

Bird's-Eye View

June
July
1999



The Newsletter of The Peoria Audubon Society...

A Chapter of National Audubon since 1981

Ornithological-Audubon Chapter of The Peoria Academy of Science since 1930

Anatomy of a Spring Bird Count...

by Brenda Onken

When I awoke on Saturday, May 8, there were several birds singing around my house. That was great! It was the annual Spring Count day. I do Woodford County. My job is to count everything that flies. I know that I have a long day ahead of me. Since I live in my designated area, I start counting right away. Here I find my neighborhood birds— Chipping Sparrow, Mourning Doves, Robins and Grackles. I see them every day, but I can't forget to count them.

My sister Vicki accompanies me on the count. With fine tuned eyes and ears, binoculars, scope and a great quantity of food, we're off to find as many birds as we can. We look for birds in trees, bushes, fields, small ponds, lakes and creeks. We walk in the woods and drive down the roads with heads turning from side to side, hoping for a glimpse or a song from a new species. Sometimes we stand, staring at the sky, waiting for a hawk or a vulture to fly over. Kingbirds like to sit on a fence out in a field... Have to watch those fence rows. Kestrels perch on utility wires... Don't forget to look there.

The day started off pretty well. On the way to the park, we heard a lot of commotion. Agitated birds were sounding off and flying in and out of a maple tree. I told my sister that there had to be an owl in that tree. We searched the tree and found an Eastern Screech Owl. The owl tilted its head and stared at us. We were delighted to get this bird on our count. We debated who should have to count and identify the hundreds of swallows that are swooping over the pond. What a challenge!

Listen! What type of vireo was that—a Red-eyed, Solitary, Philadelphia? Was the song slow, fast, high pitched? Yikes!

Better get out the book.

We enter the woods. The trees are alive with birds. We gasped at the two male Scarlet Tanagers chasing each other. Look! A Wood Thrush with nesting material in its bill. Later he sings his beautiful song.

We separate to cover more territory, but as soon as we do, I here a song that I couldn't readily identify. The song is familiar, I've heard it before. With patience, I wait for it to pop up out of the underbrush. There it was, a Hooded Warbler. I yell, "Vic, get over here, look at this beautiful Hooded Warbler!" She came running, but of course it flies off further into the woods. We creep down a deer path and she finally gets to see it. Later we are squatting down, peering at a White-eyed Vireo hiding in a thicket. We marvel at the sight of the Magnolia Warbler and Golden-winged Warbler.

There are times when you stand with your head tilted back, looking at the underside of a tiny warbler, trying to figure out what it is. Other times you are down on your knees, peeking between leaves and stems, trying to get a glimpse at something flitting about. We can't forget about the "little distractions"— ticks and mosquitoes.

We're driving by a field now. Was that a Bobolink that just flew down into that tuft of tall grass? We are pretty sure that it is. Maybe it will fly again and we will know for sure. We wait and no bird. My sister says, "You had better go and flush it out." A few steps towards the tuft of grass and out flies a beautiful male Bobolink. That was a good species to get.

Hours pass and we keep birding. We arrive at one of our good spots. Vicki heads out to view the lake. "Brenda,

there's a Loon out there!" She was very excited. It was her first Loon. I ran back to get the scope. We watched the Loon for several minutes. What a sight! It dove and was rising off of the water while flapping its wings. I have not had a Common Loon on my Spring Bird Count before. WE had an exceptional day, and above all we had fun. Have a safe and enjoyable Summer... Keep birding!

News from Chautauqua...

submitted by Dr. Richard and Sigurd Bjorklund

There was a record number of Bald Eagles during the late winter. On February 4 there were 176 birds (115 adults, 61 immatures). Both eagle nests produced eggs and nestlings were seen as of May 15. On February 11 there was a documented sighting of a White-winged Scoter at Clear Lake. In early March we saw a Red-shouldered Hawk. Also in March, 17 species of ducks were regularly seen with 18 species being seen on March 18. On April 1 there were 131 Bonaparte's Gull setting a new record number for this species. On April 8 2,429 Double-crested Cormorants at Lake Chautauqua.

American White Pelicans appeared in record numbers along the Illinois River Valley this year. On April 8, 1,771 were seen at the north levee between Lake Chautauqua and Clear Lake. The water was low enough to expose mud flats and sand bars, providing prime resting sites. To top off an already exceptional spring, Surf Scoters were seen on April 21-23. This was a new species for the Chautauqua area bringing the number of species utilizing the Refuge and surrounding Sand Ridge State Forest up to 209 species. Mason county has a lot to offer a birder. Make sure you check it out soon!

1999 Spring Count and Birdathon Results

Spring Count Date- Saturday, May 8

Birdathon Date- Saturday, May 15

F=Fulton, M=Mason, P=Peoria, T=Tazwell, W=Woodford, B=Birdathon

Species	F	M	P	T	W	B	Species	F	M	P	T	W	B
Common Loon				1		1	Caspian Tern		2				
Pied-billed Grebe	8	1				2	Common Tern		1				
Double-crested Cormorant	25	102	10		61		Forster's Tern	2	11				
Great Blue Heron	64	95	50	12	23		Black Tern		8				
Great Egret	20	12	10	4			Rock Dove	20	14	52	83	25	
Little Blue Heron							Mourning Dove	71	108	90	37	102	
Cattle Egret	3	5	23		39		Black-billed Cuckoo						
Green Heron	9	5	2		6		Yellow-billed Cuckoo		1	1		1	
Black-crowned Night Heron		1					Eastern Screech Owl		1				2
Mute Swan				5			Great Horned Owl	1		1	2	5	
Canada Goose	364	251	173	77	170		Barred Owl		3	1	1	2	
Wood Duck	21	94	11	6	22		Common Nighthawk		11				2
Green-winged Teal							Whip-poor-will		22	1			
Mallard		31	47	26	71		Chimney swift	24	211	164	59	44	
Blue-winged Teal	63	43	22	1	16		Ruby-throated Hummingbird	5	6	2		5	
Northern Shoveler	4	27	8				Belted Kingfisher	5	2	5	1	4	
Gadwall		12					Red-headed Woodpecker	2	30	14	11	27	
American Wigeon							Red-bellied Woodpecker	22	25	21	20	32	
Ring-necked Duck		2					Downy Woodpecker	11	14	13	6	16	
Lesser Scaup	1	18					Hairy Woodpecker	2	6	2	2	4	
Hooded Merganser	10						Northern Flicker	12	28	15	16	27	
Ruddy Duck	1	5	1				Pileated Woodpecker		3			1	
Turkey Vulture	24	39	18	11	18		Eastern Wood-Pewee	4	3				
Osprey					1		Acadian Flycatcher		1				
Northern Harrier	1						Least Flycatcher		11	2		4	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	1					Eastern Phoebe	11	11	12	1	13	
Cooper's Hawk			2				Great-crested Flycatcher	14	55	10	4	8	
Broad-winged Hawk							Eastern Kingbird	21	29	30	1	16	
Red-tailed Hawk	15	18	6	2	14		Horned Lark	48	27	8	2	62	
American Kestrel	8	2	7	3	7		Purple Martin	62	9	9		24	
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	14			6		Tree Swallow	157	6218	215	141	125	
Wild Turkey		12					No. Rough-winged Swallow	40	414	83	18	86	
Northern Bobwhite	5	5		1	1		Bank Swallow	39	892	7		18	
Virginia Rail		1					Cliff Swallow	190	142				
Sora		4					Barn Swallow	161	747	318	55	1202	
American Coot	10	8	10	1	2		Blue Jay	88	235	74	45	60	
American Golden Plover			3				American Crow	53	83	76	20	69	
Semipalmated Plover	3	4					Black-capped Chickadee	13	21	57	21	32	
Killdeer	32	40	28	16	30		Tufted Titmouse	21	30	20	9	40	
Greater Yellowlegs		4					White-breasted Nuthatch	5	15	7	3	16	
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	6	2				Brown Creeper			1		2	
Solitary Sandpiper	2	2	7		10		Carolina Wren	4	9			2	
Spotted Sandpiper	2	18	26		3		House Wren	69	83	65	41	44	
Semipalmated Sandpiper		48	7				Sedge Wren	1					
Least Sandpiper	27	20	5				Marsh Wren		2				
White-rumped Sandpiper		1					Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	6	4		5	
Pectoral Sandpiper	2	3					Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	5	12	24	1	11	
Dunlin		1					Eastern Bluebird	39	24	33	6	42	
Short-billed Dowitcher	5	16					Veery	1	4			1	
Common Snipe	1	1	2				Gray-cheeked Thrush	4	3			3	
Wilson's Phalarope		6					Swainson's Thrush	1	30	34	3	8	
Ring-billed Gull	33	19	34	15	16		Hermit Thrush		2	2		1	
Herring Gull		4					Wood Thrush	3	29	6	3	5	

1999 Spring Count and Birdathon Results

Spring Count Date Saturday, May 8

Birdathon Date Saturday, May 15

F=Fulton, M=Mason, P=Peoria, T=Tazwell, W=Woodford, B=Birdathon

Species	F	M	P	T	W	B
American Robin	313	243	593	185	460	
Gray Catbird	14	52	23	6	26	
Northern Mockingbird	2	6		1	4	
Brown Thrasher	19	53	23	12	32	
American Pipit					22	
Cedar Waxwing						
European Starling	183	251	767	327	610	
White-eyed Vireo		1	1		1	
Bell's Vireo	1					
Blue-headed Vireo	2	1	1	2	1	
Yellow-throated Vireo		6	4		7	
Warbling Vireo	39	17	22	2	26	
Philadelphia Vireo		1				
Red-eyed Vireo	1	13	5	2	14	
Blue-winged Warbler		2		1		
Golden-winged Warbler		10	4		1	
Tennessee Warbler	13	91	31		52	
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	1				
Nashville Warbler		85	14	8	21	
Northern Parula	3	14	7		3	
Yellow Warbler	14	17	45	6	18	
Chestnut-sided Warbler		6	7		5	
Magnolia Warbler		7	1	5	3	
Cape May Warbler		5			1	
Yellow-rumped Warbler	20	199	35	49	61	
Black-throated Green Warbler		26	8	4	8	
Blackburnian Warbler		9		1	3	
Yellow-throated Warbler		1				
Palm Warbler		39	21	6	30	
Bay-breasted Warbler		3			1	
Blackpoll Warbler	1	12	2		3	
Cerulean Warbler		2				
Black-and-white Warbler	1	13	4	3	6	
American Redstart	1	20	1	1	2	
Prothonotary Warbler		18				
Worm-eating Warbler						
Ovenbird		18	8	1	3	
Northern Waterthrush	1	19	5		10	
Louisiana Waterthrush	2	2	3	1		
Kentucky Warbler		4				
Mourning Warbler			1			
Common Yellowthroat	46	45	20	5	37	
Hooded Warbler		1	3		1	
Wilson's Warbler				1	3	
Yellow-breasted Chat		2	1			
Summer Tanager	1	2	1		4	
Scarlet Tanager	2	25	7		3	
Northern Cardinal	58	82	121	44	95	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	32	123	27	7	30	
Indigo Bunting	52	66	28	15	36	
Dickcissel	17	49			8	
Eastern Towhee	13	45	6	2	16	
Chipping Sparrow	53	70	74	13	103	

Species	F	M	P	T	W	B
Field Sparrow	13	41	4	4	38	
Clay-colored Sparrow						
Vesper Sparrow	3	2			6	
Lark Sparrow	8	17	2		1	
Savannah Sparrow	4	2	1		2	
Grasshopper Sparrow	6	18			12	
Song Sparrow	27	26	46	5	41	
Lincoln's Sparrow		1			1	
Swamp Sparrow	4	3			4	
White-throated Sparrow	8	61	98		11	
White-crowned Sparrow	44	33	153	16	124	
Bobolink	13				10	
Red-winged Blackbird	584	701	1064	428	540	
Eastern Meadowlark	58	55	28	15	75	
Western Meadowlark	10	1	1		6	
Common Grackle	227	281	796	244	454	
Brown-headed Cowbird	69	187	101	7	104	
Orchard Oriole	3	7	2		3	
Baltimore Oriole	81	115	62	13	91	
House Finch	3	13	36	9	61	
American Goldfinch	231	78	232	40	203	
House Sparrow	211	153	625	146	362	
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	10	57				
American Tree Sparrow	1					
Rusty Blackbird			1			
LeConte's Sparrow			2			
Bald Eagle		4				
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1					
American Tree Sparrow	1					
Snowy Egret	2					
Stilt Sandpiper		3				
Sandhill Crane						
Total Number of Birds	4527	14291	7171	2430	6636	n.a.
Total Number of Species	121	161	116	81	124	145

THANK YOU DONORS!!!

Peoria Audubon would like to thank all donors to the Birdathon. It was an exceptional day, with three teams in the field. All together we saw 145 species! If you have made a pledge, please submit your payment to the treasurer. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds will go to Partners in Flight, an international organization dedicated to the preservation of neotropical migratory bird species. The remaining funds will remain with Peoria Audubon and will assist with costs associated with programs, educational outreach, and publications. Your donations are most appreciated.

THANK YOU COUNTERS!!!

This years birdcount documented 181 species of birds in the 5 county area on May 8! Central Illinois with its various habitats is one of the best places to bird anywhere! Thanks go out to all of the birders in the region for making the Spring Count a success.

Upcoming Meetings...

No Membership Meetings in June, July and August. See you in September!

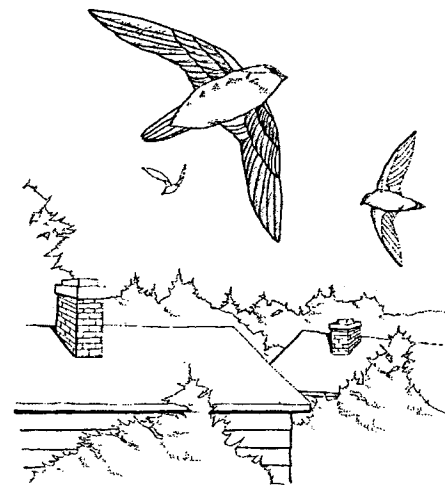
Wednesday, September 8, 7:00 PM, Forest Park Nature Center
Membership Meeting, Program to be announced

Wednesday, October 13, 7:00 PM, Forest Park Nature Center
Membership Meeting, Program to be announced

Wednesday, November 10, 7:00 PM, Forest Park Nature Center
Membership Meeting, Program to be announced

Wednesday, December 8, 7:00 PM, Forest Park Nature Center
Members Night... Bring your slides to share

Wednesday, January 12, 1999, 6:30 PM, Forest Park Nature Center
Members Potluck... Bring a table service and a dish to share.



The Bird's Eye View is published bimonthly by Peoria Audubon.

Layout and Editing by Mike Miller

Deadline for submissions to next issue: **July 15.**

Send submissions to:

Birds Eye View c/o Mike Miller

Forest Park Nature Center

5809 Forest Park Drive

Peoria IL 61614

email rmiller3@ix.netcom.com

FAX (309) 686-8820

Peoria Audubon Society
677 E High Point Terr
Peoria IL 61614

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NUMBER 875
PEORIA, ILLINOIS

Peoria Audubon Board

Officers

Rick Fox – President
Mike Miller – Vice President
Greg Brown – Secretary
Greet Princen – Treasurer
Tracy Fox – Conservation

Board

Gary Garman 99/00
Emiko Yang 99/00
Luann Elwood 99/00
Jane Grzanich 98/99
Maury Brucker 98/99
Brenda Onken 98/99