



The Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society

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<http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org>

General Meeting: Feb. 1, 2010, 7:30 PM
**Bees, Beetles and Butterflies... Why Should We
Care About Pollinators**
by Cyndi Duda
Environmental Education Specialist with
the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Libertyville Village Hall, 118 W. Cook, Second Floor Meeting Room

Cyndi Duda is an Environmental Education Specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Chicago Field Office focuses on the conservation of migratory birds, endangered species, and natural habitats – especially wetlands, streams, prairies, and forests. Cyndi's presentation will feature the USFWS efforts to promote conservation of native pollinators and the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign. Her program will also include discussion and various handouts to help you attract and protect pollinators in your own yard.

General Meeting: Mar. 1, 2010, 7:30 PM
**Surface Water Resources of Lake County
and the Flora and Fauna Within**
by Mark Pfister
Associate Director of Environmental and Population Health
Service with the Lake County Health Department
Libertyville Village Hall, 118 W. Cook, Second Floor Meeting Room

Mark Pfister has been researching the surface water resources (and the flora and fauna within) of Lake County for over 18 years during his employment with the Lake County Health Department. Mark's presentation will highlight several state threatened and endangered aquatic species and their habitat and water quality requirements. In addition, he will discuss threats to our water resources such as invasive aquatic species and human pollutants such as road salt.

SPECIAL PROGRAM: Mar. 9, 2010
**The Adventures of Lewis & Clark—Birding
Along the Lewis & Clark Trail**
by Brian "Fox" Ellis"
Ryerson Woods Welcome Center, 7:30 PM
This program is jointly sponsored with the
Lake-Cook Chapter of Illinois Audubon

Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery was a ground-breaking scientific expedition sent by Thomas Jefferson to "observe the animals of the country." They collected more than 50 bird species, many of them new to science. With quotes from their journals and his own ornithological field notes, our favorite storyteller Brian "Fox" Ellis brings to life this important chapter of American natural history.

Upcoming Meetings:
April 5 – Birding by Ear by Paul Sweet, educator
at the College of Lake County
May 3 – Bring Them Back Alive: Conserving
Illinois' Rarest Butterflies by Doug Taron from
the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

Join the Great Backyard Bird Count
February 12-15, 2010

Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 12th annual **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)**, February 12-15, 2010. A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this **free event** is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, schoolyards, and local parks, and, at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Businesses, schools, nature clubs, Scout troops, and other community organizations interested in the GBBC can contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473, Audubon at citizenscience@audubon.org or (215) 355-9588, ext 16.

Recap of the Nov. 2 General Meeting
By Sonja Velins, LCAS Member

The S.R.O. audience was treated to a surprise presentation by Anna Buckhardt, a Stevenson High Schooler, who attended a 4-day summer birding program at Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, NY, this summer under the sponsorship of our Lake County Audubon Chapter. Anna's PowerPoint presentation included photos of group activities such as taxidermy, specimen storage, and field recording.

Our scheduled speaker, Ken Klick, restoration ecologist with the Lake County Forest Preserves, brought us back down to earth with his in-depth presentation on ravines in Lake County and the efforts of the LCFP to restore them to their natural purpose – that of providing a watershed function. Ken took us back to explain the terrain history, what past errors have been committed by human interference, and how they are attempting to rectify these conditions. The presentation was replete with maps, diagrams, and dramatic photos. Upon hearing Ken's passion for this unique landform, and seeing the work of his dedicated crew, it is evident the ravines of Lake County have a bright future.

Rookery Help Wanted! --- see last page

Breeding Season for Frogs and Toads of the Great Lakes Basin

by Don Wilson, LCAS Board Member, LCFPD Steward

Spring is mating time for amphibians in the Great Lakes Basin. Amphibians prefer shallow ponds, lakes, and wetlands for mating, egg incubation, and tadpole development. Many amphibians will leave their normal habitats and migrate to breeding areas. On a rainy night you may see them hopping across the road heading for a body of water to breed in. Shallow ponds that are free of predators such as fish are preferable for obvious reasons. Many of those ponds are temporary ponds, also known as ephemeral ponds, will be dry before summer but will exist long enough for the tadpoles to become frogs or toads.

Frogs and toads are the easiest to identify of the amphibians because in the mating process the males call or sing in order to attract a female. Each male frog or toad has a distinctive call that is easy to hear and can be used for species identification. In addition to their different calls, they all do not call at the same time of spring and they don't all inhabit the same environment. Bull frogs and toads do not seem to have reservations about breeding in deeper ponds or water where there may be fish, turtles, or wading birds. Although the songs are different, some songs are quite similar. When more than one species is calling in a small body of water, or marsh, it is easy to miss a "quieter" species that is calling.

There are 12 species of frogs and two species of toads that may be found in the Great Lakes Basin. Not all of those species are found in Lake County. The species found in the Great Lakes Basin are the chorus frog, wood frog, spring peeper, American toad, northern leopard frog, pickerel frog, Fowler's toad, gray treefrog, Copes' gray treefrog, mink frog, green frog bullfrog, and Blanchard's cricket frog. They are listed in the order they usually call throughout the spring. Most people are probably familiar with the leopard frog, green frog, bull frog, and American toad. Frogs have smooth skin although they come in a variety of colors and patterns. Toads have a rough or warty skin and are found in yards and gardens.

Weather is a key factor as to how many frogs or toads will call. All amphibians' body temperature changes with air and water temperature changes. Frogs and toads usually require an air temperature higher than 41°F to sing. Even then, it is only the species that are early breeders that will sing. As the temperatures increase, so do the numbers of species that sing. The prime time for frogs and toads to call is about a half hour after sunset although you may hear them calling during the day. The reason for calling at night? So they aren't as likely to become a meal for a predator. Since both frogs and toads have moist skin, dry air, or a strong wind, dries out their skin so they stay in or under the water and calling activity is reduced. The best air conditions are damp air with little or no wind. Heavy rains also reduce calling activity.

Some evening after a warm spring rain take a walk along a wetland after the sun sets and listen to the sound of the marsh. You will be amazed at what you may hear. You may need to stand still for a few minutes to let the frogs start singing

again. You may also hear a variety of marsh birds calling or singing just before dark.

If you would like to learn more about calling frogs and toads, or participate in monitoring calling frogs and toads, go to websites for Bird Studies Canada and Chicago Wilderness. Because of the amount of their life frogs and toads spend in water, they are environmental water quality species.

The Science of Window Collisions

Birding Briefs, Birder's World, October 2009

New research suggests that the number of birds killed in collisions with windows in urban areas in North America during spring and fall migrations is far greater than ever imagined - more than 34 million each year.

"Our results confirm that sheet glass consisting of small windows to entire walls of buildings is a lethal hazard for birds," says Muhlenberg College ornithology professor Daniel Klem Jr. "There is no window size, building structure, time of day, season of year, or set of weather conditions during which birds elude the lethal hazards of glass in urban, suburban, or rural environments."

Minimizing the use of large expanses of glass when constructing buildings will mitigate bird-glass collisions, Klem suggests, as will reducing ground cover, changing the height of surrounding vegetation, and eliminating shrubs and trees from areas in front of already-standing buildings.

Commercially available window films, both clear and opaque or translucent coverings, will also prevent collisions. "Applications that combine alternating and contrasting UV-reflecting and UV-absorbing patterns to existing clear and reflective windows have promise of preventing bird strikes while offering little or no visual distraction for humans."

Lone decals or other individual objects placed on or hung in front of windows are ineffective. To prevent collisions, decals or strings of feathers and beads must cover the window surface uniformly. Separating them by 5-10 cm provides complete or near-complete avoidance.

Klem published his findings in the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*.

Birds and Books

A book review by Diane Rosenberg, LCAS Vice President

"Life List – A Woman's Quest for the World's Most Amazing Birds", by Olivia Gentile, is the true story of Phoebe Snetsinger – the first person to see eight thousand species. It is a fascinating adventure story of a woman who travels the world, encounters dangerous situations, and experiences hardships to identify birds. The book also explores Phoebe's personal life, as her growing involvement with bird watching affects her relationship with her husband and four children. "Life List" raises the provocative issue of the boundary between passion and obsession.

Pine Dunes Forest Preserve

By Don Wilson, LCAS Board member

Pine Dunes is a relatively new forest preserve in north central Lake County near Antioch. This new preserve is located in the heart of one of the predicted fastest growing areas of our county. The population in this area of the county is expected to grow nearly 26 percent by the year 2020.

Location

Pine Dunes is in an area bordered by State Line Road on the north, Edwards Road on the south, Crawford Road on the west, and Hunt Club Road on the east. Most of the surrounding preserve land, including road frontage, is still in private ownership.

History

Creating this 255 acre preserve has been a five year process requiring land purchases from five different landowners (DuTemple, Steinberg, Hayden, McClanahan, Kordt). This area and the surrounding areas are or have been primarily agricultural and rural home sites. The original 153-acre parcel was purchased in October 2004 from the DuTemple family. At that time this site was listed as a "Priority One Site" by the Lake County Forest Preserve recognizing the site's ecological value. The 40-acre Hayden parcel was a former Christmas tree farm. This property has two small ponds, scattered wetlands and upland woods as well as remaining stands of Christmas trees.

The wetlands on the Hayden property have been identified as ADID wetlands (Advanced Identification) and are recognized for their ecological importance. The preserve was named Pine Dunes in 2005 because of the pines growing in this area and the dune-like topography in some areas of the preserve.

Natural Scene

This new preserve features outstanding ecological diversity including gently rolling topography, several small ponds, upland woods, and 40 acres of ADID wetlands. This preserve will help to maintain the integrity of this area's valuable wetland complex. The uplands of the preserve consist of pines and deciduous trees that surround open meadows, former Christmas tree areas, and a large grove of mature oak trees. This diverse habitat offers excellent wildlife habitat and gives the impression of being in the north woods.

At this time little restoration work has been done. Future restoration will not only revitalize the savanna, wetland and upland plant communities, but enhance wildlife habitat. While at the same time protecting valuable natural resources, Lake County Forest Preserve also feels that a trail system with good access and scenic views can be created in a preserve of this size. In the future, this trail system may be linked with the trail systems in adjacent forests such as Ethyl's Woods, Raven Glen, Van Patten Woods and the Des Plaines River trail.

Access

Currently access is limited to an unpaved road off Edwards Road just west of Hunt Club Road. There is no formal parking area. In the future, the entrance to the former Christmas Tree Farm on Hunt Club Road may provide access to the Pine Dunes Forest Preserve.

I Want to Know!

By Glen Moss, LCAS Board Member, Steward at Old School Forest Preserve

There are many books about birds, but if you are looking for information specific to our area you might try some of the many sites recommended by the Bird Conservation Network. The BCN is a network of 18 organizations in the Chicago region. The website for BCN is <http://bcnbirds.org/>. Clicking on "green papers" under What We Do will lead you to writings about wind turbines and bird collisions to name a couple of topics. You can even download a Birding Guide for the Chicago Region. Have you noticed a decline or increase in a specific bird species? See how your observations compare to the BCN results by looking at the Species Trends information. The trends are listed by both habitat and species. You may want to join the BCN-net listserv. Interesting discussions take place and questions are posted and answered by participants. Suggestions for timely readings and events are also posted. Want to find out what birds have been spotted over the years during the bird count days at your favorite Lake County forest preserve? Judy Pollack of BCN will send you the information by contacting her at jpollack@audubon.org. Be sure to tell her what site you want to know about. I have asked her for Old School Forest Preserve.

Four Features to Look For in Bird

Baths

Lillian and Don Stokes, Birder's World, Vol. 20, Issue 4, August 2006

1. Shallow Depth.

Small birds prefer water less than an inch deep.

2. Sloping Sides.

Shallow and deep at the same time, baths with gently sloping sides accommodate birds of all sizes- from goldfinches to doves.

3. Bird-friendly rim.

Birds need a comfortable, sure perch from which they can tip their heads down to drink.

4. Non-slip surfaces.

Birds like to feel sure-footed as they ease themselves into the water.

Global Birding

From AARP Bulletin, April 2009

It is not always easy to find the best birding sites and what you might see when you are traveling. There is now a global website, www.birdingpal.org, that lists local birdwatchers all over the world that will treat you to a birding expedition when you are in their area. They will do it for free because they love to share their passion with others. Volunteers are listed by country, state, town or region; languages spoken; and availability. You can e-mail them directly to make arrangements for your adventure.

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Rookery Help Wanted!

Lake County Forest Preserve District has approved an additional eleven heron platforms to be installed at the Almond Marsh Rookery this winter. Our successful pilot heron platform last year has resulted in the present cooperative program co-funded by LCAS and the LCFPD. We'll be installing the heron platforms as soon as the ice at the rookery pond is frozen thick enough to support the weight of volunteers. Please contact us at audbirds@aol.com or call 847-362-5134 if you are able to help on a weekday on short notice in January or February. This is a very important project and relies on our help. Thanks!

For installation details, visit our website:
www.lakecountyaudubon.org.

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