

Bird's-eye View



SUMMER 2012

Mark your calendars!
BIRDING FIELD TRIP
SAT. AUG. 18, 2012

Newsletter of The Peoria Audubon Society. . . Chapter of National Audubon since 1981

Chapter of The Peoria Academy of Science since 1930

www.peoriaaudubon.org

Contact the Peoria Audubon Society at audubon@peoriaaudubon.org

Peoria Audubon meets at 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May, at the Forest Park Nature Center (FPNC). It's a relaxed, friendly evening with an interesting presentation followed by refreshments. Free and open to the public.

These are just a few of the upcoming events listed at www.peoriaaudubon.org/calendar

Sat. Aug. 18, 2012, 7 AM - 4 PM **Field Trip: Birding the Illinois River**

Catch the peak of shorebird migration with this field trip led by Maury Brucker, of Peoria Audubon Society, and Mike Miller, of the Peoria Park District. Destination includes Emiquon, Lake Chautauqua, Rice lake, Banner Marsh and other great birding spots along the Illinois River south of Peoria.

Trip includes transportation in a Park District, 15-passenger van and a catered lunch. Pre-registration required. Register early as this trip fills up fast. Best for 12 and up. Forest Park Nature Center and/or Peoria Audubon Members receive a \$5 discount. Call Peoria Park District at 686-3360 for more info and registration. Fee: \$35.



Sat. Aug. 25, 2012, 9 AM - Noon **Hummingbird Festival at FPNC**

Vernon Kleen from Springfield will demonstrate hummingbird banding and discuss the fascinating world of hummingbirds. You will have a chance to feel the heartbeat of a hummingbird and "adopt" one of these beautiful flyers with a donation to the Illinois Audubon habitat acquisition fund. This free event is a come-as-you-please activity. Jointly sponsored by Forest Park Nature Center and Illinois Audubon. Fee: FREE, donations greatly appreciated

Sat. Sept. 8, 2012, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM **Hennepin Hopper - Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve Field Trip**

Maury Brucker will lead a trip northward to the lakes at Hennepin-Hopper, where a 2600-acre refuge was created with a complex of restored lakes, wetlands, and prairie. On the return leg, everyone will stop at a Hopewell Hill Prairies Nature Preserve. Maury indicated that the group may also stop for sandwiches on the return trip.

Be at the Forest Park Nature Center at 9:00 AM to go on the trip. No need to call ahead, but be there promptly at 9:00 AM to go. Contact Maury at 309-691-5213 for more information.

Wed. Sept. 12, 2012 7PM **Birding in SE Alaska and the Tongass Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC**

James Fenner, a junior at Knox College in Galesburg, will present "Alaska: Forests, Fisheries and the Wilderness." As part of his college curriculum, James completed an 85 mile kayak voyage in southeast Alaska this past summer, traversing the remote waterways of the Tongass National Forest and the surrounding wilderness area. The presentation will include numerous photos of the experience, including a trip to a nesting seabird colony on St. Lazaria Island.

September 21-22, 2012 **Illinois Audubon 2012 Annual Meeting & Fall Gathering**

Lincoln Land Community College
Trutter Center, Springfield, Illinois

Wed. Oct. 10, 2012 7PM **Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC**

Program to be announced.

Wed. Nov. 14, 2012, 7 PM **Monthly Membership Meeting at FPNC**

Program to be announced.

A Note from our President

Lights at Night - Value and Harm *by Dennis Endicott*

A couple of weeks ago, our local PBS station aired a POV documentary, "The City Dark." The film followed the journey of Ian Cheney, who spent his childhood in rural Maine, where he developed a passion in amateur astronomy. But when Ian moved to New York City, the difference between light and dark was upended.

The film then follows Cheney's journey to discover the surprising and alarming costs of light pollution and the disappearance of the night sky. But astronomers are far from the only ones affected by the disappearance of the nighttime sky.

Birds, bats and other migratory wildlife use several clues in their (mostly) twice yearly journeys but starlight is an important one, and extensive night glow can be highly disruptive to the celestial clues these migrants track. "Millions of birds, evolved to navigate by the stars, crash into brightly-lit city buildings each year during migration season" And, navigation is not the only issue. With large buildings in urban areas, bird collisions that were caused in part by attraction or confusion of building lights. In Chicago, a group of volunteers from Chicago Audubon, the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors "<http://www.birdmonitors.net>", has taken action to help reduce bird collisions, caused in part by excessive and inappropriate lighting. Volunteers rescue injured migratory birds and collaborate with building management and architects to develop solutions that help prevent bird collisions.

So, what can be done to help? First, take steps to minimize light that reflects upwards. Instead, use specially designed reflectors that cause light to focus downward. Purchasing and using light According to the International Dark Sky Association, we waste 22,000 gigawatt-hours

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FPNC = Forest Park Nature Center,
5809 N. Forest Park Drive, Peoria Heights

This Newsletter and an Archive of past newsletters are available on the website:
www.peoriaaudubon.org

a year on ineffective and unneeded lighting. At 10 cents per kilowatt hour, this amounts to \$2.2 billion wasted annually.

With outdoor lights for roads, business and outside your home, use only lights that have a shield on top, so that all beams are directed downward.

Several cities, including Chicago have adopted "Lights Out" programs whereby many tall buildings voluntarily turn off their office lights during migration, thereby minimizing collision danger as well as lessening the confusion factor to which birds and bats are prone. According to Judy Pollock, Director of Bird Conservation for the Audubon Chicago Region:

Why are tall buildings a trap for migrant birds?

It is thought that the lights on tall buildings confuse the navigation systems of birds unlucky enough to have these buildings in their flight path. They circle the buildings repeatedly and die of exhaustion or by colliding with the building.

What kind of birds are they?

Over 250 species migrate through Chicago, about 5 million individuals in all. Many small songbirds such as warblers, thrushes, and tanagers migrate at night. Many birds killed at Loop buildings are small migrants from the tropics – some of which are declining steeply in numbers.

What other hazards do Chicago Loop buildings pose for birds?

Reflective windows and lighted atria are significant sources of bird mortality. Birds may be attracted to reflected trees or sky, or try to fly through glass to indoor vegetation.

In Peoria, city leaders should take steps to develop effective ordinances to alleviate light pollution and promote a dark sky. Studies indicate that not only would this be the right thing to do, but by having the light focused where it does the most good, money could be saved by having lower energy bills with reduced wattage lighting.



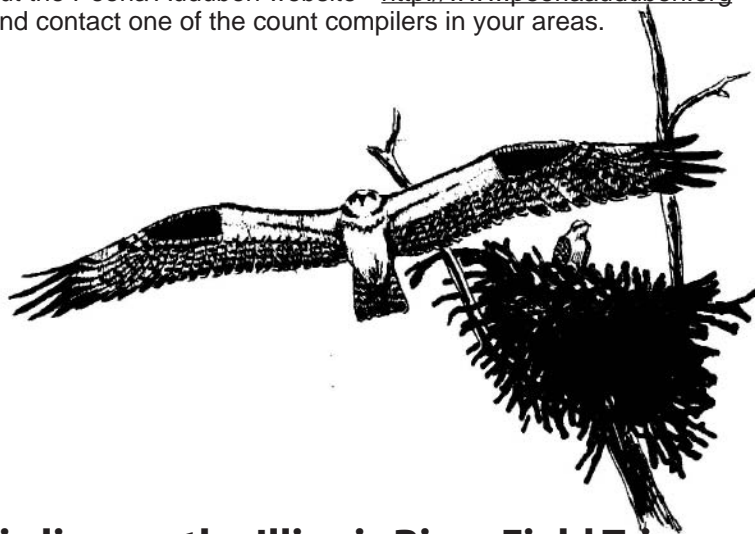
Two photos of the Chicago skyline taken before and after 11 pm on the same fall night in 2003. (Photo Credit: Eric Fogleman).

Spring Bird Count Re-Cap

by Mike Miller

Every year, birders from across Illinois organize county-wide spring bird counts. Peoria Audubon members take part in counts in Tazewell, Woodford, Mason, Fulton and Peoria Counties. This year, the count took place on Saturday, May 5. In Peoria County, we had three teams covering the county, and they reported seeing a total of 128 species of birds. It was excellent birding weather, and the early spring had several birds arriving ahead of their usual schedule. A few notable sightings were a Osprey at Banner Marsh, a Peregrine Falcon near the McClugage Bridge, and a Prairie Warbler in northern Peoria County.

Spring Bird Counts are an important tool for understanding bird migratory patterns. Other counts such as the Breeding Bird Survey that takes place in the Summer focus on nesting range, while Christmas Bird Counts focus on wintering range. Bird Counts are one of the largest citizen scientist based surveys. We are always looking for new people to become involved in both the Spring Count and Christmas Bird Counts. For a listing of count organizers, check out the Peoria Audubon website "<http://www.peoriaaudubon.org>" and contact one of the count compilers in your areas.



Birding on the Illinois River Field Trip Sat., Aug. 18, 2012, 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM

by Dennis Endicott

Maury Brucker of Peoria Audubon and Mike Miller of the Peoria Park District join forces to host a birding trip along the Illinois River south of Peoria. Timing is set to capture the peak migration of shorebirds; known for their very long distance migrations. According to Maury, as a group, shorebirds make up the farthest traveled migrants of the different groups of birds. Many of them start in the arctic tundra and continue migrating toward the southernmost points of South America.

Join us for the fall migration, where the focus will be shorebirds! The trip includes transportation and lunch. Fee for Peoria Audubon and Forest Park Nature Center members is \$30/person. Call the Nature Center at (309)686-3360 to make your reservation.



The photo to left is a Solitary Sandpiper. The picture was taken by Dennis Endicott on last years fall migration field trip. A photo gallery of previous years trips is viewable at www.peoriaaudubon.org.

Check out the pictures of what you may see on this years trip.



Alaska: Forests, Fisheries and the Wilderness

Wed., Sept. 12, 2012, 7:00 PM at Forest Park Nature Center

James Fenner, a junior at Knox College in Galesburg, will present "Alaska: Forests, Fisheries and the Wilderness." Before traveling to southeast Alaska, James and his class colleagues prepared by taking a 10-week Spring Term class on the Knox campus with Nic Mink, visiting Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies.

James and his class have now kayaked over 100 nautical miles, starting from Sitka, Alaska in and around the surrounding wilderness to False Island. They have seen numerous species of wildlife, including bears, killer whales and humpback whales. They have endured very wet conditions, extreme amounts of rain (it is a rainforest), and cold temperatures with highs in the 50's, even though it is July. He has hiked a 14 mile trek to the top of Mt. Edgecumbe, and peered into a dormant volcano.

After the class ends, James will assist research projects while volunteering on St Lazaria Island, approximately 20 miles off the Sitka coast. St Lazaria is home to approximately half a million nesting seabirds! Because several of the species nest in burrows, the general public is not allowed on St Lazaria.

The most familiar seabirds nest openly on cliffs and fly to and from those cliffs during the day. Few people know that a "night shift" of seabirds exists. Fewer still see them nesting! Let your eyes adjust to the darkness on St. Lazaria and you will spot a storm-petrel or auklet tumbling out of the air after it crashes into tree branches. The small bird patters over the forest floor until it finds a hole in the ground - its burrow entrance - where deep inside its partner is sitting on an egg or a chick awaits food.

Some of the common birds of St. Lazaria are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Fork-tailed storm-petrels | Thick-billed murres |
| Leach's storm-petrels | Tufted puffins |
| Pelagic cormorants | Rhinoceros auklets |
| Glaucous-winged gulls | Ancient murrelets |
| Pigeon guillemots | Cassin's auklets |
| Common murres | |

Please join us for our September meeting to see some photos of this amazing trip and hear more of the details from James.

Reina Galvan kayaks through the Inside Passage of Southeast Alaska



Hummingbird Festival

**Sat., Aug. 25, 2012, 9:00 PM - Noon
Forest Park Nature Center**

The hummingbird festival offers an up close view of these amazing, tiny little birds as Vernon Kleen, Master Permit Bander and member of the IAS Board of Directors, captures and bands the birds during the festival.

Get an upclose and personal experience while watching a hummingbird banding. Learn about these amazing migrants and how to attract them to your yard.

Attendees at IAS Hummingbird Festivals "adopt" hummingbirds by making a \$5 donation to the Illinois Audubon Society's land acquisition fund; this fund is earmarked for the protection of Illinois wildlife habitat. Donors will receive an attractive, signed certificate, and will be notified if their bird is ever recaptured.



Audubon Adventures

by Deb Roe

Last Newsletter we solicited sponsors for Audubon Adventures. We had seven generous people step up and sponsor a classroom. But we still need **17 MORE** sponsors.

Information about the program is in last month's newsletter and online here:
<http://education.audubon.org/audubon-adventures>

Peoria Audubon society is a 501c(3) corporation, so sponsorships are tax deductible.

If you would like to sponsor a classroom, please clip the coupon below and send it, along with a check written out to Peoria Audubon Society for \$50, to Peoria Audubon Society, 677 E. High Pt. Terrace, Peoria, IL 61614.

**2012 Audubon Adventures
Classroom Sponsor**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

*Send \$50 to Peoria Audubon Society,
677 E. High Pt. Terrace, Peoria, IL 61614*

Lights at Night!

Inside:

When does your annual membership expire?
Check the date on your mailing label

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Conservation

★ RESTORE Act Passes!

On July 6th, President Obama signed into law a bill that included the critically important RESTORE Act, directing 80 percent of the Clean Water Act penalties that are owed by BP to the Gulf. With that stroke of the pen, the biggest paycheck for conservation ever became a reality. This was a truly heroic effort by all of Audubon—staff, chapters, activists and state offices have worked doggedly to deliver this success story for almost two years.

Bringing in as much as \$20 billion in funds for Gulf restoration and recovery, here's what it means for birds, habitat, and people:

Each of the five Gulf States will have the financial capacity to begin and complete restoration projects that have long been planned, but underfunded.

Thousands of acres of lost habitat for birds and other wildlife in the region will be restored, repaired or replaced.

Much needed re-engineering of the Mississippi River Basin will get a kick start—allowing that ecosystem to begin to rebuild itself, and helping to reverse the disappearance of Louisiana coastal wetlands.

Restoration projects large and small, spanning the entire coast of the Gulf of Mexico from the barrier islands of Texas to the Florida Everglades, will receive essential support.

As in any bill that goes to a House-Senate conference, there were compromises. Unfortunately, the visionary funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the Senate version of the bill got left on the cutting-room floor. That funding is the primary driver of land acquisition for Parks, Refuges and Forests in America and we fought hard to keep it in the final legislation and came up short. On the other hand, we're pleased that a provision in the House version of the bill that would have expedited construction of the Keystone XL pipeline also was excluded.

In the final analysis, we're thrilled to be delivering billions of dollars of desperately-needed investment in one of America's most biologically rich regions that is critical to migratory birds. Over the next months and years, Audubon will work with the Federal-State task force set up by the RESTORE Act to propose and implement restoration projects across the entire Gulf Coast. This is truly a great victory for conservation and we thank every part of the Audubon family for two years of hard work to this great common cause.

