



The Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society

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<http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org>

General Meeting: Feb. 4, 2008

Natural History Explorations of Madagascar by Dave Willard The Field Museum

Dave Willard is the Collections Manager, Division of Birds, Department of Zoology, at the Field Museum in Chicago. Dave has been on research trips to Madagascar and will relate his experiences and explorations of that one-of-a-kind ecosystem. His research interests focus on community structure and migration of birds. Over the course of his career he has studied the feeding ecology of herons at Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey and the avian fish-eating community of a Neotropical forest in Manu National Park, Peru.

General Meeting: Mar. 3, 2008

Biodiversity at Rollins Savanna by Ken Klick Lake County Forest Preserves

Since 1995, Ken has worked as the senior restoration ecologist for the Lake County Forest Preserve District, supervising large woodland, wetland, and prairie restoration projects throughout the District's 26,000 acres of open space.

The 1200-acre Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve is a large-scale wetland, prairie and savanna restoration that provides critical habitat for many grassland and wetland bird species, including state listed Henslow's sparrow, northern harrier, sandhill crane, and least bittern; and regional rare grassland birds like the bobolink, eastern meadowlark, and savanna sparrow. Natural resource restoration efforts began ten years ago and included the removal of 10 miles of

agricultural drain tiles to restore hydrology; control of invasive species; planting of native trees, shrubs, and wetland plants; and seeding of savanna, wetland, and prairie species. Passive recreational trails and a native plant nursery are also part of the scene.

This program will illustrate the restoration and management steps involved in shaping a former corn and bean field in one of our region's hottest birding locales and Important Bird Area (IBA).

Upcoming General Meetings: Program Schedule for 2007-2008:

April 7 – Bird Identification by Jeff Sundberg, Lake Forest College

May 5 – Lake County's Disappearing Landscape by Sara Surroz, Liberty Prairie Conservancy

General meetings of the Lake County Audubon are held at 7:30 pm on the first Monday of the month October through May skipping January. These meetings are **open to the public** as well as to the members of the National Audubon Society and are typically held in the second floor meeting room of the Libertyville Village Hall at 118 W. Cook which is just across the street to the north of the Cook Memorial Library. This **newsletter** is mailed to our members two times in the fall and two times in the spring.

Notice: If you would prefer to receive this newsletter electronically by e-mail or on our website please let us know. We could save paper, printing and postage costs.

Ask Audubon

(Audubon Newswire, National Audubon Society, Vol. 4, No. 19, 9/28/06)

"What are the most environmentally responsible washing machine and detergents to use? I assume hand washing dishes and clothes uses less of everything. Correct?"

Many commonly used dish and laundry detergents contain phosphates, which accumulate in bodies of water. Phosphates cause algal blooms, which in turn deplete the water of oxygen, eventually making the water unlivable for fish and other species. This impacts birds that rely on the water and its organisms for their survival, as well as people who enjoy clean lakes and streams. Ecological cleansers are generally phosphate-free and labeled as such. To learn more about specific ecological cleansers see:

<http://www.coopamerica.org/pubs/greenpages/results.cfm?category=C3>.

As far as washing machines and dishwashers, you can check the government's Energy Star site (<http://www.energystar.gov>) to see which brands are energy efficient. Consumer Reports recommends front-loading machines, which require less water, detergent, and energy. To read more about these models see: <http://www.greenerchoices.org/ratings.cfm?product=washer>. Some of the more efficient washing machines do cost more money upfront, but over time you will save on energy and water costs.

You would certainly use less energy (fossil fuel energy, not your energy!) by doing things by hand. As far as water usage, it depends how much you have to wash. If you have a small amount of dishes or clothes, you will be using less water with hand washing. By running your washing machine or dishwasher only when you have a fairly full load, you will ensure that you do not waste water.

What Is SWALCO And What Can It Do For Me?

by Chris Geiselhart

The Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, better known as SWALCO, has been in existence since 1991, when it was formed by 38 municipalities in Lake County as a response to growing concerns about what to do with our mounting solid waste, aka, garbage or trash. With increasing pressure on landfills and the possibility of building an incinerator in the central part of the county, communities began to look at other options for disposing of things they could no longer use. The whole idea became: reduce how much we were throwing away.

A variety of options was discussed in the process of forming SWALCO, but it was obvious that we needed a sea change in our attitude toward what we dispose of and that more and more

we should consider much of it a resource. Curbside recycling of materials beginning with paper, gradually expanding to glass, metal, and certain plastics, spread throughout the County, encouraged and assisted by SWALCO. Eventually SWALCO initiated periodic collection of several more perplexing types of "disposables": household chemical waste and electronics. Household chemical wastes include old oil-based paint, solvents, various "-cides" such as herbicides and pesticides, used motor oil, and now prescription medications. Included in the electronics collection are personal computers, monitors, computer drives, keyboards, modems, mainframes, scanners, printers, televisions and related peripherals, cell phones, small household appliances and many other items. There are ongoing electronics collection sites in Wauconda, Highland Park, and seasonally in Mundelein and a household chemical waste site in Gurnee (by appointment only). Complete lists are available on the website listed below. Composting of yard waste is also encouraged. Members of the public are informed and educated about these through periodic newspaper articles and ads.

A keystone of SWALCO's outreach through education is the Earth Flag Program. Started in 1993, the program is for all schools in Lake County, kindergarten through high school. SWALCO personnel work with school staff and student leaders to teach the 4Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover) and set criteria having to do with waste reduction and recycling. Students collect data and teachers report it in order to document activity successes. The program is publicized to the school community throughout the school year. Upon meeting all the criteria, a large Earth Flag, the classic photo of Earth taken from space, is presented to the students at an end-of-year ceremony. Over 120 schools have achieved the Earth Flag since its beginning.

Members of the public are invited to attend Solid Waste Agency of Lake County bimonthly meetings, and SWALCO staff members (847-336-9340) are available to answer questions related to disposal and recycling. Visit the website at www.swalco.org for a wealth of information.

Some Energy-saving Tips

Excerpted from The News Sun, October 30, 2006

Energy audit:

A good first step in making an older home more energy-efficient is to do or get an energy audit -- that evaluates how much energy the home uses, pinpoints problem areas where the house is losing or wasting energy and what you can do to correct it. Energy audits cost up to \$400 but some energy companies provide free audits for low-income households. To locate an energy auditor, call your local utility companies or state energy department (see www.naseo.org for a list)

Energy saving tips:

1. Weatherize: Plug leaks around windows, doors, ducts, pipes and electrical outlets with caulking and weather-stripping and close fireplace damper when not in use. Insulating window films are also an inexpensive way to help seal drafty old windows.

2. Insulate: Add insulation to attic, walls and basement. Also make sure air ducts are insulated and sealed. See www.simplyinsulate.com.

3. Tune-up: Get a professional to service heating and cooling systems every year and change the filters. Costs range between \$50 and \$100.

4. Smart thermostat: Invest in a programmable thermostat (\$50 to \$125), which can be set to lower temperatures at night or when away.

5. Vent check: Be sure furniture and drapes don't block the air flow from the floor vent. • Water heater: Reduce the hot water heater to warm or 120 degrees Fahrenheit and make sure it has an insulating blanket.

6. Light for less: Replace your light bulbs with new compact fluorescent (CFLs), which use 75 percent less energy. And don't forget to turn off everything (lights, television, computer, etc.) not in use.

7. Free heat: In the winter, keep blinds or drapes open on sun-exposed windows during the day and closed at night to conserve heat. Also, close off all unoccupied areas of the house.

8. Home upgrades: If your house has leaky single pane windows, old appliances, an outdated furnace and more, consider upgrading with efficient, money saving products that have the Energy Star label -- the government-backed symbol for energy efficiency. See www.energystar.gov for a comprehensive list of home improvement products and where to get them, or call (888) 782-7937.

Eliminate Unwanted Catalogs

Catalog Choice (<http://www.catalogchoice.org>) is a free service that allows you to decide what gets in your mailbox. Use it to reduce your mailbox clutter, while helping save natural resources. Catalog Choice is a sponsored project of the [Ecology Center](#). It is endorsed by the [National Wildlife Federation](#), the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#), and funded by the [Overbrook Foundation](#), the [Merck Family Fund](#), and the [Kendeda Fund](#).

The mission of Catalog Choice is to reduce the number of repeat and unsolicited catalog mailings, and to promote the adoption of sustainable industry best practices. The aim is to accomplish this by freely providing the Catalog Choice services to both consumers and businesses. Consumers can indicate which catalogs they no longer wish to receive, and businesses can receive a list of consumers no longer wanting to receive their catalogs. The collective positive impact that the Catalog Choice community has on the environment is directly related to the number of people using the service. You can help spread the word.

Common Bird Species Declining

From Quick Takes by David M. Bird, Bird Watcher's Digest, September/October 2007

A National Audubon Society census has revealed that populations of some common birds in the United States have declined significantly since the 1960s. Using data from Breeding Bird Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts, Audubon's report, called *Common Birds in Decline*, states that the numbers of 20 common bird species have fallen by at least half since 1967. Some of the more obvious species on this list include logger-head shrike, eastern meadowlark, northern pintail, greater scaup, evening grosbeak, northern bobwhite, snow bunting, whip-poor-will, and field, grasshopper and lark sparrows. However, some of the more surprising species on this list are the black-capped chickadee, common tern and common grackle. Habitat loss is fingered as the main culprit, but other factors include invasions by alien plants and animals and widespread ecological changes caused by global warming. The preservation of breeding and feeding grounds in Canada's boreal forest was most frequently identified as a critical step in saving some of these species.

West Nile Virus

From Quick Takes by David M. Bird, Bird Watcher's Digest, September/October 2007

In the May 17 issue of the Journal Nature, S.L. LaDeau, A.M. Kilpatrick and P.P. Marra published a paper titled "West Nile Virus Emergence and Large-Scale Declines in North American Bird Populations" Analyzing 26 years of data from the Breeding Bird Survey and focusing on 20 common bird species, the scientists found that since the 1999 emergence of West Nile Virus, 7 species, including American crow, blue jay, tufted titmouse, American robin, eastern bluebird, house wren and black-capped and Carolina chickadees, underwent significant declines in populations. Of those, the American crow population was hit the hardest. By 2005 only the blue jay and the house wren had restored themselves to pre-1999 levels.

Ducks Increase

From Quick Takes by David M. Bird, Bird Watcher's Digest, November/December 2007

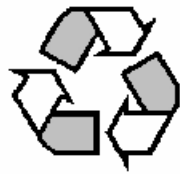
In July the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a report indicating that the mid-continent duck populations are estimated at 41.2 million pairs, an increase of 14 percent over last year. Winter snowfall and good precipitation have led to slightly improved habitat conditions for brood rearing and brood survival. Total pond counts last May revealed 7 million ponds, a 15 percent increase from last year's estimate and 44 percent higher than the long-term average. Overall, 9 of 10 surveyed species increased this year. Mallard numbers are 10 percent higher than last year, and redheads, canvasbacks and northern shovelers are at record highs. Blue-winged and green-winged teal, gadwall and widgeon are all above their long-term averages. Pintail and scaup numbers, however, still remain well below their long-term averages. For more details, visit Ducks Unlimited at ducks.org.

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DATED MATERIAL!!

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Welcome New Members!
There have been 143 new G64 chapter members reported by National Audubon in the period from August through November.

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% 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 **Mail your check and this form to:**
Lake County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 332
Libertyville, Illinois 60048

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Make checks payable to National Audubon Society.
Dues include \$15 for AUDUBON magazine. Please allow 4-6 weeks from receipt of payment to receive your first issue of AUDUBON.
___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.
Chapter Code G64 (Lake County Audubon)
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