

# KANE COUNTY AUDUBON WINTER/SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL BIRD FEEDER

As I put together this newsletter, its early December and still no snow has fallen (I'm sure by the time you receive this, the previous statement will not hold true), Sandhill Cranes are also still migrating toward Jasper-Pulaski, but soon winter will take hold and our winter residents and visitors will be occupying our area.

I'm excited about the coming year, for once again we can start our new year check list and get out and look for the winter visitors (Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, etc). KCA has put together a set of field trips that will take us to many different close locations and on distant road trips (Ohio, Nebraska, Wisconsin) looking for birds we do not get in our area. In one case there is a limited number of participants so contact the leader as soon as you can. If you look at the schedule of trips, you will see that KCA has almost every weekend covered with a trip, so come and join us.

Our meetings should be interesting as we look at the historic Galapagos Islands, Wind Energy and other topics. **Be sure to note the meeting sites as some will not be at Peck Farm.**

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## STYROFOAM DROPOFF

Kane County now has someplace to drop off Styrofoam – if you didn't know, before this all Styrofoam was just put into the landfill. Now the Dart Container Corporation has opened a recycling drop off site at 310 Evergreen Drive in North Aurora. The type of foam accepted at the facility are those with the numeral 6 surrounded by chasing arrows. Once collected, the foam will be compacted and shipped to companies that will convert the foam into a number of consumer products. This is another way KCA members can participate in a recycling program.

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## KCA SPONSORS

Please support the following businesses that are sponsors of KCA Audubon. They have all stated that members will receive discounts when identified.

Blackberry Farm	202 N. St. Elburn	630-365-1424
Johnson's Farm	40W467 Rt. 38 Elburn	630-232-9004
Wasco Nursery	41W780 Rt. 64 St. Charles	630-584-4424
Wasco will also give discounts on shrubbery		

When you shop, please thank them for supporting KCA.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME

submitted by Bob Andrini

This is the 3rd set of matching birds names with older used names. The first two sets were relatively easy, this one might be harder. Good luck.

1. White-billed Logcock	a. Black-billed Cuckoo
2. Pigeon Woodpecker	b. Saw-whet Owl
3. Rain Crow	c. Yellow-billed cuckoo
4. Rain Dove	d. Am. Golden Plover
5. Kirtland's Owl	e. Am. Coot
6. Cat Owl	f. Killdeer
7. Muddy Belly	g. Spotted Sandpiper
8. Teeter Tail	h. Ivory Billed Woodpecker
9. Noisy Plover	i. Great Horned Owl
10. Pond Hen	J. Northern Flicker

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## MEETING PRESENTATIONS

**January 13:** Jack Shouba will guide us around the famous Galapagos Islands. Jack will discuss the evolution of some of the birds and animals present on this isolated island. Jack has been with us before and amazed us with his pictures and knowledge.

**February 10:** Mark Frigo, a member of KCA, will discuss the affect of Wind Energy on our environment. There is a lot of controversy about the effect on bats and birds and Mark will discuss these and also the benefits of this power source. This meeting will take place at the St. Charles Public Library.

**March 10:** Jon and Joy Duerr, members of KCA, will give a presentation about the history of the Spring Bird Count. Many years of data have been collected and with Jon and Joys insights, the data will be dissected and evaluated. This will help us understand the importance of our participation in the upcoming Spring Bird Count.

**April 14:** Chris Anchor of the Cook County Coyote Research program will update us on his findings since his last presentation. Data includes more 'family' information. Chris is probably the most knowledgeable person about coyotes and his work with them has allowed him to get to know the coyotes 'up close and personal'. This meeting is co-sponsored by the St. Charles Park District and will meet at the Pottawatomie Community Center, St. Charles.

**May 12:** Chuck Peterson, another KCA member and landscape architect, will discuss some of the ways we can help out our feathered friends in addition to putting out feeders.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### **Sept 19 – Crabtree Nature Center (Bill Koch)**

Five KCA birders made the trip out to Crabtree Nature Center in Barrington to bird the marshes, woodlands and prairies. The unseasonable temperatures made for a great late summer hike on the dew covered trails. The outing took off a little after 8 AM due to the front gates not opening until precisely 8 AM. The target birds for the outing were regular summer residents as well as some early migrants including warblers and thrushes. 40 total species of birds were viewed on the day. Absent birds were Mallards and any type of hawk. The Wood Duck counts were very high on the Crabtree Lake and the marshes. Early migrants that were spotted included: Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Magnolia Warbler. An adult Green Heron did its best statue imitation for the group as it stood still only yards away in the middle of the marsh. We got our final bird of the day, a Ruby-throated Hummer after we checked the exhibit center feeder one final time. Thanks go to the walk members who all had input on the birding and identifying the surrounding trees and plants.

### **Sept. 26 – Grunwald Farm Forest Preserve (Tim Balassie)**

What started out as a cloudy, foggy morning ended with seven KCA members tallying 40 species at Grunwald Farms Forest Preserve, located a few miles east of Kaneville. The highlights of the 1.25 mile hike included nine species of warbler (including a new one for the year – Bay-breasted Warbler) as well as Cooper's Hawk harassing a Great Blue Heron. Eastern Wood Pewees, Eastern Phoebes and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are still present, as were two lone Eastern Meadowlarks. Fall arrivals included Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Swainson's Thrush. The resident Red-tailed Hawks put in an appearance as did a Belted Kingfisher.

### **Oct. 13 – Prairie Green Wetland (Tim Balassie)**

Nine KCA members spent a rewarding two hours at Geneva's Prairie Green preserve. Forty species were observed, including many fall migrants. The highlight for many was the Peregrine Falcon actively hunting for Red-winged Blackbirds – truly an "Animal Kingdom" moment. Other fall species included: several LaConte's Sparrows, Nelson's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, and a Merlin. The marsh closest to Peck Rd. held Mallard, both Blue- and Green-winged Teal, Wood Duck a pair of Redheads, and a few Wilson's Snipe. Several species of note were not ready to yield to winter: Sora, Nashville Warbler, Barn Swallow, Chimney Swift, and Eastern Meadowlark.

### **Oct. 17 – Elburn Forest Preserve (Nancy Schnaitman)**

Under cloudy skies and temperatures in the low 40's 10 birders set out in search of birds at Elburn Forest Preserve. 25 species were sighted including: Brown Creepers, a Cooper's Hawk sitting high up, and many Ruby-crowned Kinglets. The only warbler species sighted was the Yellow-rumped Warbler and these were abundant. One Sora called from the wet area on the western edge of the preserve. It seems that many of the birds may have moved on during the cold, wet weather earlier in the week.

### **Oct. 26 – Horicon Marsh (Chuck Peterson)**

Fifteen hardy individuals braved the elements to bird Horicon Marsh in south central Wisconsin. The weather cleared about the time we started birding and cooperated the rest of the weekend. Although not an ideal time to bird the marsh, members of our club counted 51 species of birds and had a wonderful time enjoying the blue sky and golden colors of the October landscape. We also toured the marsh with the folks

from Blue Heron Landing and got a good look at the interior of the largest cattail marsh in the U.S. A great time was had by all.

### **Nov. 14 - Sand Bluff Bird Observatory (Bob Andrini)**

Twenty five KCA members left Peck Farm for a trip to watch Saw-whet Owls being banded. This followed the presentation on "Why Band Birds" at our monthly meeting. When we arrived at the banding station, we were greeted with a recorded sound of the male Saw-whet Owl Steve Freisch, the owl banding specialist, presented a brief program about how they capture and band the owls. He also showed slides about the banding process and how they age and sex the owls. Half of our group then accompanied Steve to the nets to see if he had captured any owls. After about ½ hour they returned with frowns on their faces – no success. Steve then went into the back room and produced an owl that had been captured earlier in the evening. With a tight grip on the bird, he banded it (ensuring that if it escaped it still would wear the band) and showed us under black light the markers that indicated the age of the bird. A couple of time throughout this process, Steve grimaced in pain, as the very sharp talons of the little owl pierced his fingers – we grimaced with him after seeing how sharp the talons were. Steve then walked around the room and let everyone have an 'up close and personal' view of the bird. About the time he was finished, one of the volunteers came in with a newly captured owl and we got to see the procedures take place once again. The other half now headed out to check the nets, but also came away with no owls. We only saw the two owls banded, but all feel that it was a worthwhile trip.

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## **KCA BOARD**

At the November meeting members voted to approve the slate of candidates for the board. We have also revised the board to have 4 members rather than the 5 we have had in previous years. Here are the present officers:

President: Bob Andrini  
Vice President: Tim Balassie  
Secretary: Nancy Schnaitman  
Treasurer: Jane McMillan

Here is a list of the appointed positions on the board:

Field Trips: Jon Duerr  
Publicity: Sue Wagoner  
Speakers: Chuck Petersen  
Hospitality: George Mohn and Carol and Erika Veidel  
Website: Chris Madsen  
Historian: Jerry Hope  
Mailings: Karen Yost  
Stamps: Julie Long  
Ink Cartridges Cheryl Hayes

## WHAT IS THE ABA? AND WHAT ARE BIRD CODES?

submitted by Paul Mayer

So often we hear birders talking about the “ABA area” or “Code 4” birds; perhaps two designations we don’t fully understand. If you’re keeping track of your birds and the places you saw them, having an understanding of these terms could be helpful.

First, the ABA area. The ABA area (sometimes referred to as the ABA checklist Area) comprises North America north of Mexico. It does not include any part of Mexico or the Caribbean or Cuba. Boundaries for the ABA area include: the 49 continental United States, Canada, the French Island of St. Pierre et Miquelon and all adjacent waters out to 200 miles or halfway between continental mainland and adjacent countries or territories.

Next, the codes. Basically the codes designate the relative rarity of birds.

Code 1 and Code 2 birds are considered fairly common. These codes include regular breeding species and visitors. The basic difference between 1 and 2 is that 1’s are more widespread and usually more numerous (e.g. the Robin) Code 2 birds may be more restricted geographically or may occur in lower densities (e.g. California Thrasher).

Code 3 birds are considered ‘rare’. These species occur in low numbers but do occur annually in the ABA Checklist Area. It would include both visitors and rare breeding birds (e.g. Tropical Parula).

Code 4 birds are considered as ‘casual’ meaning that they are not recorded or observed annually in the ABA Checklist Area but have been recorded at least 6 time including at least 3 in the past 30 years.

Codes 5 are accidental. They are species that have been recorded five or fewer times in the ABA Checklist Area or fewer than three records in the past 30 years (e.g. Yellow-browed Bunting)

Code 6 birds are designated as ‘cannot be found’ which is almost synonymous for ‘in all probability “extinct”’. This would include species such as Ivory-billed Woodpecker or Bachman Warbler.

Besides the numerical designation, you may also see a letter, namely an N, V, E or X. “N” designates ‘native’. ‘V’ denotes a visitor. ‘E’ are exotics which are introduced birds that have become established sufficiently to be counted. Those birds with an ‘X’ are considered to be extinct. Letter designations tend to be more confusing as they are not yet standardized between organizations such as the ABA and the various field guides using the same or similar letters.

I hope this sheds some light on the birds you are seeing or pursuing. Use the codes to help you plan trips, fill out your life list or just to keep track. But more than anything else, get out and enjoy birding.

## THANKS

Thanks to Roger Hotham and Jerry Hope for all they have done for KCA. Both members have recently stepped down from holding positions on the KCA board. Roger was instrumental in setting up field trips. Jerry has established links between KCA and the media that publish our activities. Because of their dedication and perseverance, our club has grown in both numbers and in activities

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## CONGRATULATIONS, DICK!

One of KCA's members, Dick Lamermayer recently fulfilled a dream of running a marathon or ½ marathon in every state of the union. On a recent birding trip, he related that he had finally finished his dream. I wonder if he also had time to bird in every state of the union, and he has state bird lists?

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## KCA HITS NEW TRIP RECORD

This year, KCA has had the most number of field trips and number of birds seen in its recorded history. We have had an amazing 87 field trips up to this time (including both scheduled trips and rambles) and have seen 225 species of birds. Here is a chart showing a history of our trips.

Year	Number trips	Number of species seen
2005	Partial year	125
2006	35	192
2007	58	201
2008	63	209
2009	87	225

A list of upcoming trips is in this newsletter. If you are interested in finding out about our spontaneous rambles, contact Bob (630-584-8386) to be placed on the kcabird alert email list.

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME

Here are the answers to the matching question.

1. White-billed Logcock	h. Ivory Billed Woodpecker
2. Pigeon Woodpecker	j. Northern Flicker
3. Rain Crow	a. Black-billed Cuckoo
4. Rain Dove	c. Yellow-billed Cuckoo
5. Kirtland's Owl	b. Saw-whet Owl
6. Cat Owl	i. Great Horned Owl
7. Muddy Belly	d. Am. Golden Plover
8. Teeter Tail	g. Spotted Sandpiper
9. Noisy Plover	f. Killdeer
10. Pond Hen	e. Coot

Hope you all did well. Some of these may have caused you problems.

## ROAD TRIPS

We have five road trips scheduled this birding season to some very exciting places:

### **January 23: Starved Rock**

Tim Balassie will lead members to Starved Rock for the annual IAS Eagle Weekend event. Scopes will be set up at the lock and dam for viewing the wintering Bald Eagles near the dam. The group will also attend the flight show over at the lodge where many raptors will be flown. Contact Tim for information (630-513-7345)

### **March 25 - 28: Cranes of Nebraska**

Jon Duerr will lead members to Grand Island Nebraska to view the migration of about 500,000 Sandhill Cranes. The trip will look for not only the Sandhill Cranes but also many waterfowl as well and Sharp-tailed Grouse and Prairie Chickens. Contact Jon (630-584-5891) by Feb. 10 for information and deposit.

### **April 9 – 10: Prairie Chickens**

Bob Andrini will lead members to Effingham IL. to view our 'native' Greater Prairie Chickens. We will go into a blind on one of the IAS sanctuaries early in the morning to view the Chickens doing their ritualistic mating dances. Many other grassland species will be observed. Participation is limited to only 10 people, so if you're interested call Bob (630-584-8386) ASAP.

### **May 10 - 13: Magee Marsh**

Paul Mayer will lead this trip to one of the nations premier spring migrant traps, Magee Marsh in Ohio. Warblers and other migrants will be almost within touch in this magical spot. Contact Paul (630-377-3438) by Feb. 6 to sign up.

### **May 22: Horicon Marsh**

Chuck Petersen will head once again to Horicon Marsh for a pontoon float trip into one of the largest freshwater marshes in America. Time is right for migration so many birds will be seen and heard. Contact Chuck (630-584-1566) by Feb. 28 to sign up.

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## NEWEST MEMBERS

Below is a list of the most recent members of KCA. If you see them at a meeting or on a field trip, welcome them.

Batavia:	Carol and George Alewel Kathy and Craig Copper
Carpentersville:	Don and Cynthia Cwyner
Elgin:	Harry and Cathy Blecker
Geneva:	William Utz
Gilberts:	Patricia Asher
Glenview:	Jeffrey Sanders
Montgomery:	Mary and Thomas Griffith
Naperville:	Jennifer Arnott
St. Charles:	Tami Bone Kim Girard Bill and Carol Ludemann
Sugar Grove:	Jeff VerCautren
Wasco:	Martin McNamara
Wheaton:	Kim Harrod
Winfield:	Sally MacDowell

## PHOEBE SNETSINGER BOOKS

submitted by Jon Duerr

Two books are now available about the life and birding achievements of Phoebe Snetsinger.

Snetsinger, Phoebe. *Birding on Borrowed Time*. American Birding Association. 2003

Gentile, Olivia. *Life Lists*. Bloomsbury Press. 2009

Phoebe Snetsinger did the impossible by actually seeing over 8,100 bird species out of the world total of more than 9,900 (the actual number of species is in a state of flux because new species are continually being found and new research makes changes to the known species). Also, this amazing list did not begin until 1965 when Phoebe was 30 years old! The stories are about a very dedicated, intelligent, personable woman who took to her new hobby with a rarely found deep passion. Phoebe set a very high bar for the rest of us who make lists of our birding discoveries!

*Birding on Borrowed Time* is a semi-autobiography. It was assembled after her death from her notes, journals and correspondence and her son Tom added an interesting Epilogue. The book is presented in chronological order and follows her list from bird one, Blackburnian Warbler in Minnesota to the last new species, Red-shouldered Vanga in Madagascar. Throughout the chapters we read of her feelings, her view of birding and bird taxonomy, travel, and how the world was changing for bird watching. She describes her torments about being away from her family and how her own health issues dictated her decisions. We also get a glance into the rapidly evolving world of ecotourism. She was in the forefront of expert ecotourism that many of us enjoy today. We learn of the travel, study and planning it took to visit some of the world's remote locations. The book is specific about destinations, her guides and key birds but is short on good descriptions of habitat and other birds seen - a small complaint.

The more recent book, *Life Lists*, parallels the first but also explores the driving force behind the desire to see all the birds in the world. The author, Olivia Gentile, came to Phoebe's quest from a totally unrelated perspective. She did not watch birds, she was not in the Snetsinger family and she knew nothing of ecological travel. It was an off-hand comment made to her while she was exploring why bird watching lifted a friend's depression. "Why don't you ask Phoebe Snetsinger about seeing birds?" This and Olivia's interest in gender equality got the ball rolling that ended with *Life Lists*. We read more of the interactions within the Snetsinger family as Phoebe's obsession deepens. How her husband and adult children reacted to Phoebe's extended trips and the strain it placed on them. She also explores Phoebe's reaction to her cancer diagnosis and re-occurring health issues. A major difference between books is the revelation about Phoebe's disappointment with some of her guides. This was not found in Phoebe's book. Ms Gentile did an enormous amount of homework. Along with reviewing the notes and journals, she went on birding tours and interviewed Phoebe's peers and friends.

Both books are good. You will learn about Phoebe Snetsinger from both. Birders and bird listers will find more in *Birding on Borrowed Time*. General readers will find *Life Lists* more interesting.

Phoebe Snetsinger is someone to remember. She took the interest in bird watching to the highest level. Yes, she had the advantage of a nice inheritance, of newly

opened locations and the growing knowledge of birds, but she was also gifted with intelligence, curiosity and determination. Both books tell her story and either must be read by anyone "making a list!"

Both of these books can be checked out from the KCA library.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

All trips are open to the public. If you have any questions please contact the trip leader or Bob (# below). All trips start at the location of the walk unless otherwise stated. All meetings will be at Peck Farm (except for Feb. 10 and April 14). See newsletter for details of the meeting topics. For all walks, please dress for the weather conditions. KCA is a chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Contact/Leader</b>
<b>January</b> 1	Bird Walk	Nelson Lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Rhonda 630.479.1384
2	Bird Walk	Nelson lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Terry 630.896.3219
13	Meeting	"Animals of the Galapagos Islands," Jack Shouba, speaker, @ Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM	Bob 630.584.8386
16	Roadside Birding	Depart Peck Farm Park, Geneva	8 AM	Jerry 630.377.1444
23	Bald Eagle Watch Weekend	Starved Rock State Park		Tim 630.513.7345
<b>February</b> 6	Bird Walk	Nelson Lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Terry 630.896.3219
10	Meeting	"Wind Energy," Mark Frigo, speaker, @ <b>St Charles Public Library</b>	7 PM	Bob 630.584.8386
20	"Gull Frolic"	Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club		Bob 630.584.8386
27	Bird Walk	Les Arends Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Jon 630.584.5891
<b>March</b> 6	Bird Walk	Nelson Lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Terry 630.896.3219
10	Meeting	"History of Spring Bird Count,"	7 PM	Bob

	14	Meeting	"Coyote Research Update," Chris Anchor, speaker @ <b>Pottawatomie Community Center, St Charles</b>	7 PM	Bob 630.584.8386
	17	Bird Walk	Elsen's Hill/West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve, Winfield	8 AM	Chris 630.492.0049
	24	Bird Walk	Fox River Shores Forest Preserve, Carpentersville	8 AM	Bill 847.931.9123
<b>May</b>	1	Bird Walk	Nelson lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Terry 630.896.3219
	8	Spring Bird Count	Throughout Kane County		Jon 630.584.5891
	10- 13	Road Trip	Magee Marsh, Ohio		Paul 630.209.6019
	12	Meeting	"How to Help Our Feathered Friends," Chuck Peterson, speaker, @ Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM	Bob 630.584.8386
	15	Bird Walk	"Magic Hedge," Chicago lakefront	6 AM	Jane 847.622.3216
	22	Road Trip	Horicon Marsh, Wisconsin		Chuck 630.584.1566
	29	Bird Walk	Grunwald Farms Forest Preserve, Blackberry Township	8 AM	Nancy 630.365.9595
<b>June</b>	5	Bird Walk	Nelson Lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Terry 630.896.3219