

Kane County Audubon Newsletter

Fall 2022



Swift Sits Set for Sept. 10, 16

KCA's 8th annual Chimney Swift Sit will be held Saturday, Sept. 10, at 6:30 p.m. at the Village Hall, 102 S. 2nd St., in West Dundee.

There's plenty of street parking along 2nd Street and free city parking across the street. Bring a lawn chair if you wish. Some 826 Swifts entered the chimney at the hall on Wednesday night, Sept. 6, so there should be a good show Saturday.

A second sit will be held Friday, Sept. 16, at 6:30 p.m. at a location to be announced.

Chimney Swifts are gathering in large groups as they migrate to South America. The Swift Sit is a family-friendly event to watch one of these groups as they roost for the evening. The show begins slowly about 20 minutes before sunset. Hundreds of these cigar-shaped birds will fly around a chimney opening. At first, one or two birds will drop in, but then, eventually, the flock will form a funnel and begin pouring into the chimney en masse. It's an amazing spectacle!

You do not need to be a KCA member to attend. Binoculars are optional because Swifts are visible with the naked eye as they enter the chimney.

—Marion Miller



Hundreds of Swifts are expected to roost in the chimney of the Village Hall in West Dundee on Saturday, Sept. 10. Photo by Marion

KCA Walks Record 262 Species to Date

In 2020, KCA had 41 trips and rambles and saw a total of 168 bird species. In 2021, we had 45 trips and rambles and saw 173 species. Those were COVID years, and we limited participation and the number of trips we offered. As a result, we didn't get as many birds as we used to.

This year, we are making up for lost time! Through Sept. 3, KCA has held 54 bird walks and rambles this year. Those outings have yielded an amazing 262 species! To be fair, we did have a long distance trip to Washington State, which added 69 birds for the year (as well as 9 birds to KCA's life list).

But, our walks here in Kane County always get good totals. Our bird walk at Dick Young Forest Preserve in Batavia on Sept. 3 recorded a whopping 63 species. Among them were 13 warblers, including Ovenbird, which was new for KCA's year list. Kudos to leader Tim Klimowski and the 11 other KCAers who birded with him.

Thankfully, our trips and rambles no longer have any limits on the number of participants, so all are welcome. Look at our calendar of events and see how many more trips we have for the year and come join us. It feels great to return to a somewhat "normal" trip activity. We have often had new birders join us on our walks, and I think they all have enjoyed the experience of being with birders that are more than willing to answer questions and help newcomers feel welcome.

For those that don't know, a trip is a scheduled event announced in the newsletter. Rambles are spontaneous trips looking for specific birds or going to a different location. To get ramble announcements, call me at 630-624-8387 or email drinibird2@gmail.com.

—Bob Andrini

Fall Global Big Day Set for Oct. 8

Mark your calendars for the fall edition of Global Big Day Saturday, Oct. 8. By taking part in October Big Day, you're also joining the second-ever Global Bird Weekend and celebrating World Migratory Bird Day. Be a part of the global team and help set a new record for birding!

You can bird anywhere you like for as long as you like from midnight to 11:59 p.m. The idea is to create a snapshot of bird populations around the world on a particular day. Last year on October Big Day, 32,670 birders worldwide turned in 78,024 checklists with a grand total of 7,269 species.

Participation is easy:

- Watch birds on Oct. 8.
- Enter your sightings on eBird.
- Watch the sightings roll in in real-time on the eBird October Big Day page: <https://ebird.org/octoberbigday>. If you don't know how to use eBird, contact me, and I will help you set up an account.

—Regina McNulty

Birders Bookshelf

An Australian Birding Year, by R. Bruce Richardson

Ever thought of taking a year off and birding nonstop for a year? Now, how about doing that in a camper with your less enthusiastic significant other. R. Bruce Richardson did just that in Australia. Both he and his wife, Lynn, are Americans who live in Australia. R. Bruce is a passionate birder. He could go 24 hours a day. His wife enjoys birding on a more limited basis. They spent the year in a camper moving from place to place, occasionally staying in motels or cabins when the need for a little space apart became overwhelming. Each day, they searched for whatever birds were in the area. They were never bored!

They finished the year with 640 birds they saw together. Along the way, they discovered the amazing country, people and wildlife that live in their newly adopted home. The book is sprinkled liberally with photos of the awesome birds and places they saw.

This is more than just the story of the birds seen. He goes into details of the day-to-day trials and tribulations when you are trying to see as many birds as possible while covering huge distances dealing with weather, mechanical challenges, and difficult and amazing people.

R. Bruce has an engaging personality and does not spare himself when telling his story. His first book was so successful he has another one coming out in January.

—Regina McNulty



More Than 10,000 Swifts Recorded on ‘Swift Night Out’

The annual Swift Night Out was Sept. 2-4, and it was another successful event.

Some 26 birders—including five first-time observers—watched 18 chimneys throughout Kane County. Thirteen were found to be active roosts. The total number of Chimney Swifts counted going to roost during the three-night period was 10,700. Some 76 percent of the active roosts were chimneys at business locations. The remaining 34 percent were chimneys at either schools or churches.

—Marion Miller

Sax-Zim Expert Tops Speaker Lineup for KCA’s Fall Meetings

KCA will kick off its 2022-23 meeting schedule in September. And, I have good news: We will be meeting in person, and there will be treats!

COVID is still with us, of course, but, at press time, the numbers for Kane County were decent. Mask wearing is optional. But, if you’re not feeling well, please stay home. There will be other meetings.

Here’s the skinny on our fall lineup.

Wednesday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m., Annual Photo Sharing Night

Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, St. Charles.

One of our most popular meetings returns! Once a year, KCA members share their best images and stories with the group. KCA is blessed with some truly gifted photographers: You won’t want to miss this meeting! If you’d like to participate, send your photos to me via e-mail (tweetspro@gmail.com) or a free file-sharing service, such as We Transfer (<https://wetransfer.com>) or Google Drive. Photos don’t have to be of birds. Any nature subject is fine. Mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, flowers, landscapes—the world is your oyster. To expedite the presentation, I will put all the images into a PowerPoint presentation before the meeting. However, you’re also welcome to put your images on a thumb drive and bring it to the meeting. Either way, we’ll get you in!

Wednesday, Oct. 12, 7 p.m., Swallows of Kane County, John Sprovieri

Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, St. Charles.

During the summer, swallows are a common sight all over North America—from Alaska to south Florida. These graceful birds swoop and glide for hours chasing insects in flight. Most are very sociable, nesting communally and gathering in flocks on roadside wires. They are often found close to people, nesting around barns, houses and other man-made structures. This presentation—generously illustrated by photos from KCA members—will teach you all about the six swallow species that are seen in Kane County. You’ll learn about their diets, breeding habits and migration patterns. You’ll also get tips on how to identify swallows and where and when to see them.



Wednesday, Nov. 9, 7 p.m., Birding the Bog, Richard Hoeg, volunteer naturalist, Friends of Sax Zim Bog

Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, St. Charles.

A retired computer programmer, Rich Hoeg lives near Duluth, MN. A photographer, blogger and author of children’s books, Hoeg is a volunteer naturalist at Sax-Zim Bog, one of the premier winter birding areas in North America. It’s home to some amazing birds, like Great Grey Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, and Evening Grosbeak. In this presentation, Hoeg will take us on a tour of the bog, only without the sub-zero temperatures! Whether you’ve been to the bog—or plan to someday—you won’t want to miss this talk.

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m., BCN Trends Analysis, Diann Bilderback, vice president, Bird Conservation Network Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, St. Charles.

Earlier this year, the Bird Conservation Network (BCN) released the results of a 22-year study showing that northeastern Illinois is a stronghold for breeding birds. The study, “Breeding Bird Trends in the Chicago Region 1999-2020,” provides an update on the status of more than 100 nesting species across grassland, shrubland, wetland and woodland habitats. The report shows that some breeding bird species are stable or expanding, while others face declines. A coalition of 21 conservation organizations dedicated to the preservation of birds and the habitats they need to survive, BCN collected the data from six counties: Cook, Lake, McHenry, DuPage, Kane and Will. This presentation will detail the results of the study and its implications for Kane County.

KCA Bird Walks and Outings

Our walks are led by fellow members and are intended to share an appreciation of the natural world around us. Please join us and share your knowledge and excitement about the birds of our world. Registration is no longer required.

Saturday, Sept. 10, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Freeman Kame / Meagher Forest Preserve, Huntley.
Leader: Jim Shotsburger, 847-340-1804

Saturday, Sept. 17, 7 a.m., Bird Walk

LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, St. Charles.
Leader: Jon Duerr, 630-485-1005

Saturday, Sept. 24, 7 a.m., Bird Walk

Red Oak Nature Center, Aurora.
Leaders: John Sprovieri and Regina McNulty, 630-776-0924

Saturday, Oct. 1, 7:30 a.m., Bird Walk

Nelson Lake / Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia.
Leader: Tim Klimowski, 630-802-1153

Saturday, Oct. 8, 7:30 a.m., Bird Walk

Elsen’s Hill / West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve,
West Chicago.
Leader: Chris Madsen, 630-492-0049

Saturday, Oct. 15, 7:30 a.m., Bird Walk

Bliss Woods Forest Preserve, Sugar Grove.
Leader: Bob Andrini 630-624-8387

Saturday, Oct. 22, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Oakhurst Forest Preserve, Aurora.
Leader: Sue Schneider and Wes Sadler, 630-204-9477

Saturday, Oct. 29, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve, South Elgin.
Leader: Barb Rask, 630-464-7490

Saturday, Nov. 5, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Nelson Lake / Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia.
Leader: Tim Klimowski, 630-802-1153

Saturday, Nov. 12, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Big Rock Forest Preserve, Big Rock.
Leader: Tim Balassie, 630-460-6910

Saturday, Nov. 19, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Burnidge Forest Preserve, Elgin.
Leader: Bill Koch, 847-830-5099

Saturday, Nov. 26, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Les Arends Forest Preserve, Batavia.
Leader: Mike Billy, 815-353-2212

Saturday, Saturday, Dec. 3, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Nelson Lake / Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia.
Leader: Tim Klimowski, 630-802-1153

Saturday, Dec. 10, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Fabyan Forest Preserve, Batavia.
Leader: Ann Haverstock, 708-767-0903

Saturday, Dec. 17, Christmas Bird Count—Fermi Circle

Various locations.
Coordinator: John Sprovieri, 630-776-0924

Saturday, Dec. 18, Christmas Bird Count—Big Rock Circle

Various locations.
Coordinator: Tim Balassie, 630-460-6910

Saturday, Dec. 24, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Geneva Dam, Main Street, Geneva.
Put down the tape and ribbon and pick up your bins—we’re going for a walk on Christmas Eve! Whether you’ve been naughty or nice, join us for a short walk along the river in search of gulls and waterfowl.
Leader: Jon Duerr, 630-485-1005

Sunday, Jan. 1, 9 a.m., Bird Walk

Les Arends Forest Preserve, Batavia.
Our annual New Year’s Day walk. What will be your first bird of 2023?
Leader: Nancy Schnaitman, 630-365-9595

Saturday, Jan. 7, 8 a.m., Bird Walk

Nelson Lake / Dick Young Forest Preserve, Batavia.
Leader: Tim Klimowski, 630-802-1153