



# The Meadowlark Messenger

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org

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

## Field Notes

*Colin Dobson, CCAS President*

Hope everyone is coping with the dropping temperatures and the falling of leaves, although this year’s fall colors have been amazing! Most of our migrant birds have passed and our “snowbirds” (e.g., Dark-eyed Juncos) have settled in, and winter is on our doorstep!

Sunday Morning Bird Walks have been great and well attended, so we hope you have been able to make it to one of our walks; if not, the walks will continue in the spring! Between all of the warblers we were seeing on the early walks to the pintails, cormorants, and gulls we saw fly over on another, we saw a good variety of birds throughout the fall! Finches are moving this winter so watch those feeders and email us if you happen to see anything interesting! We hope to see you at our upcoming events or field trips coming up!



*Yellow-rumped Warbler. Photo by Jeff Bryant.*

The next CCAS board meeting is Monday, November 21, 6:30-8:00 pm. All CCAS members are welcome to attend. For information: [mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org](mailto:mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org).

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## Champaign County Audubon Society

## Officers

- President: Colin Dobson
- Vice President: Roger Digges
- Secretary: Jennifer Wick
- Treasurer: Todd Kinney

## Members at Large

- Beth Chato
- Nathan Powazki
- Megan Skrip

## Committee Chairs

- Bylaws: Roger Digges
- Conservation: Zachary Sutton
- Education: (vacant)
- Field Trip: (vacant);  
Beth Chato, Colin Dobson, Brody Dunn
- Finance: Todd Kinney
- Membership: Sara Johnson
- Program: (vacant)
- Communications: Sara Johnson (Chair);  
Shoshie Bauer, Jeff Bryant (Birdnotes  
Listserv), Susan Pollock, Megan Skrip,  
Sarah Stewart

Champaign County Audubon publishes *The Meadowlark Messenger* nine times per year. **Comments regarding the newsletter, or articles for submission, are welcome.**

## Contact us!

P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803  
ChampaignCountyAudubon.org  
[mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org](mailto:mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org)

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## Bird of the Month

*Roger Digges, CCAS Vice President*

At some point in our lives, usually when we're very young, we begin to pay attention to those wondrous beings with feathers and learn what a few of them are, one species at a time—robins, cardinals, blue jays, crows, and others. But there are dozens more around us. We just don't see or hear them because we're not paying attention, or if we do, we have no idea what they are. However, if we become interested in them, we begin to pay attention again, to subtle variations in color or sounds of birds, and learn new names, one species at a time.

I am writing this column as one who is still learning for those who would like to know more about birds in our area, one species at a time. The best way to learn, of course, is by doing—going on our Sunday morning bird walks in the spring or early fall, participating in our field trips, birding with a knowledgeable friend, going for a walk on your own in [one of our local natural areas](#), or just paying attention to birds in your own backyard.

## What will you see this month?

Our familiar friends, robins, perhaps, (although fewer and harder to find in November) and cardinals and blue jays, and crows. But there will be other birds we can only see during the coldest months of the year, “snowbirds” fleeing the ice and snow further north.

Some snowbirds are already at local feeders, but the one I'd like to introduce you to this month (if you don't already know it) is the Dark-eyed Junco. Juncos are sparrows, but unlike what we tend to think of when we heard the word sparrow—small brownish birds with black and/or white streaks. While juncos vary according to region, the one which visits our area is the slate-colored junco, which tends to be gray (males) or brownish gray (females) above and bright white below with a noticeable boundary between the two colors.

They are readily identifiable by that contrast between the darker upper body and white belly, but especially the outer white tail feathers they flash conspicuously in flight. The slate-colored



*Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Colin Dobson.*

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## Field Trip

*Annual Sandhill Crane Migration*  
*Saturday, November 12, 2022 (new date)*  
*1:30–8:00 pm*  
*Anita Purves Nature Center, 1505 N.*  
*Broadway, Urbana*

Join us for our annual trip to Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area to witness one of nature's greatest spectacles: the Sandhill Crane Migration! Every fall, tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes descend on the fields of Jasper-Pulaski for their evening roost.

Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center at 1:30 pm to carpool and caravan for a day of birding followed by a sunset visit to the preserve to watch the Sandhill Cranes fly in. You don't want to miss this trip!



*Sandhill Cranes. Photo by Jeff Bryant.*

## Your Local Birds: A Comprehensive Study of the Bird Communities of Champaign-Urbana

*Thursday, December 1, 2022, 7:00 PM–8:00 PM*  
*Join us on [Zoom](#)*  
*Meeting ID: 835 0727 9259*  
*Password: CCAS*

Do you like birds? Do you live in Champaign-Urbana or the surrounding area? If so, then tune in for this exciting talk by Dr. Henry Pollock about your local birds! Henry, along with CCAS President Colin Dobson and CCAS Conservation Director Zak Sutton, conducted a comprehensive survey of C-U's birds in winter (January-February) and summer (June-July) 2022. Henry will present findings from the bird survey, including identifying critical areas around town for bird diversity as well as highlighting differences in bird community structure between Champaign and Urbana, public parks and private neighborhoods, and across seasons.

Dr. Henry Pollock is a postdoctoral researcher in the van Riper lab of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at UIUC. He has conducted bird research all over the world, and his current project focuses on understanding human-bird interactions in our local community!

## 2023 Board and Volunteers Needed

If you would like to be considered for the 2023 Board slate, contact us before our December meeting. Volunteers are needed to help support and run our organization. Open positions include:

Communications Chair      Field Trip  
Education Chair Chair      Program Chair

Learn more about roles and opportunities at <https://www.champaigncountyaudubon.org/volunteer> or email [mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org](mailto:mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org).

## Welcome, New Members!

*Kathryn Rice-Trumble, Julia Saville*

## Thank You, Renewing Members!

*Jan Houston*

*Bold indicates contribution beyond dues.*

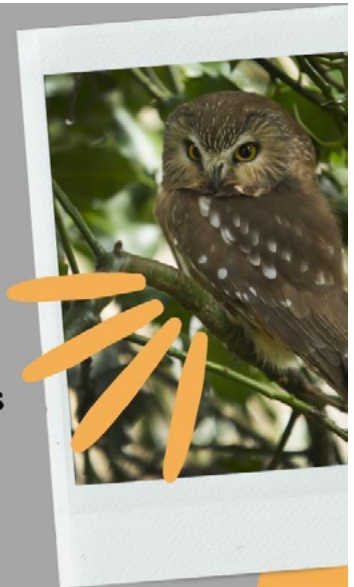
Thank you to Phyllis Williams for her generous donation in memory of Normal Childers.

# 2022 Owl Night: An Up-Close Experience with Our Round-Eyed, Feathered Friends

with the Natural Resources and Environmental  
Sciences Department at the University of Illinois

Tuesday, November 8  
(rain backup November 15)

Salt Fork Center  
Homer Lake Forest Preserve  
5:30- 8:30 p.m.



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variety of Dark-eyed Juncos nest throughout nearly all of Canada and northern United States as well as eastern and western mountains. They winter throughout nearly all the continental U.S. So, many of the birds we see during migration are just passing through while others will be spending all winter in east-central Illinois. According to [eBird](#)'s bar chart for Champaign County (in its "Explore" section), dark-eyed juncos have been spotted as early as late September and as late as early May. November and December are the best months to find them.

## Where can you find juncos?

According to Cornell Lab's [All About Birds](#), you can see them in "open woodlands, fields, roadsides, parks," and I would add at your backyard feeders. They tend to be anywhere where there are trees. They are easy to spot. Even without binoculars, you can see those flashing white outer tail feathers as they fly up into cover. At my house, we have been seeing them daily since the cold snap in October. They prefer millet in a ground feeder but also will eat black oil sunflower seeds in a hanging platform feeder or larger hopper feeder. Check out All About

Birds for other food. You can also draw them closer by having a heated birdbath.

## How are juncos doing?

Like nearly all North American birds (and birds worldwide), they have declined in population, from 320 million birds to 220 million since 1966. That is still a lot of juncos, which is why the [International Union for the Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN) still lists them as "least concern", their lowest threat level. We need to continue to work at preserving and expanding habitat, reducing pesticide use, making windows bird-safe, and keeping our cats inside. But we also need to enjoy our juncos and introduce others to them. As my six-year-old granddaughter said when she saw her first, "They're so cute!"



# Join Champaign County Audubon Society!

*Yes, I'd like to become a member!*

When you join the Champaign County Audubon Society, 100% of your dues and donations support our efforts (and they're tax deductible!).

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ CCAS Membership (\$15 due each January).

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional donation to CCAS

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL

### *Or Join Online!*

Save time by contributing via your mobile device or computer! [Visit our website to join or donate online.](#)

I am a new member     I am renewing my membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

CCAS members will be automatically enrolled to receive our newsletter by email; check this box if you would prefer to receive a **paper** copy.

Checks should be made payable to CCAS. Send this form and your payment to: CCAS Membership Chair, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0882. Thank you!

### *Our Mission:*

*Promote interest, enjoyment, and understanding of all aspects of our natural environment, and actively encourage the protection of wildlife and native habitats.*

## Join National Audubon Society

When you join National Audubon Society you receive one year of Audubon magazine. You also have the option to receive local birding and community events delivered to your inbox from CCAS.

- **New members:** Go online to <http://bit.ly/nas-g50> or call 1-844-428-3826. Please tell them Champaign County Audubon Society sent you using our chapter code "G50."
- **Renewing members:** Go online to <http://bit.ly/renew-nas> or call 1-844-428-3826.



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