

Winter 2008 Newsletter

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL BIRDFEEDER

As I write this, the first snow of the season is hitting us with a pelting rain/snow, and making the roads very slippery. We had our December Nelson's Lake walk and 9 members ventured forth in spite of the cold weather. Birders go out in all conditions looking for their targets and sometimes get them - we all saw the winter resident Northern Shrike.

The upcoming season for KCA is full of birding activities and exciting speakers. Marilyn Campbell (retired Ex. Director of IAS) will once again visit us and talk about nonflowering plants. Tom Clay the Executive Director of IAS will talk about our parent organization and how he envisions our future. We will also hear about world birding and the very special Swainson's Hawk that appears in NW Kane County.

The winter brings us special time to view the ducks on the river (as the ice closes in the open water), bird feeders come alive with hungry birds, and sometimes these are very special surprises. But in order to see them, you have to get out - why not join us on our scheduled field trips (or rambles *via* the internet) to share the excitement. To start your new 2008 year list, come and join our January 1st walk around Nelson's Lake. Keep in touch with the ever changing birds in the area, by checking out our website (www.kanecountyaudubon.org).

NEW OFFICERS

At the November meeting we had an election of officers. Those chosen for the next two years are as follows:

President: Bob Andrini

VP #1: Jerry Hope

VP #2: Tim Balassie

Treasurer: Jane McMillan

Secretary: Nancy Schnaitman

Congratulations to those who are new officers and those who are continuing to serve our organization. Thanks to Julie Long who served as VP#2 for many years.

Congratulations also to Rhonda Nelson who served as our treasurer for the past 12 years (at the meeting Rhonda stated that KCA is in the black and with increased dues, recycled ink cartridges and increased membership, we are looking very good). Once again, THANKS RHONDA.

WHO STARTED YOU IN BIRDING

This is a continuation in a series about people who started our members into birding. If you would like to add your own comments for future newsletters, please contact me.

John Janunas - Jon Duerr introduced me to birding after a class of '61 reunion.

John Baker - My wife said I had to have a hobby in retirement, so I took up birding.

Marianne Zielezinski - Ed and I started birding with Ella Mae Goshen when we were looking for a hobby outdoors.

Gloria Dimoplan - I began birding in Wisconsin in the early 1980's during spring migration. At that time I had a vacation home at Lake Buckhorn near Baraboo. Since I retired in June 2006 I've been able to be out of doors quite a lot. Friends from KCA have been very patient with a beginning birder.

Jan Underwood - In elementary school I belonged to Audubon Junior club and enjoyed field trips to see birds.

Jane McMillan - While biking I kept noticing the variety of birds but was clueless to what they were.

Bob Montgomery - My third grade teacher organized an Audubon Junior Bird Club which turned me on and have been at it ever since, both professionally and as a hobby.

Sandy Bauer - The teacher I had for third and fourth grades had her class create a 'bird book'. In her book she included birds that I'd never seen. My curiosity was peaked!

Julie Long - My grandmother led nature and bird walks, and her son (my dad) banded birds in high school. He always took us on spring warbler walks and we always fed birds (from the time I was a baby).

Maryann Gossman - I started birding because of buying a horse, Pathogen. I remember seeing a few species as a child. I was 'hooked' when hearing a strange sound in the pasture while riding my horse. I put the horse in the corral and wandered through the pasture in search of the source of the weird sound. I found a strange bird sitting in short grass near a little rivulet of water. Not knowing what this strange bird was sent me to the local library where I paged through a bird book. The caption read - 'rarely seen'. That introduction to my first bird book and the first American Bittern in 1959 started me on my 600+ life list.

EFFECTS OF WEST NILE

(Submitted by Bob Andrini)

I think that we all have seen the effects of West Nile on the birds in Kane County, but here is some proof. From the study: *West Nile Virus Emergence and large-scale Declines of North American Bird Populations* -found in the Nature magazine or at www.nature.com, stated that 7 common species including American Robin, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina and Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, American Crow, Eastern Bluebird and House Wren have shown severe declines because of West Nile. The Blue Jays and House Wrens are showing signs of recovering but the other species have not. For more information go to their web location. (ABA's *Bird Calls*, Vol. 11, June 2007)

BIRD TRIPS

(Submitted by Bob Andrini)

This year Kane County Audubon had 54 scheduled trips and rambles. The rambles are usually spontaneously organized the Sunday night for the following week (based on email alerts or phone calls). During these ventures we have seen a total of 199 different bird species. Some of the more 'exotic' species seen were: Prairie Falcon, Harlequin Duck, Gulls (Gr. Black-back, Thayer's, Iceland, and the famous Black-headed), Saw-whet Owl and the Pileated Woodpecker. The number of participants varied from 2 or 3 to about 40. Each trip had its own 'flavor', but I'm sure that all who came enjoyed the event. We will try to do more trips in 2008 to different places and hopefully can increase the number of both birds and participants.

HUMMINGBIRD REPORTS

This summer I sent out a question over the internet about how many people had hummingbirds coming to their feeders and 20 people from all over Kane County responded. All told, 81 hummingbirds were reported. Those who answered varied in number of reported birds, but most had more than two. I was surprised by the number of these flying gems around. Next year we will conduct the survey again and be even more surprised. Help out by putting up those feeders as spring rolls around.

FALL FIELD TRIP REPORTS

September 8: NW Kane County (Bob Montgomery)

Five KCA members and a couple from Aurora met to explore NW Kane, DeKalb and McHenry counties. We visited different sod farms (Coon Creek, Neilson, H & S fields north of Marengo) and also flooded fields looking for shorebirds. Due to the drying up of flooded water ponds, the shorebird numbers were down, but we still had good numbers including all of our target species. Some of the species we observed were: Black-bellied, Golden and Semi-palmated Plovers; Killdeer; both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs; Sandpipers (Pectoral, Solitary, Stilt and Buff-breasted). We had some good looks as a Northern Harrier harassed shorebirds. On some of the ponds we observed Mallard, Blue-winged Teal and Northern Shovelers, as well as Great Blue Heron and Great Egret.

September 29: Campton Hills Park (Ann Haverstock)

We had a glorious autumn hike in one of the most beautiful preserves in Kane County. Although the birds were not numerous, we had bonding views at some of our fine migrants. I recall appearances made by Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Redstart, Magnolia, Palm and Nashville Warblers. Other shows were young Eastern Phoebes, American Bluebirds along with both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches. We also saw many of those confusing young Chipping Sparrows. I think many were pleased at seeing this preserve - it is a joy.

October 13: Afton Forest Preserve (Debbie Kern)

Though the blustery overcast day wasn't ideal for birding, 14 birders enjoyed views of 44 species. Afton, known for its wetlands didn't produce any shorebirds for our group, but a wide variety of other species were evident. Migrating warblers, an E. Towhee, White-crowned and Yellow-throated Sparrows were discovered in the trees, brush and ground cover on the way to the ever expanding wetlands.

When development impacts wetlands in DeKalb County - change, drain or fill - the wetland loss is mitigated at Afton. Once hay and cornfield, the prairie and wetland habitat has grown because of restoration work done largely by volunteers. Currently, 57 acres south of McGirr Rd. wait in a 'wetland bank' for further prairie and wetland restoration. The proposed development includes Grand Prairie Ecotype restoration, wetlands, a White Oak and Bur Oak nursery and native shrub plantings. This day the southern most ponds yielded distant sightings of Green and Blue-winged Teal, Shovelers, Coots, Rusty Blackbirds and Canadian Geese. Pied-bill Grebes and Herons were spotted in the closest pond to the parking area. A quick walk to the observation tower gave us a bird's eye view of Afton. Of course a trip to Afton would never be complete without at least one calling Pheasant.

October 27: S.E.B.A. Park (Jane McMillan)

You can't keep good birders down!!!! With rain in the forecast, threatening clouds looming and wind high, I did not think there would be a single person to walk the bike path with me. As I pulled into the parking lot another vehicle pulled in beside me. It had Indiana plates so it couldn't be anyone for my group, but it was. One of the good things about computers is letting the world know we invite those interested to join us. Joe (from Indiana) and his wife had read about our walk and how it was one of my favorites, so they came to see what was so interesting. A small group of us headed south on the bike path and managed to see 27 different species including an Orange-crowned Warbler and Purple Finch thanks to Jon Duerr. The sun was in and out, but we managed the entire walk without a drop of rain. Joe and his wife DeDe agreed with me that the walk was one worth repeating. Some of the other birds that were sighted were: Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches; Carolina Wren, Kingfisher; E. Bluebird; and Brown Creepers.

November 10: Fermi Lab (Bob Andrini)

This trip was supposed to be looking at fuddles (puddles in farmers fields) around Kane County, but with the dry conditions and lack of fuddles, I decided that we should go looking for waterfowl over at Fermi Lab. Five birders joined at the Education Center and we immediately headed to look at the feeders where we always get birds - the feeders were empty - no birds. Onward to the pond in the buffalo yard - no birds: it wasn't looking very good. We then went to Lake Law, and started seeing some different waterfowl: Cackling and Canada Geese; Northern Shovelers; Gadwall and American Widgeon; and two Snow Geese. Then we headed to see if we might find the Northern Shrike that occupies the fields - no luck here either. We did find some different sparrows: Am. Tree and many Fox. Other birds were sighted, along with an unexpected Yellow-rumped Warbler. On our way out of the park, the field by the buffalo run was covered with geese, and upon closer inspection we saw 7 Greater-white Fronted Geese. The total for the day was 31 species sighted (very surprising since we did not find many expected birds)- some birds for the first time this fall.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

In 2008, from February 15 - 18, we have a chance to participate in one of the most popular birding activities throughout the states - the Great Backyard Bird Count. Participants are to look at their feeders and count birds that come to visit. It doesn't have to be just at your feeders, but forest/field/nature center. Last year 118 Kane County residents participated and submitted lists with over 10,000 birds sighted. If you are interested go to the website www.birdsource.org for more details. This is a great way to get youngsters and friends involved.

SPEAKERS FOR WINTER/SPRING SESSION:

January: John Baker will talk about the Joys of World Birding. John is a member of KCA and has traveled the world in search of birds. He will briefly discuss his nine world birding tour destinations and show a few pictures he's taken of pretty birds around the world. He will focus on his most recent travels to Venezuela, New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, and southern Brazil. Each area has a good selection of unique exotic birds.

February: Roger Morgan will give a presentation about the ever illusive Swanson's Hawk. He will discuss their behaviors, natural history and migration to and from South America. The Swainson's Hawk Project throughout Kane and McHenry counties will also cover the current status of these birds.

March: Tom Clay, Executive Director of IAS will give a presentation about our society, its past, present and future. He will talk about the current status of the renovation of the historic Adams House in Springfield and its restoration into our new headquarters.

April: Marilyn Campbell, the retired Executive Director of IAS, will bring her special insight into the world of nonflowering plants in her talk From Fungi to Ferns. We will learn more about these organisms that we sometimes/often overlook.

May: KCA's own Jerry Hope will show us a slide selection from many of his trips far and wide. Belize and other exotic places will take center spotlight as Jerry gives his insights and reviews the exploits of his adventures.

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

WINTER/SPRING 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. All trips start at the location of the walk unless stated otherwise. Make sure that you dress properly for the weather. **Meetings start at 7 PM at Peck Farm except for the February meeting that will take place at the Sunset Community Center in Geneva.** All activities are open to the public.

Date	Event	Location	Time	Contact/Leader
January	1	Special New Year's Day Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	5	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	9	Meeting - John Baker, "The Joys of World Birding"	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM Bob (630) 584-8386
	19	Car-birding the Fox River	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	8 AM Bob (630) 584-8386
	26	IAS Bald Eagle Watch Weekend	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7:30 AM Jane (847) 622-3216
February	2	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	9	IOS Gull Frolic	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	8 AM Tim (630) 513-7345
	13	Meeting - Robert Morgan, Illinois Swainson's Hawk Project	Sunset Community Center, Geneva	7 PM Bob (630) 584-8386
	16	Car-birding Country Roads	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	8 AM Jerry (630) 377-1444
March	1	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	8	Birdwalk	S.E.B.A. Park, South Elgin	8 AM Jane (847) 622-3216
	12	Meeting - Tom Clay, "IAS Past and Present "	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM Bob (630) 584-8386

	22	Birdwalk	Crabtree Forest Preserve, Barrington	8 AM	Bob (630) 584-8386
	29	Birdwalk	Shabbona Lake State Park, Shabbona (leave Peck Farm Park)	7:30 AM	Bob (630) 584-8386
April	5	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	9	Meeting - Marilyn Campbell, "From Fungi to Ferns"	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM	Bob (630) 584-8386
	18 - 20	Illinois Audubon - Spring Meeting	Decatur, IL		Bob (630) 584-8386
	26	Birdwalk	Lippold Park, Batavia	8 AM	Ann (630) 232-9398
May	3	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	10	Spring Bird Count	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	All Day	Jon (630) 584-5891
	14	Meeting - Jerry Hope, "Vacation Birds: Belize and Beyond"	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	7 PM	Bob (630) 584-8386
	17	Birdwalk	Big Rock Forest Preserve, Big Rock	8 AM	Terry (630) 896-3219
June	7	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda (630) 479-1384