

Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS)



To contact us:

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Articles:

- Oak Hickory FP
- Hawk watching in Lake County...Definitely
- Vampire in your Home
- TechTip: Audubon Guide for iPhone
- Ft Sheridan FP

General Meetings

Libertyville Village Hall
118 W. Cook Avenue
Second Floor

Monday Feb. 7 7:30 PM

**Losing the Louisiana
Marshes and Swamps**

Monday March 7, 7:30 PM

Prescribed Burns

Monday April 4 7:30 PM

Mushrooms

Monday May 2 7:30 PM

**Des Plaines River
Waterway**

Activities

Feb. 18-21, 2011

Great Backyard Bird Count

Sat Feb. 19, 2011

Gull Frolic

Sat March 5, 2011

Wild Things Conference

Sat April 2, 2011

**Almond Marsh –
Welcome Back Herons**

Editor

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Embrace the Internet, use the Outlook PDF

If you have not noticed, the Audubon Outlook has a new look and direction. Since I began as the editor of this newsletter, I have had the vision to provide all locally written articles which are supplemented using photos, maps and links to additional material available over the Internet.

I want to encourage our readers to use the PDF version of the Audubon Outlook which is available at www.lakecountyaudubon.org. Or better yet, [subscribe](#) to the email mailing list by sending me an email at lcaudubon@gmail.com or go to <http://j.mp/i8V6hO>.

Also, if you have questions concerning subjects which are appropriate to the Audubon Society or a tech question, please drop me an email. I

would also like to encourage articles from you, our readers or suggestions on topics or speakers. We want to make it YOUR LCAS.

I, like you, am looking for the first signs of spring and hope to see you at our meetings and activities.



Rick Hoppel Audubon Outlook Editor
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General Meeting: **February 7 7:30 PM** Libertyville Village Hall

Losing the Louisiana Coastline Marshes & Swamps

Can they Be Saved??? *Speaker: Glen Moss* Lake County Audubon Board

Last year's oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico drew the world's attention to an area devastated by human activities that led to massive degradation of the Gulf, its benthic community, the bird community, and all sea life in between. It affected the economy of a vast area that depended on the sea's riches for its livelihood. While it was a sudden event that affected the area, every bit as serious over the long term has been the loss of habitat caused by siltation and erosion affecting not only the Mississippi delta but

resulting in horrific flooding in the area. Lake County Audubon board member and retired teacher, Glen Moss, will give this presentation. Glen visited the area of concern in Louisiana last year as part of an educational program and returned with a wealth of information regarding long-term habitat loss and what can be done to remediate the problem. His talk will include how loss of land areas affects neo-tropical trans-gulf migrant birds that we see in northern Illinois in the Spring. Bring a friend to learn more from this multi-media presentation.

General Meeting: **March 7 7:30 PM** Libertyville Village Hall

Lake County is Burning! LCFP Prescribed Burn Program

Speaker: Leslie Berns Prescribed Burn Manager of the Lake County Forest Preserves

A common sight around Lake County in the early spring and late fall is huge clouds of smoke from large fires in the fields and forests of our forest preserves. Instead of being the result of vandals or lightning strikes, the fires are prescribed by the ecologists of the forest preserve to remove invasive species and dead biomass. This prescribed burn program has been in place over ten years and has recently become the responsibility of Leslie Berns of the Lake County Forest Preserves (LCFP).

prevent the fires from becoming out of control. Since there is now some history to the program, she will present us with the benefits of the burns and how they have improved the ecological quality of the county.



[Almond Marsh Burn Photo Gallery](http://j.mp/dREXZL)
<http://j.mp/dREXZL>

Leslie will discuss the reasons and techniques of the burns, along with the safeguards taken to

Oak Hickory Forest Preserve

Location: Newport Township - Northeast Lake County - Boundaries are Hickory Lane on the north, Kilbourne Road on the east, Route 173 on the south, and VanPatten Woods on the west.

Five parcels of property make up this new 225 acre preserve. Three purchases were made in 2009 and two in 2010. The majority of this site is currently agricultural and planted in corn or soybeans. At this time there are several fields separated by shrubby fence rows. The northern boundary is an oak/hickory woodland with several small ponds and a few private homes and property which are not part of the forest preserve. The agricultural fields have a rolling topography and a considerable amount of gravel of varying size and type.

The wooded section of this preserve on the north includes a variety of oaks in addition to the shagbark hickory. Around the ponds and wet areas there are weeping willows, ash, and Box Elder. There are several drainage ways in the farm fields that appear as shallow depressions. Most of these eventually run into roadside ditches that eventually run into the Des Plaines River. The largest drainage way is actually a ravine in the northwest corner of the preserve. The bottom is littered with a variety of sizes of gravel and 2 - 3 feet diameter rocks. Although it is overgrown with boxelders, it will be an interesting area to observe in the spring to see what wild flowers appear and how much water flows through the ravine. In the wooded areas and in the fields there are temporary wetlands that probably contain standing water in the spring. Several of the wetlands in the fields are small temporary wetlands that are wet enough throughout the year that they can't be planted with crops and contain a variety of wetland plants such as sedges. There is also a pond with open water in one area that wasn't planted in crops. All of these wetlands are probably important breeding sites for the area's salamanders, toads and frogs.

There is no formal parking area for the preserve. Entry can be made from the east side of Van Patten Woods. Caution needs to be taken when crossing the railroad tracks which are used by Amtrak trains.



[Oak Hickory FP](http://j.mp/ideY6r)
<http://j.mp/ideY6r>
(link to PDF)



by Don Wilson

Hawk watching in Lake County.....Definitely! by Paul Sweet / Biology Instructor CLC

To a birder, fall means migration. As August draws to a close, we wait with bated breath for the first cold front to bring waves of warblers, flycatchers, thrushes ... And to a few hardy souls, fall means hawks! Here in Lake County, Illinois Beach State Park (IBSP) has long been known as an excellent place to watch the fall hawk migration. David B. Johnson and Joel Greenberg actually conducted systematic counts here in the fall of 1981 and 1982. Eighteen years later, Vic Berardi founded the [IBSP Hawkwatch](#), and after eleven years, we are still here.

At our site, we count 16 species of raptors annually, including Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Goshawk, and both species of eagles. In addition, we have observed four species of vagrant raptors: Ferruginous Hawk, Mississippi Kite, Prairie Falcon, and Gyrfalcon.

Raptors are the focus, of course, but spending eight hours a day along the lakefront means other birds as well. We count hundreds of Sandhill Cranes every year, while we expect Tundra Swans, Lapland Longspurs, and Northern Shrikes each year. Non-raptor vagrants have included White Ibis, Parasitic Jaeger, Western Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, and Common Raven. Vagrants are exciting, of course, and many of our visitors come specifically in hopes of seeing a Goshawk or a Golden Eagle. But what really makes hawk watching special to me is the celebration of abundance. Watching 150 Merlin flash by, a kettle of 100 Broadwings floating overhead, or Sharpies appearing one after the other as if they were on a conveyor belt, I gain an appreciation of the magic of migration in a way that warblers never quite provide. Seeing a single Mississippi Kite is a wonderful experience; seeing 40 floating over a stoplight in southern Illinois is truly impressive. But to recognize that those 40 are just a small part of the 200,000 counted every year at Veracruz is awe-inspiring.

One of the most common questions we hear from first-time visitors is "How can you identify that bird way out there?" We have stock answers, of course: the bird has this shape, it flies in that way. But the real answer is "Come watch 2 or 3 thousand hawks, and then we won't need to explain." The ability to pick out Blue Jays at a quarter-mile, or to find the one hawk in a flock of gulls at twice that distance, becomes second nature with enough practice. Come spend enough time with us, and you'll amaze your birding friends.

Our count is conducted from the last Saturday in August to the last Sunday in November, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Directions can be found at [Hawccount.org](#), as can all of our data. We love having visitors, and there is usually someone present to answer questions. We also love new volunteers - if you have the time, we'll teach you the birds!

The Vampires in your home!

by Chris Geiselhart

Are you harboring beings with two long teeth that suck the electricity out of your wall plugs when you're not watching? The polite way of asking is, "Is your standby power being consumed by devices that you leave plugged in when it's unnecessary to do so?" The list is fairly long, consisting of devices and functions that we assume are turned off when actually they are surreptitiously draining our collective resources and pocketbooks by their wastefulness. Take a walk around your house and think how many of these you have: VCRs, DVDs, most audio systems; TVs, home cinema suites and set-top boxes; computers, digital monitors and printers; anything with remote control "instant-on" function just waiting at your beck and call; power adapters; home video games; cell-phone rechargers when not in use; cordless drills; electric tooth brushes, curling irons, and hair dryers. The list continues with items we'd hesitate to unplug such as cordless phones and answering machines, remote-control air conditioning systems; standby light or clock; microwave ovens, security systems and fire alarms. One suggestion is to plug groups of devices into power strips, turning them on and off as needed.

This can also provide some degree of protection since most of these are surge protectors. Look for appliances and even electronic devices with Energy Star efficiency ratings.

According to DropYourEnergyBill.com, unplugging these when not in use can annually save the single household up to \$50, with a saving of 5 billion watts per year. Think of the reduced tonnage of CO2 produced and the reduction of power plants needed. Imagine the collective savings to the community from an economic and an ecological point of view if we each made a few changes and lowered our "instant-on" expectations! This year, reduce your energy consumption by taking these simple steps.

In order to determine just how many appliances are using per hour/day/month/year, use the Kill-a-Watt Meter. It's a device that can tell usage as well as cost for using your various appliances and other energy wasters. More information will be available in a future Audubon Outlook. **Read more:**

- [How to Plug All of Your Electrical Leaks](http://j.mp/e3x55y)
- [Home Energy Leaking](http://j.mp/gDIRjb)
- [Standby Power](http://j.mp/fgD2LI)

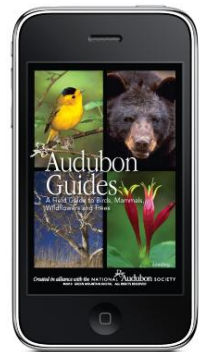


[Kill-A-Watt Meter](#)

"A device that can tell usage as well as cost for using your various appliances and other energy wasters"

Tech Tip: Get the "Audubon Guides" App <http://j.mp/gd3l22> by Rick Hoppel

Features If you are like me, you have a collection of the fine Audubon field guides. Instead of carrying those around in your bag consider obtaining the Audubon Guide App for your Apple iPhone, iPod touch or Android device. I recently got a collection of guides which included the Bird, Mammals, Trees, and Wildflower guides for \$40 from iTunes. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!**



Lake County Audubon Society Activities

April 2 (Saturday) Almond Marsh-- Welcome Back, Herons.
The area is open from 8 am-12 noon. Entrance to parking is on the west side of Almond Road, 1/2 mile south of Rte. 120. In addition to the regularly scheduled Saturday volunteers, Lake County Audubon volunteers will provide hot chocolate and snacks for visitors for as long as the supply lasts. Binoculars and bird books are available for lending.

May 11 (Wednesday) Lake Minear Trail- 7:30-9 am-- parking is available at the canoe launch on Oak Spring Road. LCAS will have binoculars and bird books to lend that morning.

May 18 (Wednesday) Brushwood @ Ryerson Woods FP -7 am
We will join Nan Buckardt of the Lake County Forest Preserves for a midweek bird walk. Meet at the parking lot by the white house by taking the first left turn at the white gate. LCAS will have binoculars and bird books to lend.

Non-LCAS Activities

When	Event	Location	Group
Feb. 18-21	Great Backyard Bird Count http://j.mp/gl7ypX	your backyard	Audubon + others
Sat Feb. 19	Gull Frolic http://j.mp/graOKs	Winthrop Harbor	IL Ornithological Society
Sat. March 5	Wild Things Conference http://j.mp/9mWfQ9	U of IL @ Chicago	Chicago Wilderness
Lake County Forest Preserves Activities		http://bit.ly/dshYp4	
Lake-Cook Audubon Programs		http://bit.ly/c2dLA9	
Lake-Cook Audubon Field Trips		http://bit.ly/buvnCb	

Ft. Sheridan FP by Barb Thompson

Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve has been open to the public since 2006, but it was a new discovery for me only last fall. My first visit was a beautiful sunny day in September. I was greeted with thousands of Dragonflies and hundreds of Monarch Butterflies. What a spectacular sight. There is also a nice view of Lake Michigan with a trail that leads down to the beach. It is nice just to take a stroll along the beach. About a month later I returned, but was disappointed that there were only a few Dragonflies & Monarchs left. On this visit, I took the trail that meanders through a field where there were a couple of Hummingbird Moths that were hovering in the air just as Hummingbirds do. Then the trail enters a wooded area, where immediately two Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen. What a treat, since I have not seen any for quite a long time. To top off the day, farther down the trail there were several Bluebirds flitting around, showing off their bright blue colors.

What a great place. I am looking forward to a return visit soon to see what other surprises I might encounter.

[Ft. Sheridan MAP \(PDF\)](http://j.mp/eh76FS) <http://j.mp/eh76FS>

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Lake County Audubon Society

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Bird House & Feeder Kits

Bird feeder kits will be available at each general meeting of the LCAS. The price is \$8 (members) and \$11 (non-members). Bluebird houses will be available for \$15 (members) and \$18 (non-members).

a new look for the Audubon Outlook

- There is a new look and a new editor, Rick Hoppel, for the Audubon Outlook. Let us know what you think by sending an email to lcaudubon@gmail.com
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