



# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Newsletter of The Peoria Audubon Society

Chapter of National Audubon since 1981  
 Chapter of The Peoria Academy of Science since 1930  
 Affiliate of Illinois Audubon



[PEORIAAUDUBON.ORG](http://PEORIAAUDUBON.ORG)

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Peoria Audubon Society formed in 1930 to promote appreciation and conservation for birds within the Peoria region. We are a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting birds through education, advocacy, and sanctuary initiatives. We strive to be inclusive, welcoming, and judgment-free to all.

## Become a Member!

Any amount donated provides you with a membership. This can be either paid in cash or through [PayPal](#). Peoria Audubon is incorporated in the State of Illinois with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, making all charitable contributions tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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SUMMER Tanager TAWNY OAKS 5/2/2026  
 PHOTO BY: VIC HARTING

## SUMMER SOLSTICE

Summer has officially arrived and with it comes a reminder to flourish in the growth and bounty around us. Visit your community gardens and green spaces this season to help show support to all the lovely volunteers that help maintain these spaces for our local biodiversity and to support our fellow community members. While the hustle of spring migration has passed, remember to slow down and appreciate all the bird songs that stay with us through the long summer days and nights. The Nighthawk's

peent overhead after a long day is one of the most beloved sounds to wind down to. If some indoor activities are in order during these hot, summer days- consider picking up some books! It's never too late to join the Peoria Public Library Summer reading program (June 1- July 11) and have a chance to win some prizes!  
 -Vic Harting

My recommended summer book pick:  
*Forest Euphoria: The Abounding Queerness of Nature*



### Monthly Meetings Free and Open to Public

Peoria Audubon Society Monthly Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday September-May held at Forest Park Nature Center and streamed via Zoom



PLEASE JOIN US

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### \* Casual Bird Outings!

Dates and locations to be determined

Come join us in some casual birding. This is an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy some birds! Inclusive to all and welcome to all skill levels!

Monthly bird outings will be scheduled throughout the season depending on weather. Check our social media or website for updates on scheduled dates and locations!

### \* The Lost Birds Musical Performance

July 26, 2026 3:30 PM

First Federated Church 3601 N Sheridan Rd, Peoria, IL

*The Lost Birds* is a musical memorial to bird species driven to extinction by humankind. Sweeping and elegiac, it's a haunting tribute to those soaring flocks that once filled our skies, but whose songs have since been silenced. It's a celebration of their feathered beauty: their symbolism as messengers of hope, peace, and renewal. But it's also a warning about our own tenuous existence on the planet: that the fate that befell these once soaring flocks foreshadows our own extinction. There is a pre-performance lecture included.

### \* **Bioblitz Bird Walk**

August 29, 2026 9:00-10:30AM

Tawny Oaks Field Station



The forests and prairies of Peoria are waiting to be discovered. Join our naturalists on a guided hike and explore the wonders of nature. Themes vary by season and location.

Birds are an extremely diverse group of animals! Join us for a peaceful morning stroll through the woods to find these feathered friends as we kick off our first annual BioBlitz Event. Please register for this program at no charge on the [park district website](#) or call Forest Park at [309-686-3360](tel:309-686-3360).

## Peoria Park District Forest Park Nature Center Bioblitz



Saturday August 29<sup>th</sup> 2026

9:30 AM-9:30 PM

Calling all photographers and citizen scientists! Forest Park Nature Center is performing a bioblitz on August 29<sup>th</sup>. A bioblitz covers a 24 hour span of time where experts and volunteers come out and record as many species as they can in a certain area. You don't have to be an expert to participate- just have a love for nature, learning, and exploring. Feel free to drop in any time between 9:30 AM and 9:30 PM to help document species within Forest Park. This can be photos or audio recordings. Please help add observations on the iNaturalist website or app to help!

**iNaturalist**

**Discover Nature Around You**

With the iNaturalist app, you can easily identify the species around you, anywhere in the world. The photos you take and share also help protect nature!

Great Blue Heron  
*Ardea herodias*

Pond Slider  
*Trachemys scripta*

**DOWNLOAD THE iNATURALIST APP**

Download the App | Snap Photos | Learn about Species | Contribute to Science

Learn more about nature while also helping to protect it with iNaturalist.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### \* Monthly Meeting

September 9, 2026 7:00 PM

Forest Park Nature Center & streamed on Zoom

Dr. Anant Deshwal, Professor of Biology, from Bradley University will provide an update on his local bird migration research. He is using a network of over 2400 Motus Towers, which are located throughout the Midwest; including North and South America. These Motus locations provide advanced telemetry for tracking individual birds that have been tagged with tiny RF ID (Radio Frequency Identification) chips. The Peoria Audubon Society provided funding for a local Motus Tower that is being used in bird migration research programs.



### \* Monthly Meeting

October 14, 2026 7:00 PM

Forest Park Nature Center & streamed on Zoom

Join Given Harper to learn about the Grand Prairie Bird Alliance (GPBA) Purple Martin Initiative, in which martin nest boxes and gourds have been placed at locations in Bloomington/Normal and McLean County, IL. The Purple Martin is the largest swallow species in North America, and the declining eastern population is almost entirely dependent on human-provided nest boxes. Given Harper, a GPBA board member and a retired avian ecologist, will discuss this exciting project.

**Want to see more events? Looking for volunteers to help lead field trips, education, and volunteer opportunities.**

**Reach out to [peoriaaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:peoriaaudubon@gmail.com)**

## Native Plant Spotlight



### Downy Serviceberry

*Amelanchier arborea*

If you're looking for a native tree to add life and color to your yard, consider the Downy Serviceberry. Also known as Juneberries, these delicious small red berries are an excellent summer treat for you and the birds! It stays relatively small at around 15-25 feet. This tree also provides beautiful white flowers in spring and lovely fall foliage.

## Summer Bird Spotlight



### Eastern Wood-Pewee

*Contopus virens*

Drab grayish-brown flycatcher found in forested areas and edges. Nondescript overall with two pale wingbars; bill usually shows extensive orange on lower mandible. Note very long wings and larger size than Empidonax flycatchers. Typically seen on a high perch, occasionally sallying out to snatch an insect. Listen for clear whistled tones, especially the distinctive "PEE-a-weeEEE!" song.

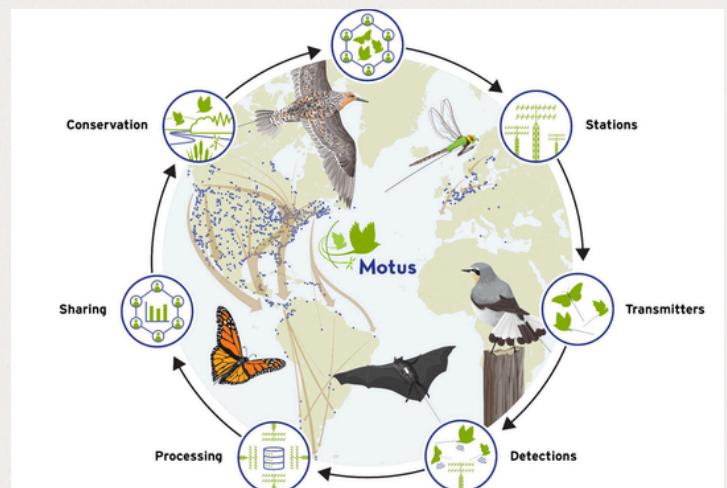
## PEORIA AUDUBON FUNDS LOCAL MOTUS TOWER BY DENNIS ENDICOTT

Have you ever wondered about why billions of birds fly thousands of miles, sometimes crossing continents, and tracing ancient routes that shape the rhythm of entire ecosystems? The simplistic answer is that, “birds are just following their food.” This is true, but bird migration takes in a lot of other factors and details. Understanding these details reveals the delicate balance of climate, habitat, food availability, and even the birds’ survival. This why research to monitor bird migration reaches far beyond the study of birds.

Studying bird migration trends is vital for protecting biodiversity, responding to climate change, guiding conservation policy, and sustaining ecosystem services. It’s a window into the health of the planet and a foundation for safeguarding the interconnected web of life.

This spring, Peoria Audubon Society took a step toward supporting bird migration research from a local perspective. In conjunction with Dr. Anant Deshwal, Professor of Biology at Bradley University, Peoria Audubon provided the funding to deploy a Motus Tower in Peoria County.

What is Motus? “Motus is an international collaborative research network that uses automated radio telemetry to track the movement and behavior of small animals, like birds, bats, and insects.” Motus uses digitally coded radio tags that emit signals that are detectable at ranges of up to 12-miles. With an international network of over 2300 Motus tower receiver stations, the movement and migration of individually tagged birds (and even bats and large insects, such as the Monarch butterfly) can be monitored. Some of the specialized models of radio tags can be as small as 0.15 grams. And, the tags are made such that each emits a slightly different digital radio signal allowing individual animals to be tracked by the network of Motus receiver towers.



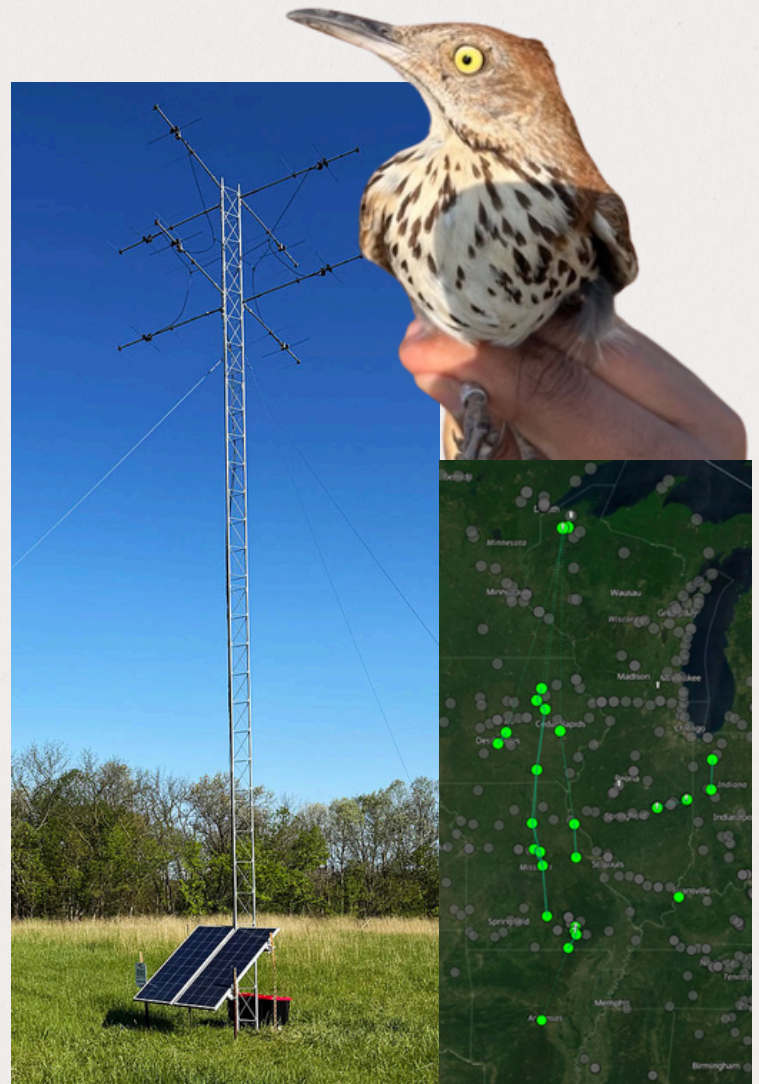
## PEORIA AUDUBON FUNDS LOCAL MOTUS TOWER- CONTINUED

Brown Thrashers are a bird species, that population studies show, are declining at a rapid rate. According to Dr. Deshwal, climate change, changes in land-cover patterns, and decline in insect populations are often attributed as primary drivers of the decline in Brown Thrashers. "But the mechanism driving the decline is still unknown. Climate change and decline is not only causing decline in Brown Thrashers but also changing their migratory behavior."

Thus, in this local research study, Dr. Deshwal, "aims to quantify the mechanism through which insect decline, and climate change are affecting migration of Brown Thrashers. To do so, he will examine their effects on the ecological drivers for partial migrants, such as arrival times and foraging opportunities." Birds will be tagged in the Midwest to track their movement patterns, and migration for both spring and fall migration. The network of Motus towers - including the local 30-foot Motus tower installed at Jubilee College State Park - will be used to provide the data needed to quantify the mechanism through which insect decline and climate change are affecting their migratory behavior.

On September 9, at Forest Park Nature Center, Dr. Deshwal will be providing us an update on his local bird migration research.

Each tower added to the Motus network, not only collects data for local research projects, but also detects and records any tagged bird or bat flying within range during its migration. This contributes valuable information to numerous studies across the continent.



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## RARE BIRDS SPOTTED RECENTLY BY PETE FENNER

As was predicted in the last newsletter, a Western Kingbird did indeed show up in Marshall County in May (found by me)! Per eBird, this was the first time this species had been found in Marshall County. Just a couple hours later, after Woodford County birder Ted Hartzler went to see this bird, he found another one in Marshall Co about 5 miles away! That bird stayed around for a few more days, and showed nicely for birders from the St. Louis and Chicago area who traveled to see it. Considerably out of their normal breeding range, Western Kingbirds have nested in Mason County south of Havana as well for the past several years!

In April, Jen Fenner spotted a Cinnamon Teal in a fluddle southwest of El Paso, IL. Birders from all over the state traveled to the El Paso area to see it, and it complied nicely for a few days. An Eared Grebe was also there, and later both a Marbled Godwit and a Hudsonian Godwit were spotted there on different days.

Although a little out of our area, in Bloomington-Normal, a Western Tanager and a Vermilion Flycatcher made appearances.

### WHAT RARITY COULD BE NEXT?

What is another rarity that could stop by our area this summer? Who knows! But I'll just guess it could be a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Last summer, one was seen in the Farmington area. This is a spectacular bird with a very long tail, much more common southwest of our area, but sometimes wanders our way. I'll include a photo so you will know what to look for. Good birding!



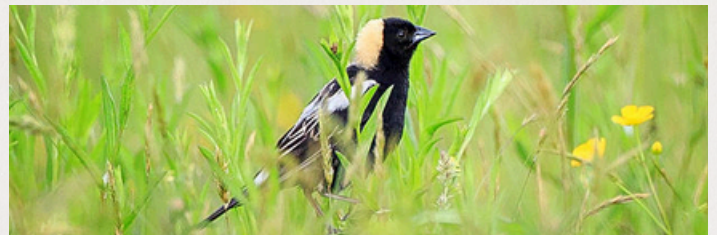
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## MAYBE NOT SO MUCH MOWING! BY CINDY STALEY

Are you interested in helping nesting birds and pollinators? If you have grassy or weedy parcels of half an acre or more, consider pausing mowing them between April 1 and July 15th. This is especially important if you or your neighborhood birders have seen or heard the return of grassland nesting bird species there. Many species are ground nesters, such as many Sparrow species, Quail, Thrushes, and shorebirds, such as the familiar Killdeer. Let's just specifically consider Bobolinks and Eastern Meadowlarks. The 'Conservation Status' of Bobolinks listed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is 'Least Concern' but the status of the Eastern Meadowlark is 'Common Bird in Steep Decline' - meaning their population has declined at least 50% in the last 50 years. If you don't have such a parcel, do you know someone who does? If so, please consider sharing this with them and ask if they would consider a similar pause in mowing? Another good reason would be to preserve potential breeding American Woodcock habitat (Low Concern). They love the grassy areas near the woods, and if present would be seen performing their elaborate mating flights from late March into mid-April in those areas.

Many people have become familiar with Woodcock because their strange feeding behavior has become popular on social media. Creating trails around unmown lawns, planting native grasses, shrubs and trees, reducing use of pesticides are some other efforts individuals can do to enhance the natural environment. As many of us feel powerless to impact climate change, these simple conservation ideas may feel doable. The 2019 publication of 3 Billion Birds Gone by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology details the decline in bird populations and encourages helping not only the birds under the most severe threat but also serve to maintain the populations of low and least concern birds as well. As with many sustainable things, pausing mowing can not only be good for birds, but also good for your personal financial budgets. With gas prices currently well above \$4 per gallon, this is mutually beneficial! Thank you for your time to read about these conservation ideas and for your consideration!



## Watch out for Invasive Wild Parsnip!

Our area has quite a lot of Wild Parsnip, and you should get to know how to identify it. Be careful! It can cause “phytophotodermatitis”. This causes your skin to erupt with blisters and itchy, burning rashes if you come into contact with the plant chemicals (in this case, parsnip sap) and then are exposed to sunlight. You can be certain you don’t want phytophotodermatitis!

To learn more about identifying, avoiding, and/or safely removing this invasive: click [here](#).



WILD PARSNIP. IMAGE BY LESLIE J. MEHRHOFF, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, VIA BUGWOOD.ORG

## CONSERVATION @ HOME BY VIC HARTING

Are you looking to attract more birds and biodiversity to your home? Are you looking for opportunities to do more for the environment from your own backyard? [Conservation@Home](#) with the Illinois Extension is a local program that helps certify properties that exhibit environmentally sound landscape practices.

If you need help figuring out which native plants will work in a specific area, consider utilizing the website:

[illinoispollinators.org](http://illinoispollinators.org). There are helpful filters for bloom time, color, height, soil type, and sunlight.

By planting more native plants, you can provide necessary food to support our local ecosystems. There is a helpful [criteria](#) list that can help guide you on your journey to conservation @ home.

Additional ideas include:


- water feature/bird bath
- compost heap/leave the leaves
- rain barrel
- removal/control of invasive species
- native trees/shrubs
- minimal use of pesticides

Gardening questions? Contact the Master Gardener/Naturalist [Help Desk](#).



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# NEW EBIRD HOTSPOT FEATURE BY PETE FENNER

Have you ever arrived at a birding hotspot and wondered how people find birds there? Or, have you wondered where you should park? Do you need a scope, or is there a restroom there? Such questions are common when birders explore new areas.

Once, I arrived at a hotspot with over 200 species seen, and it was surrounded by a fence and no trespassing signs. I later found out that owners are fine with birders so it was routine to jump the fence and find all those birds! Cornell has recently made some excellent enhancements to eBird hotspot information to help with that situation.

The enhancement is called Hotspot Wiki. A wiki is defined as a collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it. And, all of us can suggest content or edit what may be there already. Most suggestions will then be approved by a hotspot reviewer.

It is probably easy to figure out on your own, but if you search for and navigate to a hotspot, you should click on "About". There you will see "Plan Your Visit" (what to know before you go), "How to Bird Here" (what to do when you arrive), and "About This Place" (background information). There are also a series of yes/no check boxes, that indicate Parking, Entrance Fees, Accessibility Features, etc. To enter information, click on "Suggest Content", and submit when you're done. Consider helping other birders by sharing your knowledge and by submitting some hotspot information in the new hotspot wiki.



**About This Hotspot**

**Plan Your Visit**  
Perhaps the best and largest hotspot in Otsego County. There are a variety of habitats and trails, and depending on the time of year, they can be wet or muddy. There is camping at the park, and an entrance fee during the busy season. In winter some areas are not plowed.

**How to Bird Here**  
Early morning birding is suggested. Birding is good in any season, but many fewer visitors during the off season. Viewing Otsego Lake from the shoreline or from the upper roads via spotting scope can produce interesting waterfowl especially during migration. Shorebirds are a challenge in Otsego County, but Glimmerglass has one of the only public shorelines on the lake. All the roads in the park are good for birding by car. There are several parking areas and trails to explore.

**About This Place**  
Glimmerglass State Park, eight miles outside the village of Cooperstown, overlooks Otsego Lake, the "Glimmerglass" of James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales. The rolling, partially wooded terrain is host to a wide variety of wildlife. An asphalt trail through the forest affords a spectacular view of Otsego Lake; the Beaver Pond and Woodland trails are picturesque and of interest for the variety of wildflowers, shrubs, ferns, and mosses.  
The Hyde Hall Mansion, Covered Bridge, and a self-guided Beaver Pond Nature Trail are within park boundaries and open to visitors. Winter visitors can go, cross-country skiing, ice skating, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and winter hiking.

Features	
Restricted Access	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Seasonal Access	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Entrance Fee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Restrooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Parking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Accessibility Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Observation Structures	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Scope Recommended	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Birding From Car	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Beginner Friendly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes

## BOARD MEMBERS

**President:** Dennis Endicott

**Treasurer:** Pete Fenner

**Conservation Chair:** Mike Miller

Patrick Menke

Logan Stanley

Vic Harting

Emma DeBruyn

Jane Easterly

Lee Maki

Steve Zehner

Birch Davis



ANY MEMBER IS WELCOME TO CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES TO THIS NEWSLETTER. HAVE YOU SEEN ANY UNUSUAL BIRDS AT YOUR HOME OR IN THE FIELD? HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANY MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, OR CAMPS THAT YOU'D LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT? WRITE IT UP OR EMAIL THE EDITOR: VICTORiaroseharting@gmail.com

## HOTSPOT HIGHLIGHT:

### Mendenhall Park & Public Boat Launch



PHOTOS BY VIC HARTING

Mendenhall Park in Bartonville is a wetland area located along the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway. This natural area features a mosaic of wetland pools interspersed with bottomland hardwoods, including willow, maple, and elm, creating habitats for wildlife. The park's entry road leads to a public boat launch.

Utilizing a scope will better allow you to see some amazing birds in the pools further back from the road, however, it is not necessary to still enjoy birding here.



**OPEN: APRIL - OCTOBER, 6 AM - 10 PM  
NOVEMBER - MARCH, 6 AM - 6 PM  
FLOODING MAY LIMIT ACCESS**



# SAVE BIRDS NOW. DRINK BIRD FRIENDLY.



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## ADDRESSES / EMAILS OF YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LEGISLATORS

### FEDERAL

U.S. Capitol Switchboard:  
(202) 224-3121

#### **Senator Richard Durbin**

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#### **Senator Tammy Duckworth**

230 S. Dearborn, Suite 3900,  
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#### **16th District Rep Darin LaHood**

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#### **17th District Rep Eric Sorenson**

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### STATE

#### **Illinois Governor JB Pritzker**

207 State House, Springfield, IL  
62706 Phone: 217-782-6830  
or 217-782-6831

State House Switchboard:  
(217) 782-2000

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Representatives, to determine who  
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represents you, the Illinois State  
Board of Elections District Locator  
website can help. The boundaries  
are difficult to describe, so click [here](#)  
to check.

### STATE

#### **David Koehler (D)**

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#### **Chris Balkema (R)**

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all of Putnam).

#### **Dennis Tipsword (R)**

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#### **Ryan Spain (R)**

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"But man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself."

— Rachel Carson