



The Meadowlark Messenger

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org

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

December Program

A Year in Illinois' Natural Areas

Thursday, Dec. 3rd, 7pm CT

Join us for another virtual monthly meeting and seminar, presented on [Zoom](#)! This month, experience Illinois' natural splendor through the seasons with CCAS Vice President and Communications Chair, Sara Johnson.

Follow Sara's Midwest Explorer blog: <https://saraannjohnson.wordpress.com/>



Facebook: [@MidwestExplorer](#)

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Remember that the December meeting is also the annual CCAS board election (see pg. 2)!

All seminars are recorded and posted to our [YouTube channel](#) afterward. Access details and more information can be found on our website: www.champaigncountyaudubon.org/birdwalks-and-programs

Welcome to Your December Newsletter!

Sara Johnson, CCAS Vice President

Settling into winter... (despite my best efforts to resist it)

I would be lying if I said I wasn't dreading winter this year. It has been a year of limiting activities, limiting travel, and limiting gatherings; the outdoors has been my sanctuary. But alas, nature can't be stopped, and the cold winds are rapping on my windows.

In an effort to change my attitude, my new ritual has converted from morning rounds in the garden to morning feeder watch. I rise with the sun, despite my body's best effort to sleep all day, grab my cup of coffee and binoculars, and head to the back window to watch the feeders.

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Champaign County Audubon Society**Officers**

- President: Brody Dunn
- Vice President: Sara Johnson
- Secretary: Ted Veselsky
- Treasurer: John Dunkelberger (Interim)

Members at Large

- Charlene Anchor
- Jeff Peyton
- Zak Sutton

Committee Chairs

- Bylaws: Roger Digges
- Conservation: Jennifer Wick
- Education: Tyler Owens
- Field Trip: Beth Chato
- Finance: Janet Jokela (Interim)
- Membership: Rachel Vinsel
- Program: (vacant)
- Communications: Sara Johnson, Chair. Carie Nixon (Newsletter & Publicity), Megan Skrip (Newsletter), Brody Dunn (Board Listserv), Jeff Bryant (Birdnotes Listserv)

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

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Some mornings, blustery ones, in particular, the traffic is slow, consisting mostly of squirrels mopping up the leftovers. On sunny and milder mornings like today (it's 65°F!), there is often an abundance of birds! Blue Jays swooping in while announcing their arrival, Northern Cardinals and House Finches arguing over their place in the food chain, Dark-eyed Juncos resting and digesting in the hedges, and the Mourning Doves bumbling warily underneath the feeders. Today, I was pleasantly surprised by a Fox Sparrow, a winter visitor from the far North of the continent.

The stable and predictable presence of our resident birds is something to relish. While I undoubtedly love the excitement and urgency of spring birding, there is something special about the regularity of winter birds. It is a joy to see them taking advantage of the seeds I have left for them, both in the feeders and in the garden borders, finding refuge in the brush pile, or grabbing a drink or a bath in the birdbath I keep filled.

During the snowy, windy, and bitterly cold days, it is nice to know we are not alone in doing what we can to hunker down and wait for better and easier days ahead. 🐦



Fox Sparrow. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

Annual Board Elections

During December's program meeting, CCAS membership elects officers and members at large. The Nominating Committee respectfully submits the following candidates for board positions:

President: Colin Dobson
Vice President: Roger Digges
Secretary: Jennifer Wick
Treasurer: John Dunkelberger

Members at Large:
Jeff Peyton
Zak Sutton
Nathan Powazki



American Woodcock. Photo by Ryan Mandelbaum/Flickr (CC BY 2.0).

Field Notes

Submitted by Beth Chato

The final summary of our September and October Sunday surveys of Busey Woods and Crystal Lake Park is now complete. For Busey woods we saw a total of 62 different bird species. For Crystal Lake the total was 66. Combining the two areas, we saw of total of 83 different bird species. This shows that the types of habitat are quite different. Brody Dunn and I spent a combined total of 26 hours looking. The most unusual sightings were an Osprey over Crystal Lake on September 13 and a woodcock on October 25.

Interestingly, Roger Diggs observed woodcocks displaying in Meadowbrook Park on October 28. Usually they do this during mating season in the spring. Apparently, unusual weather patterns in fall affect their behavior. 🐦

Christmas Bird Count 2020

Join us for the Christmas Bird Count in Champaign-Urbana!

Saturday, Dec. 19th, 2020

CCAS has been participating in National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count for over 50 years! Want to join in? Email mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org to register for the 2020 count. Check out our website for more info and to learn about other local counts in which you can participate: www.champaigncountyaudubon.org/bird-counts-and-bird-a-thon/

Allerton Park Bird Club Podcast Features CCAS

Board members Sara Johnson and Janet Jokela were invited to share their stories from past Christmas Bird Counts on the Allerton Bird Club Podcast! The episode will be released on Dec. 4th, so keep an eye out for it! In the meantime, check out their catalog of 21 episodes covering a range of topics with members of our birding community, including board member Colin Dobson and owner of Prairie Melody Birdseed, Ken Dallmier. Find all of the episodes on their website: <https://www.allertonparkbirdclub.com/>



Birders' Bookshelf: *What It's Like to Be a Bird*

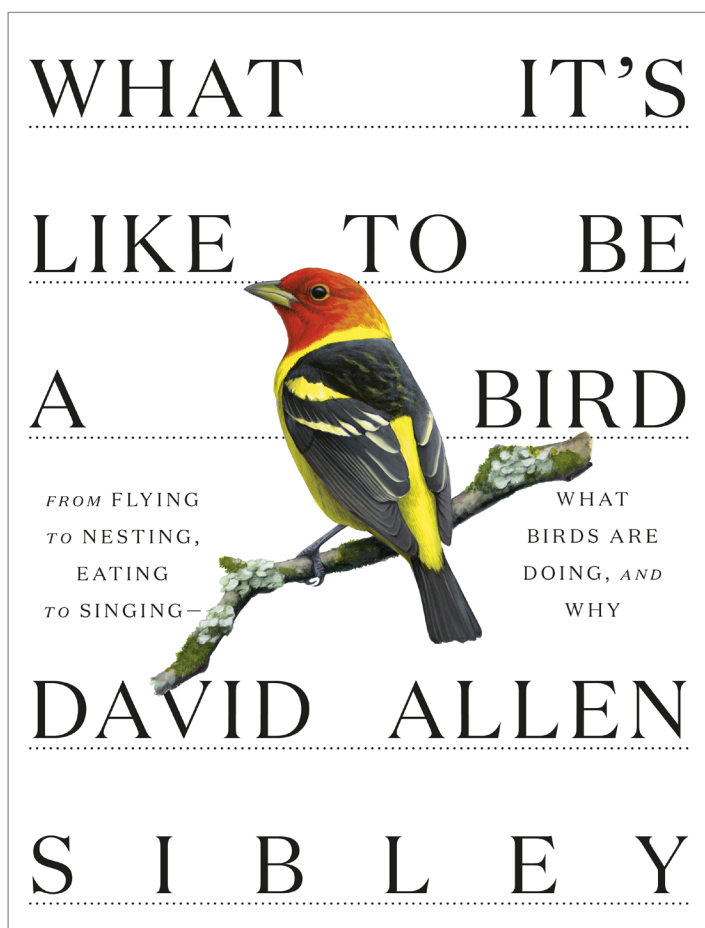
Megan Skrip (Twitter: [@Birdology101](https://twitter.com/Birdology101))

Looking for a new bird book to add to your personal library, or a fun read to while away some hours in quarantine? David Allen Sibley's latest, *What It's Like to Be a Bird* (2020, Alfred A. Knopf), is an informative and visually lavish treat sure to delight birders of all ages and experience. Over 80 life-sized paintings, stunning in detail, adorn alternating pages in the book's main section, alongside hundreds of smaller but equally absorbing drawings, abundant natural history notes, practical advice (such as what to do if a bird strikes your window), and revelations from recent research.

Ornithologists and new birders alike will learn something new from this info-packed volume, as Sibley weaves the latest scientific discoveries into interesting, bite-sized vignettes in a variety of themes. Cross-referenced essays throughout the book detail intriguing aspects of birds' daily lives, from the physiology of breathing and singing to the physics of feather color, behavioral notes about nesting, migration, and more. The book's singular fault is a surprising error in the painting on page 148: fledgling male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks do not look like adult males. However, *What It's Like to Be a Bird* is an otherwise enchanting and fascinating read, whether cover-to-cover in chunks before bedtime or out-of-order at random, depending on your whim. The oversized volume measures a whopping 11.25 inches (28.6 cm) tall and 8.75 inches (22.2 cm) wide, in spectacular service to the opulent illustrations. So, be sure to prepare space on your coffee table or most generous bookshelf.

The book is available in digital or print form at local public libraries in Champaign County. Or you may choose to do what I did, and request a copy from relatives looking for gift ideas. (I subsequently gifted my mom a copy in return.)

Happy reading! 



Birdnotes Listserv

Join our Birdnotes Listserv to get the latest local bird sightings in your inbox! Visit [ChampaignCountyAudubon.org](https://www.champaigncountyaudubon.org). Click “Go Birding” at the top of the page. Click the “Join Birdnotes” button.

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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The Champaign County Audubon Society is a Chapter of National Audubon Society, Inc.



Champaign County Audubon Society
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Thank You to Our Fundraiser Supporters!

Thank you to Ken Dallmier, owner of Prairie Melody Birdseed, and all of Prairie Melody's patrons who participated in our recent fundraiser by selecting CCAS when making a purchase! Because of you, we raised \$195.95 for education funds!



Champaign County Voted YES for Forests!

CCAS officially endorsed the November ballot referendum to support the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. Thank you to everyone who voted YES to successfully approve this much-needed funding! We are excited to see how the CCFPD applies these funds to enhance the experiences of everyone who enjoys our county's forest preserves.

VOTE
YES
for your
Forests

**YOUR health
and well-being
are worth it.**

