

KANE COUNTY AUDUBON SUMMER 2008 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL BIRDFEEDER

As you begin to read this newsletter, the migration of the warblers, shorebirds, and all those wonderful forms of avifauna have passed through our area and given us great opportunities to go out and looking for them. Now summer looms ahead with its combination of nesting birds and subsequent eruption of this year's crop of new life (immature birds). As in past years our monthly meetings will turn into field trips to different preserves throughout our area (check the summer activities in the newsletter).

We are excited to see the new building arise at Peck Farm that will continue to hold our meetings. Geneva Park District has been a great host to our meetings and different activities - for those who are interested, many of our members assist in the butterfly house during the summer, and I'm sure they could use more volunteers to help them out.

Two projects that I would like to see KCA start this summer would be to count Hummingbirds and Cooper's Hawks that appear in your yards (record only the most birds you see at one time). Last year I started collecting data and if we can 'keep our eyes open' for these birds, we might be able to establish baseline data for their populations. It's also a good way to get others involved in watching birds.

Even though bird activity seems to slow down during the summer, we still enjoy getting out looking for birds and watching their behaviors.

Come join us in our activities.

NOTES FROM OUR SPONSORS

Four organizations have offered to be sponsors of KCA and offer us discounts on bird food and bird related items at their stores. In order to get the discount simply bring a copy of the IAS magazine with your address label on it, and they will honor the offer. Here are the official sponsors:

Blackberry Farm	202 W North St	Elburn	630.365.1424
Johnson's Farm	40W467 Rte 38	Elburn	630.232.9004
Regole's Harvest Shoppe	2N492 Kirk Rd	St Charles	630.584.2024
Wasco Nursery	41W781 Rte 64	St Charles	630.584.4424

Please support these stores and thank them for being sponsors of our organization.

NORTHERN SHRIKES IN KANE COUNTY

(Submitted by Jon J. Duerr)

Northern Shrikes have been found in Kane County each year for the last 9 years. These observations come from my birding journal. I have seen them in Kane since the 1960's but sadly I did not keep regular birding notes until in the 1990's. With the creation of the Kane County Audubon web page (www.kanecountyaudubon.org) and greater use of the internet, reporting Shrike observations was greatly expanded during the 2007 - 2008 winter. More than 30 sightings were reported from 17 locations. Multiple sightings were made at Aurora West, Nelson's Lake, Burnidge Forest Preserves and Fermi Lab. To see a map of the locations, go to the KCA website (the shrike count section). The one time only sightings occurred mostly in early December and the second half of February.

A possible explanation for the distribution of the Kane County sightings would be as follows: the south bound migration of Northern Shrikes enters Kane and the rest of Illinois during the latter part of November. Some of the birds find suitable hunting areas and establish a territory forcing other Shrikes to move around. These territories are defended until the end of January when migratory instincts cause the established birds to begin shifting northward. At this time, Shrikes from all over the state are moving and passing through Kane County. The Shrikes are mostly gone by the second week of March. The above is my explanation of the Shrike behavior. We have an opportunity to re-enforce this or adjust it with future observations. The excellent KCA website and the internet give us wonderful tools to explain the bird world around us.

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.

Evelyn Campbell - Glen Ellyn	Geoff Demmel - Geneva
John Egan - Elgin	Bob Mathieu - Warrenville
Bob Montgomery - East Dundee	Jack Pomatto - St Charles
Mark & Deb Satorius - Elburn	Ken Schneider - Miramar, FL
Julianne Zenz - Batavia	

Some anniversaries of KCA members:

Ruth Barr - 40 years	Ann Haverstock - 25 years
Carol Veidel - 15 years	Jane McMillan - 10 years

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

January 19: Fox River Birding (Bob Andrin)

The thermometer struck three below zero as three of us (not everyone on KCA is crazy) left Peck Farm to look for birds along the Fox River. We stopped off at Red Oak Nature Center and did a very quick walk down to the observation platform to see what birds might be in the icy water: what a surprise to see a Great Blue Heron standing on the shore (looking very cold). With the wind coming right off the river into our faces, we didn't stay long. In the warm car we continued down toward Oswego and to our surprise we saw some Common Mergansers, and two magnificent Bald Eagles (both adults), along with the assorted Mallards and Canada Geese. After stopping off at Harners for some nourishment and hot coffee, we ended the day at a bird feeder in Batavia looking at Pine Siskins. For the day we saw 20 species - not bad for a day of birding - below zero.

January 26: Starved Rock (Jane McMillan)

A small group of KCA members carpooled to the beautiful Starved Rock area. We all had our own aspirations, (good picture opportunities, a life bird, a bird for the year list, or maybe just to return north with the same number of people that we had when we went south. Our 1st stop was at the lock and dam. We did see eagles, but no unusual gulls. We continued to the lodge and saw more KCA members as well as long standing friends from all over Illinois. We managed to see 30 species including a fleeting glimpse of a Pileated Woodpecker - at least one life bird and a few picture ops. As we headed home, we witnessed 3 Redtail Hawks fighting for "the girl". It was a pretty good way to end the trip. We all agreed it was a very good day.

March 8: S.E.B.A Park (Jane McMillan)

It is getting close to spring isn't it????? Not if you looked around at the people bundled up in coats, hats and gloves, but you can't keep a dedicated birder in the house on a sunny day - no matter how cold it is. We were rewarded with 29 species of birds. Goldeneye and Buffleheads both displayed mating rituals as well as many pair of Downy Woodpeckers hammering out their territories. One of the special treats was an Eastern Bluebird and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Surely spring is around the corner no matter what the weather feels like.

March 22: Crabtree Nature Center (Chris Madsen)

Easter Saturday dawned with a fresh blanket of snow, icy roads, and bone-numbing winds. Still a small, but undaunted, group made the trek to Crabtree Nature Center, Barrington. Unfortunately, Mother Nature had yet another weather card to play. The target birds for the day were migrating waterfowl - but Crabtree Lake was still completely frozen over. The only water birds practicing their triple axels on the sheet of ice were geese and gulls. As a consolation prize, Crabtree's many feeders offered up the usual late winter feeder fare. Plan B, Baker's Lake Nature Preserve, a few miles to the north and east of Crabtree produced mixed results: another lake that was frozen, but Double-crested Cormorants and Great Blue Herons had arrived at the rookery. Tough times call for tough measures. Plan C was implemented. The group caravanned down Rt. 59 to West Chicago and the newly-discovered 'Pella Ponds'. The target birds were located: Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Mergansers (Common, Hooded, and Red-breasted), and Horned Grebe were all swimming in the open waters of the ponds. The total for the morning: 32 species.

April 26: Lippold Park (Ann Haverstock)

Although the day began with cold high winds, and the first hour we felt as if we should have stayed in bed, we finally did have good looks at some of those spring birds. The winds kept the swallows low on the river so our tenacious birders saw all five species: Barn, Bank, Tree, Northern Rough-winged and Cliff. In a quiet corner of the pond we had one of the best ever views of a Sora Rail. Best of all, for those who made it to Glenwood Park, a first spring male Summer Tanager. He gave us such great views that had I realized I had my camera sooner, I could have had a photo. By the end of the morning we had seen only three species of warbler: Black & White, Yellow, and Yellow-rumps. It is spring and there will be more warblers to come.

SUMMER 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
June	7	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384
	11	Birdwalk	Les Arends Forest Preserve, Batavia	6 PM	Bob 630-584-8386
July	5	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384
	9	Birdwalk	James "Pate" Philip State Park (formerly Tri-County), Bartlett	6 PM	Roger 847-697-7484
August	2	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630-479-1384
	13	Birdwalk	Johnson's Mound Forest Preserve, Elburn	6 PM	Bob 630-584-8386
September	6	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia		Rhonda 630-479-1384
	10	Potluck Dinner Meeting	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	6 PM	Bob 630-584-8386

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - 2007

(Submitted by Terry Murray)

On the morning of December 15th, eight teams totaling nearly thirty birders set out to count as many birds as possible in their assigned territories. Neither falling snow nor layers of bullet proof ice underneath could thwart those hearty souls from hiking and driving their areas. Forty-nine separate species were counted. The most abundant, of course, were the Canada Geese with over 6,000 reported at first light along the Fox River alone. Birds a bit more exciting to see were 37 Brown Creepers, 1,054 American Tree Sparrows, and 152 Swamp Sparrows. A surprising total of 30 Ring-necked Pheasants were tallied with 18 in one area alone. Some not so common species included 3 Northern Shrikes, 2 Wilson's Snipes, and 7 Purple Finches as well. An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen in the area the day before the count, but stayed in hiding on that particular snowy Saturday morning in December. For more information, go to www.kanecountyaudubon.org.

Below is the result of the CBC for 2007

BIRD		Bird		Bird	
Canada Goose	6387	Downy Wdpkr	89	Am. Robin	42
Mallard	297	Hairy Wdpkr	4	Eu. Starling	284
R-nked Pheasant	30	No. Flicker	2	Cedar Waxwing	67
No. Harrier	1	No. Shrike	3	Am. T. Sparrow	1054
Cooper's Hawk	15	Blue Jay	49	Song Sparrow	73
Red-tail Hawk	44	Am. Crow	70	Swamp Sparrow	152
Am. Kestrel	9	Horned Lark	2	Wh. Th. Sparrow	34
Wilson's Snipe	2	Blck-cap Chickdee	192	Wh. Cr Sparrow	21
Ring Bill. Gull	11	Tufted Titmouse	2	Drk-eye Junco	633
Herring Gull	10	Red-br Nuthatch	21	No. Cardinal	231
Rock Pigeon	144	White-br. Nuthatch	38	R-wing Blkbird	39
Mourning Dove	524	Brown Creeper	37	Purple Finch	7
Grt. Horned Owl	8	Carolina Wren	1	House Finch	311
Short Ear Owl	1	Glden-crn Kinglet	7	Pine Siskin	24
Belt. Kingfisher	5	Eastern Bluebird	7	Am. Goldfinch	256
Red-bell Wdpkr	47	Hermit Thrush	2	House Sparrow	214
				Orn. Crn Wblr	1

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

(Submitted by Chris Madsen)

Participants from 18 Kane County communities submitted 108 checklists totaling more than 5,000 birds of more than 50 species. Aurora's bird counters captured the trifecta as they tallied the most birds (1,061), submitted the most checklists (22), and recorded the most species (29). This year the House Sparrow took top honors as the most counted species (748), last year the Canada Goose was the most counted.

Here is a listing of some of the data. For more information about this year as well as past years, go to the KCA website at www.kanecountyaudubon.org. The first number in the chart is from this year, the number in parenthesis is last year.

Aurora	22 (24)	Batavia	7 (10)	Dundee	2 (9)
Elburn	2 (15)	Elgin	17 (35)	Geneva	4 (16)
Hampshire	1 (11)	No. Aurora	1 (11)	St. Charles	16 (28)

COOPERS HAWK NUMBERS

(Submitted by Bob Andrini)

As with many of you, we have seen many Coopers Hawks during our field trips and also in our backyard. This past summer I asked a question via the internet for people to report sightings and numbers of Coopers Hawks in their back yards - and here are the results: 27 observers sent in sightings and a total of 43 birds were reported - from as low as one to as many as five hawks. I realize that this was not a scientific survey, but gives us an indication of their abundance. Knowing that Coopers is a 'bird hawk' (mainly living on birds - and presumably those coming to our feeders, one wonders what affect they are having on our feeding populations). For this next year, starting in Jan. try to keep an eye out for these hawks in your yard. Try to keep records of what time of day, and if you see them get prey (try to ID the prey species if possible). If you are really good, determine age (newborn, adult) and sex (based on size). Also record any behaviors of the hawks you see. Next year, I will once again ask for comments. Thanks for participating.

ADAMS HOUSE

(Submitted by Bob Andrini)

Many of our members have committed to a monthly donation for the new IAS office at the Adams House in Springfield. To help in the rebuilding effort, we have conducted raffles at our meeting each month - with part of the money going to the Adams House fund. As of this time, we have sent almost \$1000 in the effort. If you haven't seen the construction of the building on the IAS website, take the time to look at it. This fall the annual meeting will take place in Springfield, and we can all take a tour of the facility. I have seen the ongoing constructions, and feel that this is a building we will all be proud of. If you haven't made donation for the building, please consider it.

OFFICERS FOR KANE COUNTY AUDUBON - A CHAPTER OF ILLINOIS AUDUBON

Chapter President: Bob Andrini, 630-584-8386

1st Vice President: Jerry Hope, 630-377-1444

2nd Vice President: Tim Balassie

Secretary: Nancy Schnaitman

Treasurer: Jane McMillan

Trip Coordinator: Roger Hotham

Program Chair: Ann-Holt Harris

IAS Representative: Bob Andrini

KCA website: www.kanecountyaudubon.org