1-3pm, and the fourth Saturday of every month at Meadowbrook Prairie. The Izaak Walton League is a grassroots organization that focuses on common sense approaches to conservation. Their projects include river and natural habitat clean-up days and tree and shrub planting for soil conservation. With a long history rooted in environmental activism, the League is a great organization with which to share your skills, energy and resources.

These are just two examples of many local organizations working to protect the environment. Keep in mind that like Goldilocks, we need to find the "just right" fit so the most can be made of our contributions. You may say to yourself, "I don't really know anything about conservation or habitat restoration". Or perhaps a physical disability precludes engaging in a river clean-up or other workday experience. Consider what skills you do have and how these might contribute to the mission of the organization. Are you versed in marketing, grant writing, fund raising, or bookkeeping? These are just a few of the skills that non-profit organizations need and value. And if your work or family life do not allow for added responsibilities, consider providing a regular financial contribution through a membership or

donation. Probably the most important step is to take time to talk with the leadership of the organization that you are interested in and find out what their greatest needs are.

We are accountable to the future, and what we do now really will make a difference.

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## MAY MEETING

Urbana Free Library Auditorium  
**Thursday, May 3 at 7 PM**

The 2011 recipients of Kendeigh grants from Champaign County Audubon Society **Sarah Cleeton** will present **Assessing the responses of woodland songbirds to exotic shrub invasions in the Chicago area.**



**Kelly VanBeek** will present **Effects of alternative tillage practices on bird populations in Illinois**



drawing by Charles Tunnicliffe from *Both Sides of the Road* (1949)

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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**

By and large, the birds do not seem in tempo with our incredibly early vegetation growth. A few species are arriving early, such as the Scarlet Tanager, Common Yellowthroat, and Indigo Bunting on April 15. More are right on schedule, at least in Busey Woods/Crystal Lake. In the wider area, shorebirds are being reported, including Golden Plover, Snipe, Yellowlegs and a Dunlin. A bittern was at the St. Joseph Wetlands. A Little Gull was seen at Clinton Lake.

Smith's Longspurs have been sighted. Returning warblers include Pine, Palm, Parula, Yellow-throated, Black-throated Green, and Louisiana Waterthrush.

**Spring Bird Count. Saturday May 5**

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.

Your pledges needed!

**AUDUBON BIRDATHON WEEK:**

MAY 6-13

During Birdathon week, teams will bird various times and places in our area. This is our annual fundraiser for our Kendeigh Scholarships. Pick a team and pledge for the number of species seen by your team. See enclosed flyer and pledge form.

ALL BIRDATHON CONTRIBUTIONS FUND BIRD RESEARCH IN ILLINOIS.

**Sunday Morning Bird Walks**

May 6 - May 27, 7:30 - 9 AM.

Sunday morning bird walks through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods began on March 4 and will continue every Sunday through May 27. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot. Bring binoculars if you have them. Audubon members will be present to help beginners.



**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**

Spring is here! Check out arriving birds with binoculars from carefully selected stock, including the popular Energy Compact 8x21; a field guide from our wide selection, including the new Crossley ID ; or the New Identifier Ultra that combines songs and pictures of 120 birds. Also available: the excellent DVD on Watching Warblers.

## CONSERVATION CORNER -- Helen Parker, Conservation Chair

As I write this, Earth Day is a couple of days away, although it will be past before you read it. Regardless of the timing, the importance of the day--or week--or month--is the same. Be mindful of the earth, and live "green." By this time everybody has an idea of what this means. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Turn out the lights when you're not using them. Replace incandescents with CFs or better, LEDs. Don't drive when you can walk. Etc. etc--but above all, think about your actions.

As always, there are some specifics to mention. Congress--or at least the House of Representatives--is sticking the approval of the XL pipeline into an appropriations bill, which would be very difficult for the president to veto. Shell oil has plans to drill in the Arctic Ocean, where cleaning up a spill would make the Gulf oil spill look like sweeping the carpet. A draft plan would greatly reduce the habitat of the Northern Spotted Owl. The winter census on Isle Royale shows the wolf population the lowest it has been since records have been kept; it is possible that the population will die out. I hope not.

A little bit of good news: Monarch butterflies have reached New York state on their return from Mexico. New eggs have been found on milkweeds, and the next generation of these remarkable creatures is beginning. The western flock of Whooping Cranes is almost at the nesting area 2,400 miles from their wintering grounds in Texas. Much of the eastern flock--the ones taught to migrate with the aid of an ultralight plane--has returned to Wisconsin where they have 17 nests. We'll be hoping for chicks!

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### Vireos and the May Woods

The vireos, or greenlets, are a sort of connecting link between the warblers and the true flycatchers, and partake of the characteristics of both.

The red-eyed vireo, whose sweet soliloquy is one of the most constant and cheerful sounds in our woods and groves, is perhaps the most noticeable and abundant species. The vireos are a little larger than the warblers, and are far less brilliant and variegated in color.

There are five species found in most of our woods, namely the red-eyed vireo, the white-eyed vireo, the warbling vireo, the yellow-throated vireo, and the solitary vireo,--the red-eyed and warbling being most abundant, and the white-eyed being the most lively and animated songster. I meet the latter bird only in the thick, bush growths of low, swampy localities, where, eluding the observer, it pours forth its song with a sharpness and a rapidity of articulation that are truly astonishing. This strain is very marked, and, though inlaid with the notes of several other birds, is entirely unique. The iris of this bird is white, as that of the red-eyed is red, though in neither case can this mark be distinguished at more than two or three yards. In most cases the iris of birds is a dark hazel, which passes for black.

The basket-like nest, pendent to the low branches in the woods, which the falling leaves of autumn reveal to all passers, is, in most

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## KENDEIGH GRANTS 2012

The Kendeigh Committee had a difficult time this year: We received nine grant applications, all of which were worthy of funding. The two that we selected were:

**Valerie Buxton**, for her study on **Determining Urban Grassland Quality in Illinois**

**Tyson Dallas**, for his study on **Habitat Use and Demography of Red-Headed Woodpeckers in Alternative Habitat Types in Western Illinois.**

### **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES Bob Vaiden, Habitat Chair**

Help rebuild our shattered environment! 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:**

May 12th:            Busey Woods    9 -11 am.    Meet at Anita Purves Nature Center  
                         Weaver Park     1 – 3 pm.    Turn right into park at entrance on East Main near Smith Road.



### **Seeking Volunteers!**

Please give us a hand with membership duties. Someone is needed to maintain the membership rosters, the e-newsletter list, and print out mailing labels for the monthly newsletter. The estimated time commitment is approximately 2 hours per month. If you are interested, please email Janet Jokela at <mailto:jjokela59@hotmail.com>jjokela59@hotmail.com, or Darin Eastburn at <mailto:eastburn@illinois.edu>eastburn@illinois.edu. Thank you.

### **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.)*

# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_      C2ZG500Z  
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,

### 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

### Congratulations Mini-Grant Recipients!

We received so many great mini-grant applications this year and were able to fund six. Contributions from CCAS members aided us in this effort, including funds from the Edna Arend Memorial Fund (set up in honor of Iris Swanson's mother).

This year's recipients are:

- **Andrew Stamatkin with Urbana Middle School** for books on plant and animal classification, life cycles and ecosystems
- **Lori Clark, Germaine Light and Janice Koelkebeck with Mahomet Seymour High School** to fund a speaker to come to their class for a hands-on program about Illinois Ecosystems
- **Ralph Bonati with the Champaign County Forest Preserve District** for a Green Thumb Grow Light System for their classroom
- **Tina Lehr with Urbana Middle School** for a plant study project
- **Katie Miller with Middletown Early Childhood Center** for her class to create bird houses that the students will be able to take home with them
- **Karen Hollett with Urbana Middle School** for plant care and garden development activity supplies to teach her students about plant parts and gardening.

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

### More Mini-Grant Money to Come This Fall!

We are in the process of changing the deadline for our mini-grants and will be trying out the new process this fall. Instead of having mini-grant applications due in March, we are moving the application deadline to mid-October. Keep your eye out for information on these mini-grant opportunities.



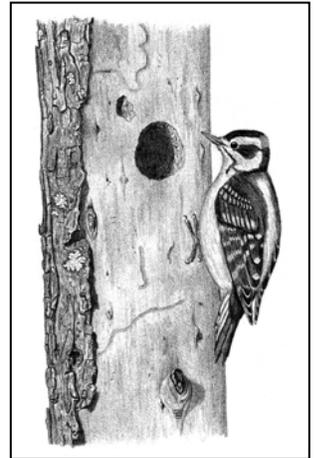
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## Calendar of Events, May 2012

- Thursday** **May 3, 7 PM. General meeting** at Urbana Free Library Auditorium. The 2011 recipients of Kendeigh grants from Champaign County Audubon Society will discuss their bird research. **Sarah Cleeton** will present *Assessing the responses of woodland songbirds to exotic shrub invasions in the Chicago area*. **Kelly VanBeek** will present *Effects of alternative tillage practices on bird populations in Illinois*.
- Saturday** **May 5, dawn to dusk. Spring Bird Count.**
- Sundays** **May 6 - May 27, 7:30-9 AM. Sunday morning bird walks** through Crystal Lake Park and Busey Woods began on March 4 and will continue every Sunday through May 27. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot.
- Sun.-Sat.** **May 6- May 13. Audubon Birdathon Week.** During Birdathon week, teams will bird various times and places in our area. This is our annual fundraiser for our Kendeigh Scholarships. Pick a team and pledge for the number of species seen by your team. See enclosed flyer and pledge form.
- Thursday** **May 17, 7:15 PM. Champaign County Audubon Society Board Meeting** at Anita Purves Nature Center.

