

Oct. – Dec. 2016

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lakecountyaudubon.org

# Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS)



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## Articles:

- Birdscaping Project
- Almond Marsh Rookery Update
- Sand Bluff Bird Observatory
- Birds in My Neighborhood
- HawkFest Lake County
- Birding the Apostle

## Activities:

- Sept 17, Field Trip to Sand Bluff see page 2
- Oct. 5, Nature Walk 7:30am, St. Mary's of the Lake, Mundelein
- Hawk Fest Oct. 14-16 see page 3
- Birdscape Workdays Oct. 22, 9am-1pm and Nov 5, see page 2

For up-to-date listings, go to

[www.lakecountyaudubon.org](http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org)

Or scan the QR code below



## Local Bat Monitoring and Their Health

**General Meeting: Monday, Oct 3, 7:30 PM** Libertyville Village Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**Speaker: Melissa Alderson**

*Environmental Educator*

Nearly 5.7 million bats have died due to White-nose Syndrome (WNS). Lake County is home to bat species affected by WNS. During this presentation, the Lake County Forest Preserves acoustic bat monitoring program will be discussed along with results of the surveys, local bat natural history, and current white-nose syndrome information. Survey equipment and educational materials will be shown.

Melissa Alderson has been an environmental educator and volunteer habitat steward for over 14 years. She has a degree in Biology emphasizing animal behavior and ecology from Northern Illinois University and her Master's in Teaching Biological Science from Miami University. She teaches preschool to adult aged programs and enjoys teaching about wildlife and native landscaping topics.

## Natural History of Owls

**General Meeting: Monday, Nov 7, 7:30 PM** Libertyville Village Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**Speaker: Steve Bailey**

*Ornithologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey*

Steve will describe and discuss each of the eight species of owls which can be found in Illinois. There will be some discussion on their biology, ecology and occurrence in the state, as well as discussion on their roosting habits and habitat where each can be found, and how any person can go about finding their own owls by looking for some typical signs that owls are around. He will also show program attendees actual owl specimens so that they can view the size, plumage and other body features of each owl. You will also get to hold and study both owl feathers and pellets (prey fur & bones) that will be passed around, as well as hear what each owl sounds like.

Steven Bailey has worked as an ornithologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey for more than 20 years, specializing in breeding birds. He is currently involved with a long-term bird and plant monitoring program, the Critical Trends Assessment Program (CTAP). This involves conducting breeding bird censuses at 500+ study sites throughout the state in all 102 Illinois counties, on randomly chosen sites on both public and private lands. In addition, he serves as an Associate Editor, Photo Editor, Writer, and Breeding Season field notes compiler for several books, magazines, and other scientific journals. He also serves on many other committees.

## Beyond Listing: Why eBird is Your Best Friend

**General Meeting: Monday, Dec. 5, 7:30 PM** Libertyville Village Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**Speaker: Matthew Cvetas**

*President of the Illinois Ornithological Society*

- What is eBird?
  - Where Birding, Science & Conservation Meet
- What can I do with eBird?
  - Submit Observations, Explore Data & Track Lists
- Yeah that's great and all but..... no seriously..... what can I REALLY DO with eBird?
  - Learn New Stuff, Find More Birds, & Use Cool Apps

Matthew Cvetas is a training professional with Hewlett Packard Enterprise, who got into birding 10 years ago when a pair of Eastern Bluebirds flew across his path while out for a run in his local park. He's been hooked on birding and bird photography ever since. Matthew is also president of the Illinois Young Birders (ILYB), a member of Chicago Ornithological Society (COS), and a regional data reviewer for eBird.

## **Birdscaping Project to Progress with Fall Workdays**

by Chris Geiselhart

The recent dedication of the new trail extension in Libertyville Township Open Space has created the opportunity for planting hundreds of shrubs and several dozen trees that will line the Bull Creek Spur of the trail. Part of an ongoing project to provide food and shelter for birds and other small animals, "Birdscaping Libertyville Open Space" is the result of public-private cooperation. It included input from LCAS and nearby residents. The trail extends north from the trailhead on Castleton Road in the Timber Creek neighborhood. Another trailhead is at the east end of Bull Creek Drive, extending east then north under the ComEd power lines. It gives access to a variety of trails in all directions, for example, the Millennium Trail, the Des Plaines River Trail, and access to Oak Openings north of Casey Road to the northwest.

Volunteers will be needed to help install the approximately 49 native trees and 200 shrubs\* on Saturday, October 22, 9am-1pm. Enter the trail at the east end of Bull Creek Drive; try to car pool or take your bike if possible. Volunteer day #2 will be Saturday, November 5, 2016; rain date is November 19, 2016. Volunteers should dress for the weather and bring work gloves and a favorite shovel. Snacks, water, and portable restrooms will be available.

This is a wonderful opportunity to participate locally in an activity that will make a life-long difference. Contact [audbirds@aol.com](mailto:audbirds@aol.com) to volunteer.

*\*Footnote: Approximately 700 plugs have been planted already, a mix of native grasses, sedges, and forbs. Township crew members have already sowed approximately 5 acres of seeds.*

## **Almond Marsh Rookery Update**

by Jack Nowak

Considering the loss of nests we had from last year's storms, the herons did quite well in producing young this year. Out of the 19 Great Blue Heron nests we had 58 herons fledged. This season we had more nests with 4 young than we did any other year. There must have been a good food supply for all the young to survive. There were also Great Egrets nesting for the second year in the trees on the island. We believe that there were some Black-crowned night Herons nesting on the island based on the evidence of the sighting of juveniles.

We had well over 400 visitors over the Saturday viewing sessions open to the public during nesting season. I'd like to thank our volunteers who helped out during the nesting season by providing the scopes, binoculars, and answers to questions that the public have, along with a little history of the marsh. Without their efforts the Rookery would not be open for education to the public during the nesting season. We hope to welcome back the herons next March as they return from their migration.

## **Field Trip to Sand Bluff Bird Observatory**

Lee Johnson's May 2<sup>nd</sup> program on bird banding at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory in northern Winnebago County prompted inquiries about planning a field trip there. We're pleased to announce that it will take place on Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Carpool and arrive at 9:00 am to view the mist nets along the trails. Then gather back at the Education Center to learn about the process and purpose and possibly release a bird yourself! There will be a \$3 per person fee for this special tour. It will be for the benefit of the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory.

Bring your lunch to eat there if you want to stay on to hike the trails to the bluff. If you wish to sign up, email [audbirds@aol.com](mailto:audbirds@aol.com) for a return email with details and other activities we've planned. GPS Address: 10602 Haas Rd, Rockton, IL

## **Birds in My Neighborhood**

by Diane Rosenberg

This past Spring, Birds In My Neighborhood, a program developed for school children by Openlands with support from Audubon Chicago Region, was introduced to Prairie Crossing Charter Schools by a team of LCAS volunteers. Twelve LCAS volunteers attended training classes taught by Thomas Barnes from Audubon Chicago Region. The training classes focused on learning techniques that can be used to encourage children to become interested and curious about the birds found all around them. Chris and Paul Geiselhart, Sandy Hauri, Carla Schmakel, Jack Nowak, Don Wilson, and Diane Rosenberg worked with 4 classrooms of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Each child was given a study guide and a bird checklist of common birds that the children were likely to see in their own neighborhood. In addition, each classroom was supplied with hands on materials including feathers, nests, and photos. The LCAS volunteers committed to leading a 3-session program which consists of one in-classroom lesson, a bird walk around the schoolyard, and a final bird walk in a local nature area. Middlefork Savannah was selected for the final bird field trip. The children, teachers, parents, and LCAS volunteers were thrilled to observe 20 species of birds at Middlefork! Because we hope to expand the program, if you've any interest in participating in Birds In My Neighborhood, please contact Chris Geiselhart at [audbirds@aol.com](mailto:audbirds@aol.com)

## HawkFest Lake County 2016

The first weekend-long birding festival in Lake County will take place from Friday, October 14, to Sunday, October 16, 2016. Events will be held primarily at the Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve and at Lake Forest College, with Saturday and Sunday morning bird walks available at various locations.

**HawkFest 2016** will provide a wide variety of activities for both new and experienced birders, with an emphasis on family-friendly activities. Many activities are free; admission for fee events is \$7 per event, or \$25 for an all-access pass. The kick-off program, a \$7 fee event, will be held at 7:15 pm at Lake Forest College, featuring raptor experts Dave Johnson and Vic Berardi who will share the history of the hawk watches in northern Illinois. Dave and Vic will share both insights and stories in what is sure to be an educational and entertaining evening. It is suitable for adults and older children. \*

Bird walks will be offered on Saturday morning at Fort Sheridan and Middlefork Savannah Forest Preserves from 7 am to 8:30 am. Following that, a series of classes and workshops will be offered on campus from 9:15 am to 3:15 pm featuring such skills as hawk identification and raptor photography, bird photography, birding in Lake County, and bird rehabilitation. Displays and exhibits are in Lake Forest College's Durand Hall, including informational tables by local birding groups and environmental organizations. There will be live birds on display.

Fort Sheridan will host events such as observing fall hawk migration and a walk through the Fort Sheridan Forest Preserve. There is an opportunity to visit education stations which feature live birds and a variety of activities while learning about birds and local ecology. An evening event will be scheduled for after hours.

Beginning at 7:00 am on Sunday, October 16, there will be bird walks at Illinois Beach State Park (North Unit) and at Waukegan Beach. There will be all day hawk watches at Fort Sheridan and at Illinois Beach State Park (North Unit). A complete schedule of events with details about registration and locations will be available on the LCAS website [www.lakecountyaudubon.org](http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org). See these links for additional information and to register for all fee-based events: <http://www.lcfpd.org/events/20161014/>; <http://www.lcfpd.org/events/20161015/>

Lake County is a premier destination for birders from all around the area, and this festival will bring people together to experience what the county has to offer for fall migration.

*\*Those attending the talk will also have the opportunity to attend a buffet dinner at Lake Forest College before the evening talk. Tickets will be \$25, including your fee for the talk. Dinner space is limited and pre-registration is required.*

## Birding the Apostle Islands

by Lucy Michael

One of the things that drew me to birdwatching was the opportunity it presented to rediscover my immediate surroundings. There is something refreshing about focusing on local history and the elements of nature which shape it; they often contain unexpected mysteries and wonders. With key flyways in our region, there are many opportunities for day and weekend trips. One such example that I recently experienced would be of Lake Superior's Apostle Islands that are visible and accessible from Bayfield, Wisconsin.

According to the National Park Service website, the Apostle Islands are among the most heavily traveled areas along the flyways of the Great Lakes. Named by 17<sup>th</sup> century French missionaries, the island's inhabitants were the Ojibwe. Their interest in one particular bird, and where it goes to nest, led to the original name of Madeline Island: *Mooningwanekaaning*, or "Home of the Golden-Breasted Woodpecker". There is also an impressive national wildlife refuge in nearby Whittlesey Creek.

With their old-fashioned charm that's complemented by some beautiful Victorian houses, Bayfield and Madeline Island are hotspots for summer tourism, but visiting the area in the early days and final days of the offseason allows for many opportunities to sight birds unique to the area. After taking a car ferry over to Madeline Island from the Bayfield dock, my favorite sight was that of a massive heron slowly walking off the empty road to watch me drive by. The park service website mentions that "herring and ring-billed gulls, double-crested cormorants, great blue herons, and cliff swallows are also attracted to the lakeshore habitat."

While my day on the sparsely-populated island included an incredibly peaceful walk, catching birds through my binoculars with the unbroken blue of Lake Superior in the background, I know I scratched only the surface of what this unique area has to offer to those who are fascinated by birds.

*Lucy Michael is an LCAS member whose lively description of her recent trip to the Apostle Islands prompted an invitation to write a brief account. We welcome others to write about their birding trips to encourage our readers to visit new places.*

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**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 linked to our website. [www.lakecountyaudubon.org](http://www.lakecountyaudubon.org)

**National Audubon Society Membership**

Join or give a gift subscription today at the special **rate of just \$20**. Make checks payable to "Lake County Audubon Society". Dues include \$15 for AUDUBON magazine. 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.

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