



The Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society

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<http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org>

General Meeting: April 6, 2009 **Decline of Wetland-Dependent Birds in the Chicago Region**

Presented by
Brad Semel

IDNR National Heritage Biologist

7:30 PM

**Libertyville Village Hall, 118 W. Cook
Second Floor Meeting Room**

What is happening to the wetland birds in our area? Find out for yourself by coming to the April 6th Audubon meeting.

"The Decline of Wetland-Dependent Birds in the Chicago Region" will be discussed from recent publications of survey data that analyzes more than 25 years (from 1980 to 2008) and 160 wetlands in the area.

Brad is a Natural Heritage Biologist with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. His current responsibilities focus on the management of threatened and endangered species, restoration and management of Illinois Natural Areas and Nature Preserves, and the management of State Park lands. He also holds an adjunct research position with the University of Illinois.

General Meeting: May 4, 2009 **Dragonflies in Lake County**

Presented by
Craig Stettner
Harper College

7:30 PM

**Libertyville Village Hall, 118 W. Cook
Second Floor Meeting Room**

Dragonflies and Damselflies, often referred to as Odonates, are regarded as one of the more ancient group of insects. Their body plan has changed very little in the last 290 to 354 million years. Approximately 435 species of Odonates are found in the US.

Because two life stages are based in the water, Odonates are good indicators of wetland health. Data on these organisms may provide additional support for the protection of wetland areas.

The intent of the Dragonfly Monitoring Network is to gain a greater knowledge of the distribution and abundance of dragonfly and damselfly species in the Chicago region and eventually to expand the network across Illinois and beyond.

Craig Stettner, Odonate monitoring coordinator for the Dragonfly Monitoring Network, northeastern area of Illinois, will talk about some of the dragonflies and damselflies that inhabit Lake County. You will be amazed to learn about this beautiful and beneficial insect.

Program Schedule for 2009-2010 will be published in the Sep/Oct issue.

A Note from Lake County Audubon Society

With more and more emphasis on our environment, Lake County Audubon would like to join the world wide effort in eliminating waste and excess. Please join us by helping us reduce the number of mailed copies of **The Audubon Outlook** newsletter. By e-mailing us and telling us you would like to join in the effort of saving our environment, we will remove you from the Newsletter Mailing list. We will then notify you by e-mail whenever the new Newsletter is available to view on our WEB Site www.lakecountyaudubon.org. You can also access previous issues of the newsletters on the web site for reference any time you would like. Please e-mail us at audbirds@aol.com. And as always your e-mail address will be kept completely confidential, not be shared with any other party, for any reason. Note: this process will not affect any mailings you get from National Audubon, including the magazine. Thank you for your effort.

Habitat for Herons

The next time you visit the Almond Marsh Forest Preserve, look closely toward the north horizon and you'll see an "iron tree" blending in with the many nests built there on the dead tree snags. A number of the nest trees have been lost to natural deterioration, reducing the blue heron population there. Audubon's plan for this pilot project is that the man-made nest tree will attract a breeding pair of blue herons and become the first of many replacements for the natural nest trees. This recent installation is a joint effort of the Lake County Forest Preserve, the Lake County Audubon Society, and Integrated Lakes Management. To see photos, go to Heron Platform Construction in the Photo Gallery on our website.

A Wildlife Viewing Primer

Tips on Observing the Elusive

by John Grassy, GORP Wildlife Expert, <http://gorp.com>

What's wildlife viewing all about? Of course the point is to see wildlife. But there's more than that. The point is to observe wild creatures going about their business — meaning the animals either don't know a person is nearby, or they've determined the person isn't a threat and have resumed their normal activities. Watching animals this way is by far the most fun, and the most rewarding — it's a chance to play naturalist, to learn about animals firsthand.

All wildlife are inherently fearful of people. Turtles bail off the log on which they've been sunning themselves. Rabbits and deer bound off. Herons and grouse freeze, melting into their surroundings. It seems almost impossible to get close. How does anybody manage to do it? Putting yourself in position for a great wildlife encounter isn't so difficult — though it does take practice, and patience. The following pointers will improve your wildlife viewing skills.

- **Hit the field early or late.**

Early morning and evening are by far the most productive times for wildlife viewing: this is when just about all creatures are most active. Overcast days tend to be more productive than bright, sunny days.

- **Be aware of wind direction.**

Mammals have especially keen noses and will flee the moment they smell you, which could be a mile or more away. As much as possible walk into the wind, or "quarter" it (moving at a 45-degree angle to the wind).

- **Move slowly and quietly, using all of your senses.**

Take a few steps, then stop, look, and listen. Stay in one place for a bit. Your ears will locate all sorts of things — the rustling of a snake or small mammal on the ground, the calls of birds and frogs, the yip of a coyote in the distance. Use your eyes to detect movement — THEN use your binoculars to zero in on whatever you've seen.

- **Find a comfortable spot and sit down.**

This could be at the base of a big tree, on an open ridgetop, or at the edge of a marsh. Relax and start scanning and listening. Wildlife that may have disappeared as you approached will often reappear once they think the coast is clear.

- **Use field guides.**

Field guides are indispensable; they allow you to figure out exactly what it is you've just seen. They're filled with great tips on how to identify each and every creature on the continent, and where to look for it.

- **Get down with kids.**

Adults look up and into the distance; young children look at the ground. Your child may be far more interested in turning over a rotted log or a stone and marveling at worms and beetles than in stalking a pair of sandhill cranes. For at least part of the outing, go at your child's pace and follow his or her interests — you'll be impressed by how many different things a three- or six- year-old can find.

Wild Bird Center

Here's a reminder from owner Mike Schudrowitz that Audubon Members are entitled to a 10% discount on seed and suet. "All you have to do is mention your membership," he said recently. His Wild Bird Center located in Libertyville was closed in March but the Fox River Grove store at 934 Route 22 (at Route 14) is still open. Mike is offering free delivery for anyone in the eastern part of Lake County if they want it and will continue to support the groups in the area.

Spring/Summer Bird Walk Schedule

(see LCAS website for calendar <http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org>)

MARCH

21 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Mc Henry Dam/ Moraine Hills SP 8AM

28 (Sa) Lake-Cook Aud- Lake County Loons 8AM

28 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Crabtree Nature Center 8AM

APRIL

4 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Rollins Savanna 8AM

11 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Volo Bog State Natural Area 8AM

18 (Sa) Lake-Cook Aud- Beginners Birding at Ft. Sheridan 8AM

18 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Middlefork Savanna 8AM

22 (We) LCAS at Old School FP 7:30AM; Earth Day (birds, treats and garlic pulling)

25 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Henry Dam/ Moraine Hills SP 8AM

29 (We) Lake-Cook Aud at Ryerson Woods FP 7AM

MAY

2 (Sa) Lake-Cook Aud at Montrose Harbor/Magic Hedge 7:30AM

2 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Illinois Beach State Park 8AM

3 (Su) LCFPD @ Ryerson Conservation Area 7AM

6 (We) LCAS at Middlefork Savanna FP 7:30AM

7 (Th) Lake-Cook Aud at Shaw Woods, Lake Forest 7:30AM

9 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Wright Woods 8AM

9 (Sa) LCFPD @ Ryerson Conservation Area 7AM

10 (Su) LCFPD @ Daniel Wright Woods FP 7AM

13 (We) Lake-Cook Aud at-The Grove, Glenview 8:30AM

16 (Sa) WBC-FRG @ Mc Henry Dam/ Moraine Hills SP 8AM

17 (Su) Lake-Cook Aud at Daniel Wright Woods FP 7:00AM

19 (Tu) Lake-Cook Aud at Skokie Lagoons, Northfield 7:00AM

23 (Sa) Lake-Cook Aud at Grant Woods FP, 7:30AM

31 (Su) Lake-Cook Aud at McHenry Dam 7:00AM

JUNE

3 (We) LCAS at Reed Turner Woodland 7:30AM

6 (Sa) Lake-Cook Aud at Rollins Savanna FP 7:00AM

JULY

22 (We) LCAS 6:00PM Almond Marsh Evening: Cheese & Crackers with the Birds

LCAS= Lake County Audubon Society, 847-362-5134,

<http://www.lakecountyaudubon.com>; Lake-Cook Aud= Lake-Cook Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society, 847-831-0331; <http://www.lakecookaudubon.org/>

[Home Page.html](#); LCFPD= Lake County Forest Preserve District, **reservation and fee required**, 847-968-3321 <http://www.lcfdp.org/> ; WBC-FRG= Wild Bird Center, Fox River Grove, 847-639-6594 (walks will start from the store unless indicated) <http://wbc-frg.com/>; Bird and Nature walks are offered many Saturdays and Sundays at Volo Bog State Natural Area and McHenry Dam/Moraine Hills State Park, 815-344-1294.

<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/PARKS/R2/VOLOBOG.HTM>

Help Others Find a Bird:

Tips and Tricks

Excerpted from T. Stephenson, Bird Watchers Digest, January-February 2008

1. Begin your directions with a point everyone can locate.
2. Let people know right away if the bird is flying or perched.
3. Clock analogies can be useful if employed carefully.
4. Set up a landmark in advance if you are going to be birding in one spot for a while.
5. If you are sure you can find the bird again, put your binoculars down before you try to tell someone where it is.
6. If you think that you won't be able to find the bird again, use the bobbing binoculars technique to find the landmark.
7. Look for obstructions that might keep another person from seeing the bird that you can see from your position.
8. If you are working with only two people, bring them right in front of you.
9. You need special care to help others find a flying bird.
10. It is possible to use various optical devices to help others find a bird such as hand mirrors or laser pointer

Invasive Species

By Don Wilson and Glen Moss, LCAS Board Members

E.O. Wilson said "On a global basis ... the two greatest threats to biodiversity are habitat destruction and invasion of exotic species." In many cases, these two threats go hand in hand. Once a habitat is destroyed or altered, the habitat often becomes a suitable environment for non-native or exotic species. When any species becomes dominant, displacing and out-competing native species for nutrients, light, space, or water, it becomes invasive.

Invasive Species

Exotic species are plants and animals that have been introduced, intentionally or accidentally, to an area where the species didn't previously occur naturally. Often an exotic species becomes invasive due to a lack of native competitors and/or predators, or changing environmental conditions, and/or restricting or eliminating natural processes like fire.

Native and non-native plants and animals become invasive when they economically or ecologically adversely affect the habitats they invade. Buckthorn was brought from Europe as a landscaping shrub but quickly became invasive, out-competing native vegetation due to birds spreading the seeds and retaining leaves longer than most native shrubs. The zebra mussel, which is native to the Black and Caspian Seas, was brought in inadvertently in the ballast water of freighters and has no native predators. Native cattails respond to environmental changes and become invasive when they become the dominant species and displace other native species.

Spread Of Invasive Species

Greater import of materials from outside of the US is also contributing to the increasing number of invasive species occurring in the US. In Lake County, the number of locations where invasives occur is growing along with the list of new invasive species. Invasives such as Eurasian milfoil and zebra mussels are spread by watercraft when the watercraft is moved from one body of water to another without proper cleaning. Seeds such as garlic mustard caught in the tread of footwear are spread through the process of walking when treads are not cleaned. Pets inadvertently spread seeds when seeds get caught in their fur or the pads of their feet. Mowing can spread seeds when the equipment is not adequately cleaned before use in another area or when the discharge is blown on the road and picked up by tire treads. Other sources of invasive dispersal are fishing bait (carp) dumped into a body of water, and firewood (emerald ash borer) moved from one campsite to another. Seeds are also spread naturally through the air and water. Purple loosestrife is spread by the flow of water. Native wildlife such as deer, waterfowl, and birds spread seeds in the fur, feathers and feet as they move from one area to another.

Controlling the Spread of Invasive Species

Controlling an invasive species once established is difficult and costly. Eradicating an invasive species once established is often impossible. Plant seeds may remain viable for years. In Lake County, invasive plants, rather than animals, are targeted for control or eradication by volunteers through a number of organizations. Most invasive plants are physically removed by volunteers by pulling or cutting and/or the application of herbicides. In addition to these methods, natural resource professionals may also control invasive species, both plants and animals, with pesticides, traps, prescribed burns, biological control, and mechanical removal.

Recognizing, reporting, and removing invasive species is key to preventing invasive species from becoming established and spreading. For more information on invasive species, or to volunteer, check the websites of Lake County Forest Preserves, Illinois DNR, Wisconsin DNR, New Invaders Watch Program, Liberty Prairie Conservancy,

Lake Forest Open Lands or search on Invasive Species. A great deal of information and opportunities are available.

Bats and Wind Turbines

By Chris Geiselhart, President, LCAS

Wind turbines have been hailed by many as a positive alternative to fossil fuels for energy production. But a negative result, well-known to the public, is the perceived high number of fatalities in the bird population caused by wind turbines.

Less well known is the concern about the fatalities among the bat population, and recent research is showing that they are more under threat than the bird population. This is a world-wide problem, and the increase in wind farms will present greater and greater danger to this most valuable and avid consumer of crop-threatening and disease-spreading insects. Most data available on the threat to these slow-reproducing mammals has been gleaned from research on wind farms in eastern North America.

Most threatened are migratory, tree-roosting bats such as eastern red bats, silver-haired bats, and hoary bats. They seem not to be affected during the breeding season but mostly during the time when they disperse or migrate in late summer and fall. Mystery is still attached to the possible causes of the bat deaths, and scientists have come up with eleven hypotheses. That most favored currently is a condition called "barotrauma." Many studies are showing that, instead of evidence of blunt trauma caused by being struck by propeller blades, a high number of dead bats display signs of internal hemorrhaging. A sudden drop in air pressure near the blades causes deadly damage related to "the bends" that humans can get when diving in deep waters and resurfacing too quickly. The explanation is that, being mammals, bats' lungs are like balloons with air passages that allow for two-way airflow. These end in thin sacs that are surrounded by capillaries. When the outside pressure drops, the sacs can expand to over-capacity, much like an overblown balloon, resulting in burst capillaries. The lungs fill with fluid, drowning the bat. Birds' lungs are structured differently and their systems are better able to withstand sudden drops in air pressure.

As with many research topics, more information is needed before drawing conclusions. Possible solutions being studied to remedy this serious problem are:

- * investigate further why bats seem to be attracted to wind turbines
- * increase wind speed at which turbines start to rotate because bats are more active at night when wind speeds are low.
- * shut down turbines on low wind nights
- * use an "acoustic scarecrow," a device that emits uncomfortable ultrasounds that seem to deter night-flying bats from flying near turbines
- * study how migration and mating habits might attract bats to the ridges where they tend to be killed; this could lead to different locations for the wind farms.

Indiana Dunes Bioblitz

On May 15-16th, the National Park Service and the National Geographic Society are holding a "Bioblitz." Volunteers are paired with scientists and will record every plant, animal, insect and fungus in the National Lakeshore. Your help is needed! For more information see www.NGSednet.org/scientists or contact Lynda Lancaster, Lynda_Lancaster@NPS.gov.

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Welcome New Members!

There have been 85 new G64 chapter members reported by National Audubon in the period Dec-Jan.

We hope to see you soon at a general meeting, so come on down! If you attend a meeting and introduce yourself, you will be offered a 50% new member discount on either a bird house or bird feeder for your yard.

Bird House and Feeder Kits

Houses to accommodate Bluebirds and Wrens and feeders will be available at each meeting of LCAS. The price is \$7 for members and \$10 non-members for houses and \$8 for members and \$11 for non-members for feeders.

National Audubon Membership

New memberships only...sorry not for renewal. Join or give a gift subscription today at the special **Introductory rate just \$20**...43% off the basic rate
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___ The National Audubon Society occasionally makes its membership list available to carefully selected organizations whose mailings you might find of interest. To have your name omitted from this list, please check here.

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