

Apr. – May 2016

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lakecountyaudubon.org

Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS)



To contact us:

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Articles:

- Take Two Trees and Call Me in the Morning
- Bird Monitors Needed
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- Birdscaping Update
- Photography Competition
- LCAS Non-Profit Status – see back page

Activities:

- April 2 Welcome Back Herons 8:00am at Almond Marsh FP
- April 20 Nature Walk 7:30am at Wright Woods FP
- April 30 Nature Walk 7:30am at Reed Turner Woodland Preserve
- May 11 Nature Walk 7:30 at St. Mary's Seminary (members only event)
- May 25 Nature Walk 7:30am Pine Dunes FP
- June 1 Cheese and Crackers Event 6:00pm at Almond Marsh FP

For up-to-date listings, go to www.lakecountyaudubon.org
Or scan the QR code below



Learning to Bird by Ear: Recognizing and Identifying Birds by Their Vocalizations

General Meeting: Monday, Apr. 4, 7:30 PM Libertyville Village Hall 2nd Floor
Speaker: Geoffrey A. Williamson

Many experienced birders will say that 90% of their birding is done "by ear." For those conducting censuses and surveys, this skill is especially important, as it enables one to recognize more efficiently and effectively what birds are present on a survey route. But even the casual bird watcher will find ear-birding skills quite useful. In many situations, such as forest and marshland birding, birding by ear is valuable in locating and identifying birds when they are difficult to see.

This presentation describes basic concepts in bird vocalizations and provides organizing principles for learning to bird by ear. The talk also discusses the many resources available to the person looking to acquire or improve ear-birding skills.

Geoffrey is the co-editor of Illinois-Indiana regional reports for *North American Birds*, the journal of ornithological record published by the American Birding Association.

Bird Banding and Monitoring

General Meeting: Monday, May 2, 7:30 PM Libertyville Village Hall, 2nd Floor
Speaker: Lee Johnson
Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, Winnebago County

Lee Johnson started Sand Bluff Bird Observatory in northern Winnebago County in 1967. Since that time, the all-volunteer organization has grown to about 35 active and dedicated volunteers who help band on weekends during migration, spring and fall. SBBO has banded over 300,000 passerines and raptors. The data generated over 48 years of banding in the same place is important for scientific studies to show what is happening to bird populations. There are people who do not "believe" in global warming, but bird banding data shows that many of the migrating and nesting birds are shifting their historic locations. Lee will talk about some of the examples which the banding data has shown, including Indigo Bunting, Gray Catbird, Fox Sparrow, and

Tennessee Warbler. He will also give examples of unusual retraps from other countries, and longevity records from retraps.

Lee is a self-taught ornithologist, with first-hand experiences that come with years of being out in the field. He is also keenly interested in native plants and ecology, and maintains an acre of sand prairie in his yard with many rare species. He also has studied and observed butterflies and other insects, reptiles and amphibians, geology, and everything related to nature. He has spent his adult life working to save the natural world, and teaching people about nature. For this dedication he has received several awards, including the George and Barbara Fell Award, the Seth B. Atwood Award for Conservation, and the National Friends of Parks and Recreation.

The Chicago Audubon Society will host its eleventh biennial Birding America conference on Saturday, March 19, 2016 at North Park University, 3225 West Foster Avenue in Chicago.

The conference consistently draws an enthusiastic audience of Chicago-area birders with a full range of birding skills and interests. The format consists of presentations by regional and national experts on key birding locales, both local and international. Also, skills development workshops on bird identification and other bird-related topics will be offered, as well as the opportunity to network with other birders and browse related exhibits.

To inquire further about Birding America XI, please contact the Chicago Audubon office at 773-539-6793 or via email at cas@chicagoaudubon.org. For additional program information, please see website at <http://www.chicagoaudubon.org/>

Take Two Trees and Call Me in the Morning

Teresa H. Horton, PhD, Research Associate Professor, Laboratory for Human Biology Research, Department of Anthropology, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

Understanding the health benefits of nature can help us conserve nature

Often cited reasons to conserve nature include preserving habitat for wildlife and providing ecosystem services such as cleaning air, filtering water, and moderating temperatures. However, many of these arguments are complex and easily ignored by people concerned with the stress of daily living. In a recent TEDx talk, [Justin Bogardus](#), director of the viral videos “[Nature Rx](#),” makes the case for developing simple messages that appeal to people’s immediate needs. We can make some simple arguments for conserving nature by appealing to the public’s desire for better health and well-being.

“Get outside, go get some fresh air and exercise” is a common recommendation to someone who is feeling poorly. Common sense suggests that access to green space improves health and well-being by increasing physical activity. However, there is more to the health benefits of nature. Simply sitting outdoors or viewing nature through a window can speed recovery from surgery, reduce stress hormones, and improve attention and focus. As described recently in [National Geographic](#), increasing scientific evidence demonstrates that spending time in nature produces measurable changes in our brains; other sources document improvements in mental and physical health. Thus, our brains perceive the difference between a pristine river and a polluted sanitary canal, and our bodies respond to this difference in perception in significant ways.

The human body appears to be separated from nature by the layer of cells that forms our skin and extends inward, forming the linings of our digestive and respiratory systems. However, this layer of cells is not so much a barrier as an interface with the communities and ecosystems that surround us. Our digestive system absorbs chemicals and microorganisms. Our respiratory system provides an entry point for air-borne chemicals, particulates, and allergens. Our sensory receptors convey signals about electromagnetic (e.g. light, heat), chemical (e.g. taste and smell), pressure (e.g. touch, sound), and social stimuli to our brain. The information coming across this interface is spread throughout our body by an internal world-wide web made up of our nervous, endocrine, immune, and circulatory systems. Thus, our minds and bodies are not independent of the environment, but connected to it by a continuous, multi-modal flow of information.

Knowledge of these connections has helped public health workers understand the mechanisms for disparities in health among different socioeconomic groups. This knowledge is being used to influence policy regarding urban green spaces and food deserts in an effort to improve public health. We should apply this knowledge more broadly to affect conservation policies through simple messages that appeal to individuals’ self-interest, their health. Simple messages can be conveyed that spending time in forests and prairies may help reduce obesity or depression, or even increase the body’s ability to fight cancer. Sometimes keeping it simple has huge ramifications. Sometimes, all you need is a dose of nature.

Bird Monitors Needed

Lake County has several opportunities for those people interested in becoming bird monitors:

The Casey Trail

In partnership with Libertyville Township, Conserve Lake County now seeks skilled volunteer birders to monitor birds in the township’s farm fields along Casey Road as they undergo their transformation back to native prairie, wetland, savanna, and woodland. Baseline data collection for this long-term project would ideally begin this March using protocols established by the Bird Conservation Network. Monitoring will occur at specific locations along Casey Trail, which runs from Oak Openings in Grayslake to Casey Farm in Libertyville. We anticipate a significant increase in birds using these lands, making this year’s baseline data particularly valuable.

For more information about this exciting project, contact Greg Rajska at grajska@conserve-lakecounty.org

Bluebird Nest-box Monitoring

Bluebird monitoring is an excellent opportunity to get out and enjoy nature while helping to restore the Bluebird population. Monitoring of nest boxes is once a week during nesting season. Due to constant habitat loss and competition of non-native species, Bluebirds have been an endangered species in Lake County since the 1920s. Since Bluebirds are cavity nesters, the most important thing we can do to bring them back is to provide monitored nesting boxes. The following trails are in need of a monitor:

Buffalo Creek F.P. * Cuba Marsh F.P. * Epstein Farm (located in Hainesville) * Flint Creek F.P. (East and West) * Fort Sheridan * Gander Mountain F.P. * Half Day F.P. * Heller/Highmoor Nature Center (Highland Park) * Island Lake Farms * Kemper Lakes Golf Course (Old McHenry Road) * McDonald Woods F.P. (New Trail) * Merit Club Golf Course (Libertyville) * Renwood Golf Course (Round Lake Beach) * St. Francis Woods F.P. * Wadsworth Savanna F.P.

If you are interested in becoming a monitor please contact Walt Sivertsen at 847-223-4730 or email him MCFWalt@yahoo.com. You will find it extremely rewarding.

The Bird Conservation Network (BCN) Survey

The goals of the BCN Survey are to generate a picture of bird distribution in the region, assist conservation planners in decision making, and to create a database which can be used by researchers investigating specific ecosystem questions.

Bird monitoring is easy and is not a big time commitment. Monitors are required to visit their site twice in June (breeding season) and should try to make 5 or more visits total each year. Monitors need to be able to recognize birds by sight and sound. Points are set up at the site and the monitor spends five minutes at each point recording all the birds seen and heard. Data is then entered into BCN eBird.

Many Lake County Forest Preserves are in need of monitors, especially:

Middlefork Savanna * Lakewood * Independence Grove * Nippersink * Wilmot Woods

For more information please contact BCN Survey Coordinator, Emma England at bcsurvey@gmail.com

So why not give it a go! Bird monitoring is rewarding, gets you out in nature, and is a way you can make a very important contribution to bird conservation in your county.

Letter from Anna Buckardt

I have been a birder for as long as I can remember. As a kid it was a fun hobby that none of my friends shared, and that earned me the title “nature girl.” I was such a bird nerd that when asked, as part of a third grade project, what my favorite family tradition was, I wrote “woodcocking.” And yes, for those of you who didn’t know, woodcocking is a very legitimate verb (which I may have made up) for watching male American Woodcock breeding displays. But despite how much I loved birding, I never thought it would turn into a career.

In 2009, with support from the Lake County Audubon Society, I was fortunate enough to attend the first annual Young Birder’s Event at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, NY. The few days I spent in NY opened my eyes to the many career options in Ornithology. Although I didn’t realize it as a 16 year old, the Young Birder’s Event encouraged me to take my hobby and passion for birds and turn it into a career.

Since then my passion has only increased. After working with my ornithology professor at Michigan Technological University to write and secure a grant, I spent the summer of 2013 on the big island of Hawaii researching the impact invasive rats have on the foraging habits of endemic birds. I presented my findings at The Wildlife Society’s (TWS) national conference in 2014. After that I was hooked. Hooked on field work, hooked on research, and hooked on sharing what I learn with others.

In the summers of 2014 and 2015 I was an Avian Field Technician for the Southern Sierra Research Station (SSRS) in Weldon, CA. I helped with detection surveys, nest searching, and banding of Endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatchers and Threatened Western Yellow-billed Cuckoos. In my second summer at SSRS, I took on an additional research question about Brown-headed Cowbird management strategies. I am very excited to be presenting my findings at the TWS Western Section meeting this February.

And the excitement doesn’t end there. In the fall of 2015 I worked for the Great Basin Bird Observatory. I conducted point counts and mortality surveys at the Crescent Dunes Solar Energy Facility in Tonopah, NV. Although the job was by no means glamorous, I learned so much and felt so fortunate to have an ornithology experience so different from my other opportunities.

It seems unreal to me how many fantastic and positive ornithology experiences I’ve had up to this point. I have loved every minute of them. Now starts a new chapter in my life and career. I have accepted a research assistantship at the University of Maine starting in the fall of 2016. My Masters research starts this summer in northern Wisconsin, where I will be woodcocking nightly to understand American Woodcock use of habitat management areas. It’s funny how things have come full circle for me.

I would like to thank the Lake County Audubon for supporting young birders like me, and helping foster a passion for birds and the environment. The impact you had on my life was greater than you will ever know.

Ed. Note: This article was written in response to a request to update LCAS on the progress Anna has made that turned her from a self-professed “bird nerd” to a young professional in the ornithology field. Well done, Anna!

Birdscaping 2016 Update

Lake County Audubon Society will begin its third phase of planting high-quality native shrubs and trees along a newly-established trail on Libertyville Township Open Space property located east of Bull Creek Drive and north of Rte. 137. It will continue to provide and expand habitat, food, and shelter for birds and other animals. “These plants are to provide animals with high-energy food during different seasons of the year,” according to Paul Geiselhart, who initiated the project in 2012 in cooperation with Libertyville Township Supervisor Kathleen O’Connor.

Funds will be supplied from a variety of grants that will provide for stabilization of the stream bank and erodible areas in the Liberty Prairie Reserve and educating residents of Lake County about the importance of native plants that support unique animal habitat. Planting workdays will take place in Fall 2016. Prior Spring brush-clearing workdays will be necessary, so volunteers will be needed during both seasons. Those interested in helping will find information about dates on our website: www.lakecountyaudubon.org as well as Facebook.

Photography Competition

“Moments In Nature”, a Lake County Audubon Society photography competition, was on display at the Brushwood Center in Ryerson Woods from January 10 – February 21, 2016. Over 80 visitors attended the Sunday afternoon opening event where Awards, Honorable Mentions, and Best in Show designation for each class were on display. The competition was judged by Ralph Durham, president of the North Shore Camera Club who commented, “I thought that the quality of the images submitted was outstanding.” The Advanced Class Best in Show was awarded to Kelly Happ for “Take Off” and the Beginner Class Best in Show went to Madison Pfeiffer for “Pollinator on Duty”.

The following is a list of the photographers who received awards or honorable mentions; William Bach, Tami Bevis, Julie Boatright, Michelle Cox, Nicola Cushny, Bonnie Dawson, John Edmondson, Joan Farrell, Sue Matsunaga, Robert H. Noble, Jennifer Parmley, Michael Schmitt, Sheri Sparks, Anne Thrall, and Milton Weinberg. The Lake County Audubon Society would like to thank Emma England for organizing the photo competition, Ralph Durham for judging, and the Brushwood Center for hosting the exhibition. Most of all LCAS would like to give special thanks to all of you who participated in the competition; your terrific photos “focused” our attention on the natural beauty that surrounds us in Lake County!

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This newsletter was printed using soy-based ink on paper with 100% [post-consumer recycled content](#) processed chlorine free.

Lake County Audubon Society

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Lake County Audubon Society Non-Profit Status

After much time and effort, we have achieved 501(c) (3) status. What do these sometimes mysterious numbers mean? This status means that we are not only an Illinois non-profit, as we have been, but have received the designation that will enable donors to deduct the value of gifts and property to the Lake County Audubon Society on their Federal Income Tax forms. We are "also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522." Note: Your donation will be used fully towards our mission; our society is all volunteers, there are no administration fees taken out. To enhance the ease of donating online, LCAS has a PayPal account which is linked to our website.

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