



The Audubon Outlook

Newsletter of the Lake County Audubon Society

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<http://w.w.w.lakecountyaudubon.org>

General Meeting: Oct 1, 2007 “Top Ten Birding Locations”

Presented by

Tony Szabados

7:30 pm

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

Over the years of his career as a computer programmer and consultant to many businesses, Tony Szabados has traveled around the country taking pictures on the side including during his personal travel as well. He has come to experience many wonderful locations for birding over the Northeast, Florida, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, California, Alaska and the Midwest states of North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin plus Canada's Point Pelee and Churchill and other provinces. This program will feature photographic images of Tony's choices for the best birding in North America and the birds that are found there.

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.

Upcoming Meetings: Program Schedule for 2006-2007:

**October 1 – Top Ten Birding Locations
by Tony Szabados**

**November 5 – Global Warming by Richard
S. Treptow, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus,
Chicago State University**

December 3 – Pot Luck Dinner

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

**March 3 – Biodiversity at Rollins Savanna
by Ken Klick, Lake County Forest
Preserves**

**April 7 – Bird Identification 201: Moving
from Beginner to Intermediate Birder by
Jeff Sundberg, Lake Forest College**

**May 5 – Preserving Open Space in Lake
County by Sara Surroz, Liberty Prairie
Conservancy**

Audubon Adventures Classrooms

The AUDUBON ADVENTURES Classroom Resource Kit will again be available for use in Lake County schools this year. AUDUBON ADVENTURES is one of Audubon's most successful education programs for schools. Designed for students in grades 3-6, it presents scientifically accurate facts in a newspaper style format that is colorful and very appealing to students. If you are interested in obtaining materials for your classroom, please contact us.

Is Organic Food Worth It?

Sheryl Eisenberg, This Green Life, April 2007, Re-printed with permission from the Natural Resources Defense Council (www.nrdc.org/thisgreenlife)

1) How can you be sure that food labeled "organic" really is organic? Use of the term is regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture. In order to put the word "organic" on a food label, the grower or producer must get the product certified as organic by a USDA-accredited certifier. Those who knowingly label or sell non-organic products as "organic" can be fined up to \$11,000 for each violation.

2) What exactly does "organic" mean? On a food label, "organic" means the food was produced without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetic engineering or irradiation. In the case of animal products, it additionally means the animal received no antibiotics or hormones and was fed organic feed containing no animal by-products. An organic label also means animals had access to the outdoors, though "access" is not defined in a meaningful way, which makes this the weakest provision of the regulations.

3) Are some foods with an "organic" label more organic than others? Yes, among processed foods with multiple ingredients, those displaying the USDA organic seal -- and/or called "organic" on the front label -- have the most organic content: at least 95 percent. Those labeled "made with organic ingredients" on the front may be as little as 70 percent organic. (The latter cannot display the USDA's organic seal, but may display the logo of the certifying agent.)

4) Is organic food better for the environment? Yes. By eliminating massive quantities of toxic pesticides and synthetic fertilizers used in conventional farming, organic methods help protect the health of our air, water and soil. Another benefit of organic food is that it does not add to the problem of antibiotic resistance -- which makes antibiotics ineffective for treating illness -- because antibiotic use in organically-raised animals is not allowed.

5) Is organic food safer for you to eat? Yes. Unlike conventionally produced food, organic food exposes you to no synthetic pesticides or growth hormones. Many of these substances have been proven to cause cancer, birth defects and damage to the nervous and reproductive systems in animal studies, though at higher levels than commonly found in food. What has not been studied is whether exposure to low levels of these substances, individually or in combination -- as happens in the real world as distinct from the lab -- also has adverse health effects. In the absence of this information, the safest course is not to expose yourself to chemicals designed and proven to kill other forms of life. This is especially true for children, as their developing nervous and endocrine systems put them at much greater risk of harm than adults.

6) Is organic food worth the extra cost? Yes, in the sense that you really do get extra value in the form of safer food that's better for the environment. But you still might not be able to afford a diet of it. If so, try picking and choosing your organic purchases. A study by the Environmental Working Group of 43 fruits and vegetables shows that you can reduce your pesticide exposure from produce by up to 90 percent by avoiding the twelve most contaminated fruits and vegetables (peaches,

apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, lettuce, imported grapes, pears, spinach and potatoes) and eating the least contaminated instead. If you have young children, a high priority might be organic milk.

7) Will your purchases make a difference? Yes. The reason organic food is now the fastest-growing sector of the food industry is that consumers like you have shown they want it by buying it. There is, in fact, no other way to promote organic food than by buying it and encouraging others to do the same.

8) Is organic food always the best choice? Not necessarily. Locally grown conventional food that travels a hundred miles to get to you may be a better choice than organic food grown 1,500 miles away. Why? Because transporting food a short distance causes much less global warming pollution. That local farm is also preserving open space in your area and contributing to your local economy. **Better yet**, get food that is both local *and* organic. **Finally**, it's worth noting that when it comes to what is best for the earth and human health, the USDA's organic standards are not the be-all and end-all. Some farmers have their own standards that might allow the occasional use of an antibiotic to treat real illness or a chemical to control a catastrophic pest outbreak (which would prevent organic certification), but actually do much more on a day-to-day basis to cultivate naturally fertile soil, promote biodiversity, provide for animal welfare, keep water supplies safe, protect agricultural workers' health and grow safe, delicious, nutritious food. That is why it is good to **patronize farm stands and farmer's markets** -- and ask the farmers about how they grow their food.

Lake County has weekly farmers' markets in many communities in the growing season (see LCAS website). Grocers like Jewel, Dominick's and Sunset Foods carry a selection of organic foods.

Upper Midwest Regional Audubon Conference

Everyone who cares about birds and their habitats is invited to attend the conference; "Declining Species, Declining Habitat: Reversing the Trend" and "Mississippi River: America's Flyway." This important three-day conference runs October 12 to 14 at the Embassy Suites in Bloomington Minnesota, and features researchers, authors and policy-makers discussing the good, the bad and the ugly in our region's ecosystems. The conference, sponsored by Audubon Minnesota, is open to the general public. Join experts as they discuss the latest information on grassland, forest, wetland and neighborhood birds. Learn about how changes in the environment affect birds and current efforts to preserve them. Hear keynote speaker Dr. Bridget Stutchbury, noted scientist and author, probe whether migratory songbirds are "canaries in the coal mine." A full day devoted to the Mississippi River spotlights the importance of this major flyway, culminating in an excursion on a Mississippi River sternwheeler. Field trips and a special presentation on global warming, featuring John Flicker, president of the National Audubon Society and Dr. Mark Seeley, University of Minnesota climatologist and Minnesota Public Radio weather commentator, round out the weekend's events. Find out more and get registration materials at <http://mn.audubon.org/> or call 651-739-9332 for information.

Hawks Don't Stake Out Backyard Bird Feeders

Birding Briefs, Birder's World, Vol. 20, Issue 4, August 2006

Songbirds seem to return to well-stocked feeders with some regularity, so it would stand to reason that bird-hunting hawks would spend considerable time at feeders, too. Not so, according to researchers in Indiana.

Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks that were tracked by radio transmitters over the winters of 1999-2004 did not hunt at feeders any more than expected by random. Graduate student Tim Roth and ecology professor Steven L. Lima at Indiana State University studied Accipiter movements in and around Terre Haute, Indiana, and reported their findings at last year's American Ornithologists' Union meeting.

The researchers tracked hawks around several large backyard feeding stations and 15 feeders that they maintained. "It's not that hawks don't visit feeders," says Roth, "but we found that they're not spending a disproportionate amount of time at feeders." Instead, hawks appear to be "managing" their prey, Roth says. That is, by hunting at unpredictable times and places, hawks prevent songbirds from expecting their arrival.

In addition, Roth and Lima found that owls influence the hunting behavior of Sharp-shinned Hawks. The hawks remain in their night roost until about a half-hour after sunrise while Great Horned and Barred Owls are still active. Sharpies attack prey more frequently in the evening hours, and they return to their roost before sunset, when owls come back out. Owls do not appear to threaten the larger Cooper's Hawks; Roth has seen them hunting by the light of city street lights and the moon.

Water, Essential to Life But in Bottles?

(Excerpted from Conservation Alert, Vol. 11, No. 4, by D. R. Dann)

How often does your day pass without seeing someone carrying around a bottle of drinking water? The Beverage Marketing Corporation reports U. S. bottled water sales increases of 60% since 2001 to almost \$11 billion. Americans will drink some 30 billion single serving bottles of water this year. What are the factors driving this explosive growth and should we really be shunning old fashioned tap water and just be satisfying our thirst from bottles? In some third world countries where many people lack access to safe drinking water and millions die every year from diseases linked to tainted water, clean bottled water is essential to health. However, in the United States the story is very different. The Environmental Protection Agency sets standards for avoiding contaminants in drinking water under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Municipal water suppliers may not provide water that doesn't meet these

standards. If you are drinking bottled water because you think that it is purer, safer than community water, or better for your health you are probably not getting your money's worth. The purity standards for bottled water, set by the Food and Drug Administration, are no higher than those applied to tap water. In fact in some instances they are lower or less rigorous.

Problems with Bottled Water

The plastic bottles are mostly made from a polyethylene resin known as PET, which is petroleum (fossil fuel) based, the manufacture of which releases air pollutants, sulfur oxides, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and carbon dioxide, all of which contribute to global warming. Although conscientious consumers increasingly recycle, most plastic water bottles (an estimated 2 millions tons) end up in landfills or as roadside litter. 11 states require deposits and return refunds but these typically apply to beer and carbonated beverages. Excessive withdrawal of natural mineral or spring water to produce bottled water has threatened local streams and groundwater. In 1999, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) studied 103 brands of bottled water and determined that one-third failed to comply with industry-set standards.

NRDC further said that an estimated 25 percent or more of bottled water is really just *tap water in a bottle* -- sometimes further treated, sometimes not. Unlike tap water, bottled water normally contains no fluoride, proven to prevent dental carries. Tap water is distributed through an energy efficient infrastructure whereas transporting bottled water long distances involves burning significant amounts of fossil fuels.

Instead of buying bottled water you can carry a reusable bottle or some other container and fill it from the tap, which you can filter if you wish. Just take care that it is not made from PET or other plastic that can leach harmful substances or risk bacterial contamination. Polypropylene plastic #5 PP, #2 HDPE, or #4 LDPE are not known to do so and are considered safe for reuse (check this link for the Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) to learn more : <http://www.socplas.org/>).

LCAS Outing September 15

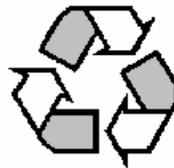
On Saturday Sept. 15 Lake Co. Audubon and Lake Co. Forest Preserve will have a bird walk at Old School Forest Preserve in Libertyville at 7:30 am followed by restoration work at 9:00 am. Everyone is welcome to participate in one or both of these free events. The walk will be led by Ed Zehr and participants should meet in parking lot A at Old School. Bring binoculars if you have them. For the work day Stewards will explain restoration policies and then work until 11:00 starting from parking lot A. Bring work gloves and water. Tools will be provided. Old School has a mix of natural areas that attract many types of birds. Old School is located South of Rt. 176 on St. Mary's Road.

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Welcome New Members!

There have been 217 new LCAS chapter (G64) members reported by National Audubon in the period from January through July.

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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