

WINTER/SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL BIRDFEEDER

The throngs of winter are pressing in (right now its below zero with the wind chill outside) but we are looking forward to the annual Christmas Bird Count. This winter/spring session is very exciting with field trips almost every weekend. Look over the upcoming events and see the list of speakers we have lined up for our meetings (coyotes, wind energy etc) - they should raise more than casual interest in attending the meetings. Please note the location for the meetings - we expect a couple of them to bring an unusually large audience so we are moving to bigger sites.

One exciting event that will take place in June is our trip to Danville where their local Audubon group will host us for a weekend of special birding - see Danville in June in newsletter.

At our meetings we have had raffles for the Adams house in Springfield. If you even go to see the Adams House, look at the board that shows contributors and you will see Kane County Audubon in the Cardinal Section. We can be proud of the fact that we have been consistent in sending them part of our raffle monies. Kath and I have been in the Adams House and find it very attractive and a place that will be utilized by both IAS and the Springfield community. If you haven't supported the Adams House renovation, there is still time to help out.

As always KCA meetings and all field trips are open to the public so ask friends to accompany you on any of our activities.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

See if you can identify the following waterfowl by their 'old' names. Answers will appear later in the newsletter.

"Old" Name

1. Butterball
2. Sawtooth
3. Sprig
4. Spoonbill
5. Baldpate
6. Coot
7. Bluebill
8. Whistler
9. Oldsquaw

"New" Name

- a. Greater Scaup
- b. Pintail
- c. Common Goldeneye
- d. Black Scoter
- e. Common Merganser
- f. American Wigeon
- g. Northern Shoveler
- h. Long-tailed Duck
- i. Bufflehead

INTERESTING BIRD BEHAVIOR

At a recent meeting (and on our KCA internet mailbox) I asked people to write down observations about 'unusual' bird behaviors they had witnessed. If you have any special observations, please send them to me (Bob A). Here are some of those behaviors:

Mark: I saw a Peregrine Falcon on the shore at Sauer earlier this year and he was hopping up and down on a large weed like plant.

Heidi: I spotted a Bald Eagle flying south over the Fox River between SEBA park and Jon Duerr. The same day (this was in November) I saw a Mute Swan north of the dam in Carpentersville. I have only seen them in the coldest, most bitter weather of Dec. Jan, or Feb.

Bob: While inside of our home, I heard loud squawking coming from our bird feeders. When I looked I saw a House Finch sitting in one of our feeders holding a very upset House Sparrow by the tail.

Ginny: I saw a flock of birds squawking away high in a tree. A large rat snake had a big lump in its body, which obviously was a bird, so all species came to dive bomb the snake.

Ginny: When I was picking blueberries in Maine, I noticed a Swainson's Thrush coming out and grabbing a berry and hiding under a pine tree, he then continued to the next tree where I was picking and did the same thing, following me up the hill.

Sue: I saw a Downy Woodpecker scolding and dive-bombing a Red-bellied Woodpecker in a tree. The Red-belly seemed to ignore the Downy and eventually left that area in the tree.

Jane: While in Costa Rica we witnessed hummingbirds dipping completely under the water in the pools made on the side of the hill - the ground keepers/native people have maintained the pools so that guests can witness this event.

Tim: While birding Kane County I was able to catch a hunting Northern Harrier coming towards me. The bird proceeded to 'slalom' through the aspens, moving between them like a skier going through the gates.

Dennis: While birding in British Columbia I saw a Pileated Woodpecker flying from one outhouse to another and peck very loudly on the green plastic roof. It must have scared the #%\$@ out of the people in the outhouse.

MEMBERS BIRDING OUTSIDE KANE COUNTY

Here are some locations where Kane County Audubon members have spent their time birding in 2008. These were collected at our meetings as well as through the internet.

Colorado	Texas	Nevada
Wisconsin	Minnesota	New York
Florida	Arizona	Ohio
Georgia	South Carolina	North Carolina
Maine	Michigan	Kansas
Mexico	Wyoming	Virginia
Missouri	California	Indiana
South Dakota	North Dakota	
Papua Indonesia	Panama	France
Costa Rica	Guatemala	Bahamas
Germany	Canada	Australia
Venezuela	Nova Scotia	

As you can see, KCA members have been very active in birding not only the states, but also in different parts of the world.

HUMMINGBIRD NUMBERS

by Bob Andrini

Last year I asked for those who had hummingbirds coming to feeders and 20 people responded with a count of 81 hummers. This year I again asked the question and 17 people responded with a total of 54 birds. Kath and I had the best year ever in our yard with a maximum number of 6 birds (1 mature male, 2 immature males and the rest females. We put up extra feeders to handle the crowd. Of those that responded this year, 11 were from St. Charles, 1 from each of the following towns: Aurora, Batavia, Elburn and Geneva. Next summer put your feeders up early and surround them with red flowers and perhaps the energetic fliers will set up feeding at your station.

NEW KCA BOARD MEMBERS

KCA now has a new hospitality committee, Carol and Erika Vidal and George Mohen. Our new program chair is Chuck Peterson. If you have suggestions for speakers or programs that would be of interest to our group, please contact Chuck (630-542-1566).

GBBC ONCE AGAIN

This year from February 13 -16 the Great Backyard Bird Count will take place. Many KCA members participated in the count in past years, and hopefully this year also. On the computer go to the GBBC website at www.birdsource.org for more information. If you don't have a computer and would like more information, contact me (Bob Andrini).

In 2007 participants from 16 Kane County communities submitted 118 checklists totaling nearly 10,000 birds of more than 50 species. Elburn submitted the most checklists for 2007.

In 2008 18 Kane County communities participated submitting 108 checklists totaling more than 5,000 birds of more than 50 species. The city of Aurora had the most lists in 2008. For total results of past counts, go to our website at www.kanecountyadubon.org.

This Feb. try to encourage others to participate. Talk to bird watchers and people that have winter feeders to see which city will have the most bird watchers this year.

WHAT'S IN A NAME - ANSWERS

"Old" Name

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 - e. Common Merganser
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 - d. Black Scoter
 - a. Greater Scaup
 - c. Common Goldeneye
 - h. Long-tailed Duck
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THANKS

Thanks go out to Ann Holt-Harris who has stepped down as the Program Chairperson - thanks Ann we have enjoyed the programs.

Thanks also goes to Rhonda Nelson for her dedication to leading the first Saturday of the month walks at Nelson's Lake. Rhonda led the walks for many years and in spite of some very bad weather, like the mailman, 'nothing could keep her from her duty'.

FALL FIELD TRIP REPORTS

October 18: Fermilab (Chris Madsen)

The goal of our mission to Fermilab was one of quacks (ducks) not quarks. And although we weren't shut out in that category, the quantity and variety of waterfowl on the lakes and in the fields was disappointing considering the Oct. 18th date and the fact that a late week front had moved through carrying considerably cooler weather. Unfortunately, we couldn't locate the Greater White-fronted Geese that were reported prior to, and after, our trip.

The highlight of the outing was the sighting of a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, a life bird for all fifteen walk participants. Kudos to Bob Andrini for first spotting the bird and then patiently bird-dogging it so everyone could get good views. Seen while winding our way west to exit Fermilab was a lone Osprey at Casey's Pond. Total for the day: a respectable 50 species.

October 25: Burnidge Forest Preserve (Jerry Hope)

The alarm went off at 6:30 AM, it was dark outside, looked like rain, and at 39 degrees, I wondered why I ever agreed to lead a bird walk in October. After a shower and two double chocolate donuts, I headed to Burnidge. Much to my surprise there were people in the parking lot waiting for me. We ended up with six brave birders hoping that it wouldn't rain for an hour or two.

After introductions, we started to leave the parking lot and much to our surprise saw four Eastern Bluebirds in a tree - what a way to start a bird walk! The next bird was an immature Red-headed Woodpecker. On the pond we observed several waterfowl feeding (Shovelers, Wood Ducks, Pied-billed Grebes, Green-winged Teal and American Coot). In the woods a nice selection of bird life was observed while on the west end of the lake more waterfowl and a Great Blue Heron were seen. In spite of the weather, it was not a bad day of birding.

November 8: Oakhurst Forest Preserve (Terry Murray)

We waited patiently for the ranger to open the gate so we could get to the parking lot for our bird walk. Once out of the shelter of our warm cars, we gathered near the lake questioning our attire as we experienced the chilly November winds. Looking out on the water, there were quite a few (7) Pied-billed Grebes swimming in the choppy waves along with a Ring-billed Gull. A little group of American Coots were hugging the shoreline staying out of the breeze. We headed for more sheltered areas near the woods where the birds were sure to be hiding. Both species of Kinglets and Downy Woodpeckers were actively foraging along with some White-crowned Sparrows. A Yellow-rumped Warbler was still hanging around with the Black-capped Chickadees in one of the more open areas in the woods. Along a stream we watched a small flock of Purple Finches feeding in an Ash tree as a nearly invisible Brown Creeper slowly worked its way up the trunk of the a nearby tree. After a couple of hours we saw close to 30 species and were ready to go back to civilization and warm our bones.

November 22: Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area (Bob Andrini)

Seven KCA birders and 2 DeKalb County residents met at Peck Farm at 10 AM for a long drive to Jasper-Pulaski F&W Area to see if we could find any Sandhill Cranes. Our first stop at the refuge was the picnic area where almost all members decided to eat their lunches in the car due to the cold temperature. After lunch we walked around the small lake and proceeded into the refuge headquarters to get the most current crane report. An 'old timer' sitting in a chair said we missed seeing the 36,000 crane year, but we should see about 13,000 this year (that got the group excited). We then headed for a mile walk to a small lake where we might see waterfowl. The walk to the lake produced an American Tree Sparrow, and a Brown Creeper, but little else. To our disappointment, the lake itself was covered in ice with no (NO) waterfowl to be seen. On the way back to our cars, a Great Horned Owl was seen flying through the woodland. It was an hour before sunset when we arrived at the staging area to view the cranes 'up close and personal'. Indeed there were probably 13,000 Sandhills in the field along with about a dozen deer - it was deer season around the Wildlife Area, and the deer knew where it was safe. While we watched, a couple thousand cranes suddenly took to the wing as an Immature Bald Eagle soared over the field. With the sun going down, we headed back to Peck Farm after seeing 23 species of birds and having a really good birding experience.

MEMORIES OF ROGER TORY PETERSON

By Ken Schnieder

(Ken Schneider read a biography by Elizabeth J. Rosenthal entitled The Life of Roger Tory Peterson, and wrote a reflection of his 'interaction' with the man himself. I thought he had some good insights and wanted to share them with you. - Bob)

So many times, as I read Elizabeth Rosenthal's biography, my mind wandered back to my own experiences over the decades. I grew up with Roger Tory Peterson. He was my friend and constant companion. I first met him when we both were emerging from the depths of the Great Depression. He, a twenty-something naturalist and painter, and I, a six-year-old who, as a toddler watched pigeons and starlings from the back window of an apartment over a meat market in New Jersey.

It was my mother who introduced me to Roger, unwittingly fanning a spark that was to grow into a flame. Only today, facing the irony of a recession and the specter of another Depression, do I realize what a sacrifice it was for my mother to spend \$2.75 for the 1939 revision of the first edition of Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds*. In today's economy, that comes to \$34.37, plus tax. The book supercharged my interest in birding and opened the door to a lifelong hobby - it might be called an obsession.

The Guide replaced my first 'real' bird book, a pocket sized copy of *Land Birds*, by Chester A. Reed. It was badly defaced, for I traced the outlines of the book's small format bird pictures, perhaps to engrave them into memory. As soon as I matched one of them up with a dooryard sparrow, robin or jay, I penciled "SAW" in big block letters over the corresponding image. Alas, my initial Life List was eventually assigned to the trash heap. Not so with my treasured original

Peterson Guide. Although now yellowed, soiled and loosely held together, it is witness to the respect I accorded it.

Many more times, and in many places, I consulted Roger and delighted in what he told me about birds in the pages of the Junior Book of Birds, the Junior Audubon Leaflets, in his Birds Eye View and other columns in Audubon and Bird Watchers Digest. Only twice did he speak to me in person, but both times I was part of a large audience. Once, when I was in my teens, I attended an Audubon Screen Tours presentation which he personally narrated. I cannot remember the topic of his film, nor a single word he said. I must have been in a state of awe at finally seeing the Great Man. Later my son and I flew out from Dallas to New Mexico, where Peterson spoke to a packed house during the Festival of the Cranes. We never got near him and he birded Bosque del Apache privately with a small group.

Ever Faithful, I purchased every subsequent revision of the Eastern, Western, the Texas bird guides, as well as many of the Peterson Guide series. In his magazine columns, I followed his adventures and his brushes with death. I especially remember one column in which he complained that, with advancing age, he had developed very poor tolerance to heat. He felt he would be making far fewer trips to Arizona. Rosenthal's biography relates the beginning of Rogers's descent into terminal ill health. In September, 1995, eighty-seven year old Roger spoke at a dedication ceremony in McAllen, Texas, in 91 degree heat. After giving brief remarks in the full sun, he collapsed with heat exhaustion. A stroke followed not long after, and he died in July 28, 1996.

Like Roger, I had an 'epiphany' as a kid, when concealed by shrubbery; I peered into a clearing where a courting Rose-breasted Grosbeak was displaying before a female of its kind. The color and the beauty of its dance have stayed with me. My wife, Mary Lou had a similar experience that started her into birding. Before we took our first birding tour together into Arizona (to which she reluctantly consented), she thought it best to at least look in my Field Guide at the birds that were supposed to be such an attraction. She settled on the Elegant Trogon, as if she could just order one up for the trip! Well, in Garden Canyon, she saw a male and female trogon, both at close range and in beautiful plumage. That did it.

2008 BIRD WALKS

As of the printing of this newsletter, KCA has had an amazing 65 bird walks this year - this includes both scheduled walks as well as the rambles that take place on an almost weekly basis. During these walks we have seen 208 species of birds. Some of the special birds seen: Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow; Hoary Redpoll; Kirtland's Warbler; Pileated Woodpecker; and White-winged Crossbill. Not only did we travel from for some of our walks (Jasper-Pulaski State Park in Indiana, Grayling Michigan) but also near to Jon Duerr's back yard. As always, KCA has a full agenda of scheduled walks that are open to the public. To find out about the rambles, you must contact Bob A. to get put on the kcabirdalert internet mailing list. In 2009 we will have many walks and try to see more birds than this year. Come and join us and we will try not to disappoint you.

DANVILLE TO HOST KCA IN JUNE

The weekend of June 12-13-14 Danville Audubon will host KCA for a weekend of birding. Some very special warblers nest in the Danville area and our hosts have 'promised' to show them to us. Kentucky, Prothonotary, Yellow-throated, Cerulean and Pine Warblers all may be found in June. We will be staying at the Days Hotel and we have set aside a block of rooms for two nights (Fri. and Sat.) Those that want to carpool will leave from Peck Farm on Friday at 8 AM. If you are interested in attending, please contact Bob (630-584-8386) for specific information. We need to know the number of participants to plan this special event. This should be a great trip and a way to see nesting species that aren't usually seen in Kane County.

RHONDA REMINISCES

Thank you Kane County Audubon! Nelson Lake is my favorite place in the world. No matter what the season, it's always beautiful and there's always something great to see or hear. Thank you for the privilege of leading the First Saturday bird walks for the past several years.

I've never been able to choose my favorite season - Winter offers quiet beauty, but also cold and wind. There was the famous two-person, two bird (both crows) trip. But winter also brings the Northern Shrike, owls - mostly Great Horned, but one time also Long-eared Owls, pheasants - seldom seen but frequently heard. On my last walk, we saw a Red-tailed Hawk, a Northern Harrier, and two Rough-legged Hawks, the first time I remember seeing Rough-legs out there - a fitting final day.

With spring comes our April Scope Day and good looks at waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, and White Pelicans. Later we start seeing orioles, warblers, and all the other vividly colored birds of spring. We also see the prairie and woodlands burst into color with all the wildflowers blooming.

Summer is a mixed blessing - there are a lot of unshaded spots out there! But we also have nesting birds, maybe a peek at young Sandhills, occasionally an Osprey and one summer an American Bittern. Sometimes we saw snapping turtles were laying eggs on the path right in front of us. And of course there were deer flies!

Fall migration brings hawks, Peregrine Falcons a couple of times, waterfowl reversing their route, and another Scope Day in November.

As important as the birds are the wonderful people I've met on these walks. There is no joy as great as hearing the thrill in someone's voice as they announce 'a lifer' or the awe and wonder on someone's face as they get a close look at the beauty of an everyday bird.

Thank you Kane County, for this wonderful opportunity.

THANK YOU, RHONDA!

WINTER/SPRING ACTIVITIES

If you have any questions about any of these activities call the trip leader or Bob. All trips start at the location of the walk unless otherwise stated. Make sure you dress properly for the weather. All activities are open to the public.

Date	Event	Location	Time	Contact/Leader
January	1	Special New Year's Day Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	3	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Terry (630) 896-3219
	14	Meeting - "Wind Energy"	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM Bob (630) 584-8386
	17	Birdwalk	SEBA Park, South Elgin	8 AM Jane (847) 622-3216
	24	Field Trip - "Bald Eagle Weekend"	Starved Rock State Park, Utica (depart Peck Farm)	7 AM Tim (630) 513-7345
	31	Country Roads Birding (caravan)	Depart Peck Farm Park, Geneva	8 AM Jerry (630) 377-1444
February	7	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Terry (630) 896-3219
	11	Meeting - "Bird Rehabilitation"	Pottawatomie Community Center, St. Charles	7 PM Bob (630) 584-8386
	21	Field Trip - "Gull Frolic"	Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club (depart Peck Farm)	8 AM Tim (630) 513-7345
	28	Fox River Birding by Car	Depart Peck Farm Park, Geneva	8 AM Bob (630) 584-8386
March	7	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Terry (630) 896-3219
	11	Meeting - "Coyote Research"	Sunset Community Center, Geneva	7 PM Bob (630) 584-8386
	14	Birdwalk	Les Arends Forest Preserve, Batavia	8:30 AM Nancy (630) 365 - 9595
	21	Birdwalk	Fermilab, Batavia (Pine Street entrance)	8 AM Chris (630) 377-0773
	28	Birdwalk	Bliss Woods Forest Preserve, Sugar Grove	8 AM Jon (630) 584-5891
April	4	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM Terry (630) 896-3219
	8	Meeting - "Shorebird Identification"	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM Bob (630) 584-8386
	11	Birdwalk	Sauer Forest Preserve, Sugar Grove	8 AM Nancy (630) 365 - 9595
	18	Birdwalk	Elsen's Hill, West Dupage Woods FP Winfield	8 AM Jane (847) 622-3216
	25	Birdwalk	Oakhurst Forest Preserve, Aurora	8 AM Vernon (312) 543-4718

May	1 - 3	Illinois Audubon Spring Fling	Shawnee National Forest, Rosiclare		Bob (630) 584-8386
	2	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Terry (630) 896-3219
	9	Spring Bird Count	Throughout Kane County	All Day	Terry (630) 896-3219
	13	Meeting - "Kendall County Birding Sites"	Peck Farm Park, Geneva	7 PM	Bob (630) 584-8386
	16	Field Trip - Chicago Lakefront Birding	The Magic Hedge, Montrose Harbor, Chicago (depart Peck Farm)	7 AM	Chris (630) 377-0773
	23	Birdwalk	Lone Grove Forest Preserve, Kaneville	8 AM	Rhonda (630) 479-1384
	30	Birdwalk	Lippold Park, Batavia	8 AM	Bill (847) 931-9123
June	6	Birdwalk	Nelson Lake, Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia	8 AM	Terry (630) 896-3219
	12 - 14	Field Trip to Danville			Bob (630) 584-8386

WINTER/SPRING PROGRAM SPEAKERS

January 14 - Wind Energy

Mark Frigo, a member of KCA, will give a presentation on the status of Wind Energy in America. There is a lot of controversy about windmills and their effect on bats and birds, and Mark will discuss these and also the benefits of this power source. The Wind Energy companies have done a lot to reduce the environmental concerns and Mark is at the forefront of research in these areas.

February 11 - Bird Rehabilitation

Dawn Keller, director of Flint Creek Rehab Center, will discuss rehab issues related to hawks and other birds. Justice, the owl from the Geneva courthouse will come with Dawn in his return visit to Kane County - Justice was one of the baby owls two years ago that fell out of the nest and needed some help. Dawn will discuss other problems with bird rehabilitation and what the public can do to help injured birds. **Location of talk - Pottawatomie Community Center - St. Charles**

March 11 - Coyote Research

Chris Anchor, a naturalist active in studying coyote behavior and interactions with humans, will present a program to help inform us of the present status of coyotes in Kane County. Chris has collared over 300 coyotes in his research. Some towns have had problems with coyotes and Chris will address these issues. **Location of talk - Sunset Community Center - Geneva.**

April 8 - Shorebird Identification

Bob Montgomery a long standing member of KCA will help us through the problem of identifying those confusing shorebirds. Bob is a retired wildlife biologist and has spent much of his life looking at shorebirds throughout the U.S. He will give us tips to help us understand shorebird identification.

May 13 - Kendall County Birding Hot Spots

Jason Petit, Director of the Forest Preserve District of Kendall County, will identify the best birding spots in Kendall County. KCA rarely goes birding in Kendall County so this will be an excellent way for us to become informed about the county. Not only will Jason be talking about places to bird now, but also future places that will be developed for wildlife.

All meetings are open to the public. Most meetings will take place at the Red Barn at Peck Farm except for those that have been identified.

KANE COUNTY AUDUBON - A CHAPTER OF ILLINOIS AUDUBON

Chapter President	Bob Andrini
1 st Vice President	Jerry Hope
2 nd Vice President	Tim Balassie
Secretary	Nancy Schnaitman
Treasurer	Jane McMillan
Trip Coordinator	Roger Hotham
Program Chairperson	Chuck Petersen
Hospitality Committee	Erica and Carol Videl, George Mohen
IAS Representative	Bob Andrini
KCA website	www.kanecountyaudubon.org