



The Meadowlark Messenger

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org

Champaign County Audubon Society • A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

March Program

Thursday, March 2, 2023, 7:00–8:00 pm
Join us on [Zoom](#)
Meeting ID: 818 2575 5261

Fred Delcomyn will share with us his photographs of birds, landscapes, and other wildlife of Patagonia and Antarctica! Fred is a retired University of

Illinois professor and has long been interested in nature and natural history; he completed the Master Naturalist program in 2017. few years ago, Fred gave a fascinating presentation for CCAS about birds of Australia.



All seminars are recorded and posted to our YouTube channel afterward. Access details and more information can be found on our website: www.champaigncountyaudubon.org/birdwalks-and-programs

In This Issue

<i>Field Notes</i>	<i>Pg. 2</i>	<i>Memorial</i>	<i>Pg. 4</i>
<i>Bird of the Month</i>	<i>Pg. 3</i>	<i>Upcoming Events</i>	<i>Pg. 4</i>
<i>Thank You, Members</i>	<i>Pg. 4</i>	<i>Kendeigh Grants</i>	<i>Pg. 5</i>

Champaign County Audubon Society

Officers

- President: Colin Dobson
- Vice President: Roger Digges
- Secretary: Jennifer Wick
- Treasurer: Todd Kinney

Members at Large

- Beth Chato
- Megan Skrip
- vacant

Committee Chairs

- Bylaws: Roger Digges
- Conservation: Zachary Sutton
- Education: (vacant)
- Field Trip: (vacant);
Beth Chato, Colin Dobson, Brody Dunn
- Finance: (vacant)
- Membership: Brock Martin
- Program: vacant
- Communications: Sara Johnson (Chair);
Shoshie Bauer, Jeff Bryant (Birdnotes
Listserv), Susan Pollock, Megan Skrip,
Sarah Stewart

Champaign County Audubon publishes *The Meadowlark Messenger* nine times per year. **Comments regarding the newsletter, or articles for submission, are welcome.**

Contact us!

P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803
ChampaignCountyAudubon.org
mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org

Get this newsletter in your inbox!



Would you like to go paperless and help our funds go further? Please visit the [Membership](#) page on our website and enter

your name and email address.

Find us on social media!

 **Facebook**
[@ChampaignAudubon](#)

 **Twitter**
[@ccaudubon](#)

 **Instagram**
[@champaigncountyaudubon](#)



Field Notes

Colin Dobson, CCAS President

Happy March, everyone; spring is finally on the way! Thankfully (so far) we did not have any significant snowfall this year! Now we can look forward to warmer temperatures, flora leafing out and blooming, and most importantly, the birds to come! As March progresses, geese will continue to migrate north as well as waterfowl starting to peak in migration. Perhaps check out [Riverbend](#) for some of these species this month! Winter species will not stick around for much longer so perhaps get out one last time to see some of those Lapland Longspurs, finches, and sparrows!

At the current time, we do not have any major field trips in March although we should have more field trips to come this spring! Come out to Woodcock Walks at Lake of the Woods on March 19th or Homer Lake on March 26th in the evenings! Also, our Sunday Morning Bird Walks will start up on the first Sunday, March 5. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center Parking lot at 7:30 am. Bird walks are held every Sunday until the end of May!



Lapland Longspur. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

Bird of the Month

Roger Digges, CCAS Vice President

Up until now, males and females of the birds of the month have been similar, in some cases (chickadees and turkey vultures) virtually impossible to tell apart. Great Horned Owl males and females have slightly different sizes and more noticeably different voice pitches, and Dark-eyed Junco sexes have somewhat different plumages, but one can easily tell they are the same species. Such is not the case with March's bird of the month.

From late February through March, male Red-winged Blackbirds begin to fill marshes, meadows, field edges, roadsides, prairie restorations, and trees along waterways flashing red epaulets and shouting their distinctive call—conk-a-LEE. Females on the other hand are not black and don't have epaulets. If you can find them at all, you may think they are a completely different species, their bland plumage covered with brown streaks, their faces tinged somewhat yellow



Red-winged Blackbird. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

Males sport such striking plumage to be noticed. They take the highest perch they can find and loudly announce their ownership of it against all comers. Any creature which trespasses on its territory incurs its wrath. I have seen male Red-winged Blackbirds attack other Red-wings as well as much larger trespassers—crows, hawks, owls, Bald Eagles, even deer and people. They are aggressive because nesting territory is at a premium as are nesting females. Females, however, sneak through the grass feeding or building nests, camouflaged by their drab plumage. The male's bright

with dark stripes. I remember as a beginning birder asking a more experienced companion what species that large sparrow was. It wasn't a sparrow. It was a red-winged blackbird.



Red-winged Blackbird. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

red wing patches and loud call increase the likelihood that they will attract more females and thus sire more offspring. But their plumage also attracts more predators. Females, however, don't need to attract males. The males will find them. They need to stay hidden, sitting on their nests and finding food to survive and feed their young. These two very

different strategies have led to what biologists call sexual dimorphism in this species. While in some birds males and females are different sizes (most birds of prey), Red-winged Blackbirds have different plumage as do many songbirds (cardinals, bluebirds, orioles, warblers, etc.).

Keep an eye and ear out for male Red-winged Blackbirds as winter merges into spring. Where there are males, there are usually many more females around somewhere. Males mate with 5-15 different females. So watch for them as well, but be careful not to disturb them on their nests.

You may be able to attract Red-winged Blackbirds to your yard if you live close enough to their preferred habitat and scatter grain and seeds on the ground.

How are Red-winged Blackbirds doing? The North American Breeding Bird Survey estimates that the number of red-winged blackbirds declined by 28% between 1966 and 2019, likely due to the loss of their favorite habitat, which is marshes and other open wetlands. However, there are still 180 million of them in North America according to Partners in Flight. So enjoy seeing one of our most abundant birds and be an advocate for the preservation and creation of wetland habitats.

Welcome, New Member!

Virginia McClland

Thank You, Renewing Members!

JMarsha Daniels, Todd Kinney, Paula Luesse, Allan Penwell, Lynne Reagan, Zachary Sutton, Donna Wagner, Ann Wiseman

Thank You, Renewing Member Donors!

A special thanks to renewing members who donated above and beyond annual dues:

Michael Barnhart, Astrid Berkson, Rosemary Buck, Nancy Coombs, Maggie Duncan-Flowers, Joyce Eisold, Eric Freyfogle, Darcy Gentner, Alan Halberstadt, Charles and Patricia Helm, Jennifer Hines, Dwaine Keller, Mark Remi Koster, Kay Lindsay, Charles Nixon, Steve Ogle, Gary Russell, Edmund Sutton, Iris Swanson, Belinda Porter & Greg Walkburg, Mary Solecki, Sandy Volk, Ruth Wene, Jackie Wilen

Memorial for Charlene Anchor

Our deepest sympathies and condolences to the friends and family of long-time CCAS board member and supporter Charlene Anchor who lost her fight with terminal cancer on February 8th 2023. Charlene loved reading and sharing her love of birds and the outdoors with the Champaign-Urbana community including monitoring bluebird boxes at the Buffalo Trace Prairie at Lake of the Woods. Charlene served as Secretary and Member at Large for CCAS for many years, contributed to and helped to expand CCAS educational programs, and was active during the Spring Bird-a-thon on team "Ghostbusters" with fellow past board member and friend Janet Jokela. Her absence will be felt in our small community and donations in memorium can be made to the CCAS Educational Fund: Donate ([paypal.com](https://www.paypal.com)). Charlene will be greatly missed.

Upcoming Events

See our latest updates at <https://www.champaigncountyaudubon.org/all-events>

Sunday Morning Bird Walks

*Sundays, 7:30–9:00 am
March 5 to May 28
September 3 to October 29
Anita Purves Nature Center*

Join a 75+ year tradition in Champaign-Urbana for an all ages and beginner-friendly bird walk with CCAS. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot for a free guided bird walk through either Busey Woods or Crystal Lake Park (decided on the day). All skill levels and ages are welcome (under 15 with adult). Hope to see you there!

CCAS Board Meeting

Monday, March 20, 7:00-8:30 pm

All CCAS members are welcome to attend our board meetings. For infomation, mail@champaigncountyaudubon.org.

Woodcock Walks

Join CCFPD in a search for the elusive wood snipe, AKA the American Woodcock, as the males perform their amazing courtship display at dusk. A short discussion will be followed by a walk to look for the sky dancers. FREE. Recommended for ages 5 and up. **Space is limited; registration required.**

[March 15: Lake of the Woods, 6:45–8:15 pm](#)

[March 23: Homer Lake, 6:45–8:15 pm.](#)

Almost-Empty Nesters: Investigating the Post-fledging Ecology of Eastern Whip-poor-wills

Thursday, April 6, 7:00–8:00 pm

Presenter: Sarah Stewart, UIUC, Kendeigh Grant recipient.

Kendeigh Grants

Deadline: March 25

Each year we offer grants of up to \$2000 each to three researchers conducting work in the field of ornithology in Illinois.

Proposals must contain:

1. The applicant's name, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address
2. Description of the research to be carried out
3. Proposed budget
4. Evidence of your qualifications to do the research, including a brief CV and at least two references.

Submit to Roger Digges, CCAS Vice President, at rogerdigges49@gmail.com.

Proposals must be received by March 25, 2023. Notification of awards will be made in April.

After the completion of the research, grantees must present the results in writing to CCAS. Awardees will also be asked to give a presentation at a CCAS general meeting (typically the first Thursday in April or May, the year following grant award).

Woodcock Walk at Homer Lake

Thursday, March 23
6:45- 8:15PM

Interpretive Center,
Homer Lake Forest Preserve

FREE. Recommended ages 5+
Space is limited.

Registration required at ccfpd.org

For more info:

(217) 896-2455 or jwick@ccfpd.org.



Join Champaign County Audubon Society!

Yes, I'd like to become a member!

When you join the Champaign County Audubon Society, 100% of your dues and donations support our efforts (and they're tax deductible!).

\$ _____ CCAS Membership (\$15 due each January).

\$ _____ Additional donation to CCAS

\$ _____ TOTAL

Or Join Online!

Save time by contributing via your mobile device or computer! [Visit our website to join or donate online.](#)

I am a new member I am renewing my membership

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone # (_____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ - _____

CCAS members will be automatically enrolled to receive our newsletter by email; check this box if you would prefer to receive a **paper** copy.

Checks should be made payable to CCAS. Send this form and your payment to: CCAS Membership Chair, P.O. Box 882, Urbana, IL 61803-0882. Thank you!

Our Mission:

Promote interest, enjoyment, and understanding of all aspects of our natural environment, and actively encourage the protection of wildlife and native habitats.

Join National Audubon Society

When you join National Audubon Society you receive one year of Audubon magazine. You also have the option to receive local birding and community events delivered to your inbox from CCAS.

- **New members:** Go online to <http://bit.ly/nas-g50> or call 1-844-428-3826. Please tell them Champaign County Audubon Society sent you using our chapter code "G50."
- **Renewing members:** Go online to <http://bit.ly/renew-nas> or call 1-844-428-3826.



Audubon

The Champaign County Audubon Society is a Chapter of National Audubon Society, Inc.