

Fall 2008 Newsletter

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL BIRDFEEDER

Fall is here and with it the southern migration of birds (and other animals). As we go to the streams, ponds, lakes, forest and field looking for birds, once again we join other birders looking not only for the 'usual' migrants, but also those special birds that cause everyone (at least birders) to have discussion topics for the cold winter days - who can forget that Sharp-tailed Sandpiper that appeared at Jon Duerr FP. KCA has events for birders to hone their skills at identification (well, how about TRYING to identify) those confusing fall warblers and sparrows of all types - come join us in these walks.

Speakers at our meetings will be discussing: bird research projects in Chicagoland; birding the great northwest; as well as amphibians and reptiles of Kane County.

Our field trips will be to many local preserves as well as to Illinois Beach State park looking for migrating hawks and to Jasper-Pulaski Park in Indiana to look at thousands of migrating cranes. Please check the fall schedule for details.

As we do every September, our meeting will be a potluck dinner along with members presenting their slides, digital images and pictures of nature. Please check the newsletter for what you are expected to bring to this gala event. The POTLUCK DINNER STARTS AT 6 PM.

Our website (www.kanecountyaudubon.org) continues to be a source of important information. Recently some good birds (Blue Grosbeak, Clay-colored and Henslow's Sparrows, Short Eared Owl) have been sighted and their exact location was reported on the website. Check the website on a daily basis for new arrivals during the fall.

If you can't get out with KCA on one of our trips, or one of our many rambles (call for ramble information) take the time to get out and enjoy the great outdoors and the gifts that nature provides for us.

POTLUCK DINNER

The September meeting will start with our annual POTLUCK DINNER. Ann Holt-Harris and Debbie Kern will co-chair the event. The food items to be brought will depend on the first letter of your last name: A to F brings a salad: G to L brings a vegetable dish: M to R brings a dessert: S to Z brings a main entrée's'. If you have any questions please call Ann (630-208-6620). The same evening we will show nature slides, photos or digital images (15 maximum please). The Potluck begins at 6 PM at Peck Farm (Red Barn). The Potluck dinner is going green this year! Please bring your own plate, fork, knife, spoon, napkin and cup. We encourage you to bring items which are not disposable along with nondisposable serving dishes. Also, please be sure to bring a serving spoon for your dish to share. We will be providing drinks. If you have any suggestions or ideas about how we can do our bit for the environment, please let us know.

NEW MEMBERS

(Submitted by Tim Balassie, membership chair)

Here is a listing of new members to KCA. If you meet them, welcome them to our organization.

Batavia: Richard Rusch Family, Julieanne Zenz

East Dundee: Bob Montgomery

Elburn: Mark and Deb Satorius

Elgin: John Egan, Bill Koch, Debbie Wisser

Geneva: Geoff Demmel, Robert Rogers Family

Glen Ellyn: Evalyn Campbell

Miramar, FL: Ken Schneider

St. Charles: Bill Gebhardt Family, Jack Pomatto, Barbara Rask

Warrenville: Bob Mathieu

SPRING BIRD COUNT

(Submitted by Jon J. Duerr)

The 36th Illinois Spring Bird Count was almost perfect. The conditions were wonderful with moderate temperatures, low wind (until late in the day) and the sky was clear with only thin clouds in the afternoon. Nineteen teams took to the field and found 158 species, one of the highest Kane County counts. Also, two species were added, having never been seen on counts: Rusty Blackbird and Alder Flycatcher. We also achieved 15 new high counts listed below. It was 'almost' a perfect count! The warblers, thrushes and vireos decided to either hide or move on. We had some of the lowest counts in years for some of those species: Palm Warbler 98 when its high was 805. The following are the new high counts with the previous high:

Red-winged Blackbird 3007/2358
Chimney Swift 649/366
Common Yellowthroat 242/230
Red-bellied Woodpecker 175/115
Cerulean Warbler 5/2
American Robin 1632/1194
Sandhill Crane 30/26
House Wren 271/203
Sora 113/64
Marsh Wren 41/30
Great Egret 59/53
Gr. Crested Flycatcher 37/35
Osprey 3/2
Ruby Throated Hummer 7/7
Eastern Kingbird 85/67

The numbers for Crows, Blue Jays, and Chickadees remain low, but Chickadees and Blue Jays recovered slightly.

Crow 102, 111 in 2007, 436 highest
Blue Jay 285, 263 in 2007, 486 highest
Chickadee 199, 133 in 2007, 371 highest

The totals for the count plus previous counts are linked to the KCA webpage
(www.kanecountyaudubon.org)

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

March 29: Lake Shabbona/DeKalb County (Debbie Kern)

19 birders began a ramble of DeKalb County at Lake Shabbona on a blustery, cold Saturday for a total count of 53 species. 33 species were seen while in the State Park, 17 of which were waterfowl. Of note were the Red-breasted, Hooded and Common Mergansers, Red Head, Ruddy and Ring-necked Ducks. From Lake Shabbona we headed south to Leland to the business property of Pizzo and Associates. We were graced with a lovely pair of Harriers Hawks and fodder for an educational moment. Is it a Brewer's or a Rusty Blackbird? Educated through fact, photos and skins during our April meeting, the conclusion was drawn that we did indeed view a Brewer's! A quick stop along the roadside near Afton Forest Preserve yielded an Am. Widgeon, Am. Kestrel and Shoveler. After lunch at McD's (no wonder my cholesterol is so high) we enjoyed a sun kissed walk in Wilkonson/Renwick Marsh. The Brewer's/Rusty discussion continued. Bird songs were plentiful as well the scent of rich wet dirt. As the number of birders dwindled, we continued on to the nature walk behind Michaels on Rt. 23, adding both Red and White-breasted Nuthatches. Assured of a DeKalb delicacy at Ollie's frozen custard, 9 'old coots' completed a day of birding about 2:30. Mark your calendars, this may prove to be an annual event!

May 17: Big Rock Forest Preserve (Terry Murray)

18 people arrived on a beautiful spring morning with the temperature starting in the upper 50's. The sun was just beginning to warm the air as we gathered counting numerous birds including Barn Swallows and Baltimore Orioles before we even finished introducing ourselves at the parking lot. Song Sparrows, Redwing Blackbirds and Eastern Bluebirds watched intently as we walked along the bridge which swayed gently as we stopped to gaze at an Eastern Phoebe perched on a bare branch. Indigo Buntings, Eastern Towhees and Scarlet Tanagers were singing their favorite songs as we bonded with them through binocs. Magnolia, Wilson's, Hooded and Chestnut-sided were among the mixed flocks of warblers that passed energetically as we strained to see them high in the trees. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Lark Sparrows were frolicking along the restored prairie edges as our group passed. Ginny Widrick volunteered to write down the names of the birds identified as we were walking. She stayed quite busy recording 62 different species for the morning. We all had fun with great birding and nice weather shared among friends.

May 31 - June 1: Kirtland Warbler Trip (Paul Mayer)

On Saturday and Sunday, May 31st and June 1st 2008 KCA completed an exciting trip to Grayling Michigan to see the Kirtland's Warbler. Exciting because whenever you get a rare target bird, you get excited. Eight members joined the trek and included: Bob and Kathy Andrini; Jane McMillan; RaeAnn Christ; Ruth Meyer; Ed & Marianne Zielezinski; and Paul Mayer. After an early morning talk by USF&W at the Ramada Inn in Grayling, the group was taken to the nesting sites among the Jack Pines about six miles from Grayling. Then, almost as if on cue, the bird appeared and gave everyone great looks. By 8:30 AM it was over and the group was ready to bird the Grayling area for other northern specialties. Congratulations to the four members of the group (Ed and Marianne, RaeAnn and Ruth) who added the Kirtland Warbler to their life lists.

The trip netted 53 species which included not only Kirtland's Warbler, but Evening Grosbeak, Pine Warbler, Olive-sided Flycatcher and Raven as well. Enjoyed by all, you may wish to consider this a trip for next year.

GENEVA COURTHOUSE OWLS

(Submitted by Tim Balassie)

With the interest in the Great Horned Owls at the Geneva Courthouse, KCA formed a committee to watch over the owls and their nest. With that in mind, we have developed a proposal that calls for the active monitoring of the nest to see that it remains amenable to the owls. If needed, the Chapter will repair the existing nest, or replace it with an artificial nest, with the assistance of County personnel. KCA is looking at several nest options. If you have any comments/suggestions about the owls and their safety, please contact Tim B. at 630-513-7345.

FALL PROGRAMS

September - Once again we will have our annual Pot Luck Dinner. This event will start at 6 PM at the Red Barn at Peck Farm. See the potluck section in the newsletter for further details.

October - Bird Research in the Chicago area: Conservation efforts around the region are benefiting birds. Judy Pollock, Director of Bird Conservation for

Audubon Chicago Region, and Joe Suchecki, steward and bird monitor at Springbrook Prairie in Naperville, will share research and on-the-ground results for some projects that have benefited birds of conservation concern in our region's grasslands, woodlands, and wetlands. Projects featured will include a new initiative for Kane County grassland and shrubland birds.

November - Amphibians and reptiles of Kane County: Pam Otto, a KCA member, and active naturalist will talk about the 13 species of frogs that could be found in Kane County wetlands. We will then learn how to identify these amphibians by sight and sound. Pam will also discuss what local monitoring efforts have revealed about the conservation status of these animals.

December - Birds of the Northwest and Beyond. Paul Mayer, a KCA member, will discuss Central Alaska and the outer islands that harbor abundant bird life and birding opportunities. This talk will take us to three areas of our most western state: the Pribilof Islands, Gambell and central Alaska. He will not only talk about common species, but also some very (VERY) special rarities as well.

FALL ACTIVITIES

Following are the dates, times and places for our upcoming activities. If there are any questions, please contact the trip leader or Bob Andrini. **Summer meetings change to walks. We meet at the location of the walk at 6 PM. Many members will bring a supper and meet at 5:30 for some socialization and bird talk. The Potluck in September will also start at 6 PM.** It is important for participants to dress properly for the walk, and should bring bug spray (just in case).

Date	Event	Location	Time	Contact/Leader
September	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384
	10 Meeting: Potluck Dinner	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	6 PM	Bob 630-584-8386
	14 Birdwalk	Sauer Family Farm (meet at Peck Farm)	8 AM	Jon 630-584-5891
	27 Birdwalk	LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, St. Charles	8 AM	Tim 630-513-7345
October	4 Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384

			Preserve, Batavia		384
	8	Meeting: Bird research in area	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM	Bob 630-584-8386
	11 or 12	Hawkwatch	Illinois Beach State Park, Zion		Contact Roger at 847-697-7484 for date and carpool info
	18	Birdwalk	Fermi Lab, Batavia	8 AM	Chris 630-377-0773
	25	Birdwalk	Burnidge Forest Preserve, Elgin	8 AM	Jerry 630-377-1444
November	1	Birdwalk/Scope Day	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384
	11	Meeting: Amphibians and Reptiles	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM	Bob 630-584-8386
	15	Birdwalk	SEBA Park, South Elgin	8 AM	Jane 847-622-3216
	22	Sandhill Crane Fieldtrip	Jasper Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area, Medaryville, IN	10 AM from Peck Farm	Bob 630-584-8386
December	6	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384
	10	Meeting: Birds of the Northwest and Beyond	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM	Bob 630-584-8386
	13	Birdwalk	SEBA Park, South Elgin	8 AM	Jane 847-622-3216
	20	Christmas Bird Count	Assigned areas	All day	Terry 630-896-3219

January	1	Rhonda's New Year's Walk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384
	3	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384

If you have any questions about any of the above activities, please contact the trip leader or Bob Andrini. All trips start at the location of the walk unless stated otherwise. Make sure that you dress properly for the weather. All meetings are held at the Red Barn at Peck Farm and start at 7 PM except for the Potluck Dinner which starts at 6 PM. All activities are open to the public.