The Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society

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http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org

General Meeting: Nov. 5, 2007

Global Warming: The Choice Is Ours

Presented by

Richard S. Treptow, Ph.D.

7:30 pm

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

What causes global warming? After much research, most climatologists now agree that it results from changes in the composition of the earth's atmosphere brought about by human activity. What is the harm in global warming? Among other things, although the consequences to date have been minimal, the impact will increase if the warming is allowed to continue unchecked throughout this century. What must we do? Now is the time to roll up our sleeves--the choice is ours.

Dr. Richard S. Treptow, Ph. D, will give a Power Point program with a broad overview of the causes, consequences and cures for global warming. Dr. Treptow is professor emeritus of chemistry at Chicago State University, an environmentalist and member of the Sierra Club and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

General Meeting: Dec. 3, 2007

Holiday Pot Luck Dinner

Special Guest

Join us for this popular evening of good food, great company. Participants should bring a salad, a casserole, **or** a dessert. The time will be earlier than the regular meeting time of 7:30, and the location will be determined by the size of the response. Details will be given when you RSVP. Email audbirds@aol.com or call 847-362-5134 by Monday, November 26, stating name and dish you will bring. **Volunteers are needed to help with set-up and clean-up.**

Upcoming General Meetings: Program Schedule for 2008:

February 4 – Natural History Explorations of Madagascar by Dave Willard, the Field Museum

March 3 – Biodiversity at Rollins Savanna by Ken Klick

April 7 – Bird Identification by Jeff Sundberg

May 5 – Lake County's Disappearing Landscape by Sara Surroz, LPC

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.

Bald Eagle Goes Off Endangered List, Marking Remarkable Recovery

excerpted from article by H. Josef Hebert, The News Sun, June 28, 2007

The American bald eagle, a national symbol once almost wiped out by hunters and DDT poisoning, has not only survived but is thriving. The Interior Department will announce on Thursday it is removing the majestic bird from the protection of the Endangered Species Act, capping a four-decade struggle for recovery.

Government biologists have counted nearly 10,000 mating pairs of bald eagles, including at least one pair in each of 48 contiguous states, giving assurance that the bird's survival is no longer in jeopardy. The eagle population hit bottom in 1963 when only 417 mating pairs could be documented in the 48 states, and its future survival as a species was in doubt. There were once believed to be as many as a half million bald eagles in North America, predating the Europeans' arrival. The Continental Congress put the bird onto the country's official seal in 1782, although Benjamin Franklin preferred the turkey and called the eagle a "bird of bad moral character."

John Kostyack of the National Wildlife Federation called the eagle resurgence "truly one of America's great wildlife success stories" that shows the federal law is needed and can work. "The rescue of the bald eagle ... ranks among the greatest victories of American conservation," said John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society, whose group's annual bird count shows "the eagle has recovered across America."

The bird, first declared endangered in 1967, was not always held with such affection. Over the decades, it was both revered and hated -- which almost brought its demise. A majestic bird with a wing span that can extend more than seven feet and powerful talons that allow it to swoop down and grab its prey -- be it fish in a mountain lake or a rabbit or raccoon -- was viewed by many as a scavenger, nuisance and dangerous predator.

It was hunted for its feathers, shot from airplanes, the subject of a 50-cent bounty in Alaska, poisoned in some states and fed to hogs in others. Congress passed a law in 1940, still on the books, that made killing a bald eagle illegal. But the bird's decline accelerated, thanks to DDT, the insecticide that began to be widely used in the 1940s to control mosquitoes. DDT seeped into lakes and streams and into fish, the eagle's favorite food, harming adult birds and their eggs.

When DDT was banned in 1972, the eagle's recovery began, slowly. George Wallace, vice president and chief conservation officer for the American Bird Conservancy, recalls when he was still in high school in the 1970s he saw his first bald eagle on Plum Island in Massachusetts. It was a rarity. "Seeing a bald eagle in the mid '70s was a big deal," he said Wednesday. "It was something you really looked forward to seeing. Now, to be honest, bald eagles are pretty common."

Common Bird Species Declining

Quick Takes by David M. Bird, Bird Watcher's Digest, Sep.-Oct. 2007.

A National Audubon Society census has revealed that populations of some of the most 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 http://magazine.audubon.org/pullouts/stateOfBirds.html)*, 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 including 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 to saving some of these species.

Paper Recycling Statistics

The News Sun, Feb. 26, 2007

• One ton of recycled paper saves 3.3 cubic yards of landfill space, 4100 kilowatt hours of electricity (enough to heat a home for 6 months or run a television for 41 hours).

• Enough paper is collected from recycling each year to make a box-car train 7,600 miles long.

• Everyday Americans buy 62 million newspapers and throw out 44 million.

• One ton of recycled paper uses: 64 percent less energy, 50 percent less water, 74 percent less air pollution and creates 5 times more jobs than one ton of paper products from virgin wood pulp.

• Abitibi and its partners collect enough newspapers each year to completely cover 12,336 football fields in paper one inch deep. Go to http://www.co.lake.il.us/swalco for more info on the 4Rs.

Biofuels – What Questions Should We Ask?

an article by Diane Rosenberg, Lake County Audubon Society

Recently there's been a lot in the news about biofuels, and it's somewhat confusing to sort out the pros and cons of their value as transportation fuels. The big push to use biofuels for transportation exists because they've the potential to both lower green house gas emissions and provide an alternative to fossil fuels. Biofuels can be made, using conventional technology, from biomass (usually plants which can be replenished rapidly) and are a renewable energy resource, unlike petroleum, coal, or nuclear fuels.

Biofuels aim to be carbon neutral. The carbon released when the fuel is burned is reabsorbed as carbon in new plant growth. Theoretically, carbon neutral fuels cause no net increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. In reality the energy required to grow plants and process them into fuel requires energy, and the amount of this energy determines the overall greenhouse gas reduction.

In the United States the plants used for biofuel/ethanol production come from agricultural crops, mainly corn and soybeans. In Europe the crops used are rapeseed, sugar beet and wheat; in Brazil sugar cane and soybeans; in Southeast Asia palm oil; and in India jatropha. These agricultural crop sources are often called first generation biofuels. It is possible to use non-edible plants or crop "waste" (switch grass, other prairie grasses, wood chips, paper pulp, wheat straw, corn plant parts like the stalks and leaves) to produce what's termed cellulosic ethanol. These plant sources are sometimes referred to as second generation biofuels.

What are the cumulative costs and benefits to produce a specific biofuel? For example, first generation fuel production requires more energy than second generation fuel requires. An agricultural crop requires more energy than a non-edible plant source because of the farming equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides that are used in crop production. From an energy standpoint, using corn as a biofuel source might be questioned, since corn requires petroleum-intensive fertilization and cultivation.

In addition to the energy costs, biofuel production impacts the environment both locally and globally. What happens to the environment with increased inputs of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides? What happens to soil in regard to nutrient depletion and erosion? What about water usage, water quality and any water transport costs? Corn production, for example, requires quality agricultural land, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and water. Water, world wide, is becoming an increasingly precious and pressured resource. To mitigate water use, would use of native grasses or crop waste be appropriate alternative biofuel sources?

How is biodiversity affected? Vast acreages of any monoculture reduce species biodiversity. In the global push to produce biofuels, virgin tropical forests in Southeast Asia, savannah and edges of the Amazon, and conservation land are being taken away to produce biofuel crops. In the U.S. there are approximately 40 million acres of farmland in the Conservation Reserve Program. These lands provide critical habitat for birds, wildlife and promote soil conservation. The 2007 Farm Bill contains proposals to begin converting these lands to biofuel/corn production.

What are the pros and cons of converting acreage currently used for human and animal food to biofuel production? We are linked, world wide, in a giant economic/food web. The U.S. has been a major soy bean exporter, but with increasing acreage devoted to corn, countries like Brazil are increasing soybean acreage to achieve their nationally mandated biodiesel needs. Since Brazil isn't able to produce enough soy biodiesel fuel, it's importing palm oil from Malaysia to make biodiesel. These shifts in crop production for fuel use directly and indirectly impact the cost, availability, and nutritional value of food available for human consumption.

Biofuels can, especially in rural areas, create jobs and increase income. How do we weigh economic improvements with environmental concerns? To make widespread use of biofuels effective, how can we encourage biofuel producers and auto manufacturers to work cooperatively to design engines that are more efficient and reduce emissions? What international trade agreements and regulations need be developed to regulate biofuels? Is the rush to use biofuels misdirecting our attention from broader conservation techniques that may be, overall, far more effective in reducing green house gas emission and reliance on fossil fuels?

World wide, biofuels are increasingly more important transportation fuels. Will biofuels achieve their most effective and efficient potential? The questions we ask, as global citizens, will drive the process. There are no easy answers.

(The previous article summarizes information from: Bio-Hope/Bio-Hype, Sierra Magazine, Sep/Oct, 2007; Worldwatch Institute ,Environmental News Network, Aug. 24 and 29,2007; and the Biofuels Symposium 5/9/07 so-sponsored by the Chicago Botanic Garden and The Center for Humans and Nature.) For further information contact Diane Rosenberg, dbsr333@aol.com)

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THIS NEWSLETTER WAS PRINTED USING SOY-BASED INK ON PAPER WITH 100% RECYCLED, 100% POST-CONSUMER CONTENT, PROCESSED CHLORINE FREE.

Welcome New Members!

There have been 217 new G64 chapter members reported by National Audubon in the period from January through August.

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; feeders cost $8 for members and $11 for non-members.

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:

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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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