

SUMMER 2017

From the Presidential Bird Feeder

The Illinois Audubon Society's 2017 Spring Gathering is now in the history of Kane County Audubon. We last hosted the event 14 years ago, and I'm pleased to say this year's Spring Fling was just as successful. I hoped that KCA members would step up and do all that was needed to make it a success, and so it happened. I heard many positive comments about the weekend, and was thankful for all those who participated. A big "thank you" to everyone who helped out! Read about the weekend in the newsletter.

Ahead, we look forward to our summer season. Now is when our meetings (held the second Wednesday of each month) turn into field trips to local forest preserves rather than presentations at Hickory Knolls. Check the "Upcoming Events" section of this newsletter for the locations and times. Come early and join our members for brown-bag suppers and friendship. We still have the first Saturday of each month as a "Walk around Nelson Lake." We are visiting some great forest preserves this summer, so come and bird with us.

Summer is typically a time that we call the "doldrums," but it doesn't have to be the case with birders. We not only enjoy seeing birds, but also new birding places, with kindred spirits. Birding can take place throughout the year, so come and join us.

—Bob Andrini



Inclement weather did not deter birders at the Spring Gathering.

200 Attend Spring Gathering in Kane County

After nearly two years of preparation, KCA successfully hosted Illinois Audubon Society's 2017 Spring Gathering at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center. "Many hands make light work," the old saying goes, and this year's Spring Gathering proved that statement. Some 191 people registered for the weekend, one of the largest turnouts in IAS history. Participants from throughout Illinois flocked to St. Charles with the expectation of fine birding and socializing with old, as well as new, friends.

Starting with the Hospitality Committee, chaired by Sarah Kimber, members provided the envelopes with information about the weekend, and as their name implied, they welcomed guests to the weekend, and answered myriad questions. They also set up the table centerpieces from two of our KCA members (thanks Bergesons).

Food was exceptional and was organized by Sue Peterson and Jerry Hope. Sue and Craig Copper cooked the Friday dinner of pulled pork followed by homemade brownies and ice



Participants were overwhelmed by the number, and quality, of silent auction and raffle items that Jackie Bowman and her crew obtained.

cream cups. Jerry Hope arranged for Fay's Barbeque to bring its famous barbeque chicken and pork chops. (They lived up to their reputation!) Box lunches, purchased from Smitty's in St. Charles, also got rave reviews (as did the cookie in each box).

Despite birding for only a few hours on Saturday due to thunder (most groups did bird in the rain), and three hours on Sunday, 139 species of birds were identified in the many trips orchestrated by Jon Duerr. On Saturday, groups dispersed to local forest preserves (and to the Magic Hedge and Field Museum in Chicago), to see what birds could be identified. KCA members led people up and down the Fox River on Sunday, and with no rain, had a good time seeing some great birds. We should also thank Denis Kania for filling in with his birding presentation during the height of the rain and thunderstorm.

Participants were overwhelmed by the number, and quality, of silent auction and raffle items that Jackie Bowman and her crew obtained. Many were donated by local merchants and birders. Jackie was assisted by several ticket sellers during the meals, getting people to purchase raffle tickets. Many hours were spent in preparation of the display baskets with the various items, and after the dinner on Saturday, Jackie quickly dispersed the many desired items to the happy winners. Thanks to all who donated the items for the raffle—it could not have been better.

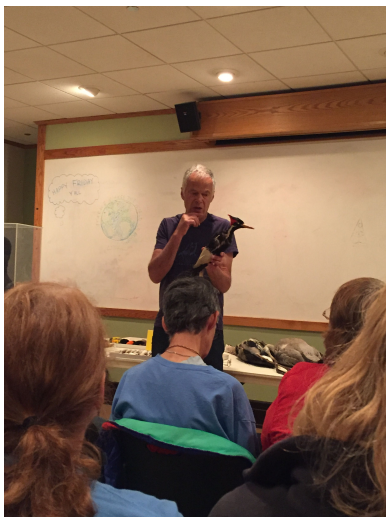
The speakers on each night gave outstanding presentations: KCA members Rich and Marion Miller described their award-winning Chimney Tower Project on Friday. On Saturday, Dave



The food was exceptional, thanks to organizers Sue Peterson, Jerry Hope and their crew of volunteers.



The Spring Gathering concluded with lunch in the outdoor pavilion at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center. Some 139 species of birds were identified in the many trips orchestrated by Jon Duerr.



After a field trip to the renowned "Magic Hedge" in Chicago, Spring Gathering participants were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the bird collection at the Field Museum, guided by David Willard, collections manager emeritus. Later that evening, Willard was the featured speaker at the event's dinner.

Willard presented a program about his 38-year history at the Field Museum in Chicago and took us around the world looking for birds.

Throughout the weekend, many KCA members helped a wide range of different tasks. I was impressed with the many, many members who volunteered to help as different needs arose.

Overall the weekend was an outstanding success, and I want to thank everyone involved that helped bring it about.

—Bob Andrini

Great Backyard Bird Count at Hickory Knolls

The 2017 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was held Feb. 17-20.

The St. Charles Park District joined with KCA to hold the 4th annual GBBC event at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center. From noon to 4 p.m., KCA members counted birds and submitted hourly data to Cornell Labs. In the four hours, 25 species of birds were counted, and about 35 people stopped by.



The younger kids could make owl masks, color bird pictures and help us count birds. The most unusual sighting was a Barred Owl that called during a walk around the Hickory Knolls Natural Area. A Cooper's Hawk decided to land on a branch near the feeders, and for the next 30 minutes, all the feeder birds disappeared. No surprise there, since Cooper's Hawks like to eat birds!

The hourly counts ranged from a high of 16 species in the second hour to a low of 10, when Cooper's Hawk showed up.

Next year, the GBBC will take place Feb. 16-19.

—Bob Andrini

Spring Bird Count Logs 147 Species

Some 48 birders turned out May 6 for KCA's 46th annual Spring Bird Count. Birders identified 147 bird species and tallied 12,403 total birds.

As a comparison, KCA recorded 159 species and 13,416 total birds in 2016.

Twenty-one birding parties spent a total of 169 hours in the field and logged 372 total miles (on foot and by car) in search of Kane County's birds.

The 2017 census had three new high counts:

- Two Red-Breasted Merganser, the previous high, one, was reported in 1997.
- 93 Red-Tailed Hawk, the previous high, 73, was set in 2010.
- 95 White-Breasted Nuthatch, the previous high, 92, was set in 2016.

—Joy Duerr



Thousands of Sandhill Cranes Thrill KCA Members in Nebraska Trip

Thirteen KCA members travelled to central Nebraska March 24-26 to view the massing of Sandhill Cranes along the Platte River during their northward migration.

The cranes concentrate in a 90-mile section of the river awaiting favorable weather before continuing to their breeding grounds. The Audubon Rowe Sanctuary organized viewing of the cranes from blinds as they return to the river for the nightly roost.



The group also explored the farmland south of the river for other birds. The second part of the trip was a stay at Calamus Outfitters in Burwell, NE, to watch Greater Prairie Chickens and Sharp-Tailed Grouse on their breeding leks. The two-hour drive between Grand Island and Burwell crosses a varied landscape from flat cropland to the rolling “Sandhills of Nebraska.” A large reservoir was built near the Calamus Ranch and supports a variety of waterfowl, including American White Pelican and Snow Goose and Blue-wing Teal.

In all, KCA members logged 63 species. Highlights included Prairie Falcon, Franklin Gull, Loggerhead Shrike and Harris Sparrow.

—Jon Duerr



More than 15,000 cranes put on a dazzling show for 13 lucky KCA members during a trip to Nebraska in March.

Global Big Day Yields Nearly 51,000 Checklists

The third annual Global Big Day took place May 13. The idea was to see how many of the world’s birds could be seen in one day. And the answer is almost 60 percent of the world’s birds were recorded on that day. The biggest day total was in Colombia, where 1,486 species were tallied in 2,500 total checklists.

By the numbers:

- 18,941 people around the world participated.
- 50,936 checklists were submitted.
- 6,584 species were recorded.
- 150 countries represented.

Some 11,470 people in the lower 48 states recorded 646 species. In Illinois, 231 species were seen and 815 checklists submitted. In Kane County, 111 species were seen and 28 checklists were submitted.

—Regina McNulty

Want to Visit Peru?

Onithologist Vernon Kleen, board member and past president of the Inland Bird Banding Association, is organizing a 16-day (15-night) birding tour of southeastern Peru from Oct. 3-18, 2017.

Fall here is spring in Peru, so the birds will be singing on territory and will be easier to find.

Kleen anticipates more than 400 species, including parrots on the salt licks. The trip will include five days in the Manu area of the Amazon basin, where more than 350 species have been identified in a single day during the spring.

The trip will be strictly limited to 12 people. An early registration is recommended. For more information, email vkleen@comcast.net.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 3, 7 a.m., Bird Walk

Nelson Lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia

Leader: Theresa LeCompte

Wednesday, June 14, 6 p.m., Bird Walk

Jon Duerr Forest Preserve, South Elgin

Optional brown bag dinner begins at 5:30 p.m.

Leader: Jon Duerr, 630-584-5891

Saturday, June 24, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Hampshire Forest Preserve, Hampshire, Ill.

Leader: Brendon Lake, 224-230-2256.

Saturday, July 1, 7 a.m., Bird Walk

Nelson Lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia

Leader: Theresa LeCompte

Wednesday, July 12, 6 p.m., Bird Walk

Glenwood Park Forest Preserve, Batavia

Optional brown bag dinner begins at 5:30 p.m.

Leader: Lesa Andree, 708-785-1037

Saturday, July 22, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Burnidge Forest Preserve, Elgin

Leader: Tim Balassie, 630-513-7345

Saturday, Aug. 5, 7 a.m., Bird Walk

Nelson Lake/Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia

Leader: Theresa LeCompte

Saturday, Aug. 19, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Shorebird Extravaganza.

Birders will meet at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center and carpool to various locations throughout the county in search of migrating shorebirds.