



The Meadowlark Messenger

ChampaignCountyAudubon.org

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

May Program

Thursday, May 4, 2023, 7:00–8:00 pm

Join us on Zoom

Meeting ID: 881 8298 7442

This month features presentations by two recipients of our 2022 Kendeigh Grant! See page 5 for details.



A bird in hand: Exploring children’s value development through mist-netting experiences

Presented by **Seunguk Shin**, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



Grassland bird stopover habitat use and migratory behavior in Illinois

Presented by **Nicole Suckow**, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

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

Mini-Grants for Educators

Closing date for applications is May 31, 2023. Details and our application form are on the [CCAS website](#).

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Champaign County Audubon Society

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- 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
- 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

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Field Notes

A recent CCAS Sunday Morning Bird Walk yielded a lot of sightings. Here is the recorded list by Jenny Applequist on April 9 for CCAS.

Busey Woods, Urbana, Champaign, IL, US, Apr 9, 2023, 7:25–8:27 am

Protocol: Traveling, 1.135 miles, 32 species

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Canada Goose 8 | European Starling 6 |
| Wood Duck 2 | Hermit Thrush 1 |
| Mallard 2 | American Robin 15 |
| Mourning Dove 3 | House Sparrow 12 |
| Cooper’s Hawk 3 | House Finch 4 |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker 2 | American Goldfinch 6 |
| Downy Woodpecker 4 | Dark-eyed Junco 8 |
| Northern Flicker 6 | White-throated Sparrow 15 |
| Blue Jay 3 | Eastern Towhee 2 |
| American Crow 8 | Red-winged Blackbird 3 |
| Tufted Titmouse 5 | Brown-headed Cowbird 12 |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet 5 | Rusty Blackbird 1 |
| White-breasted Nuthatch 5 | Common Grackle 3 |
| Brown Creeper 2 | Louisiana Waterthrush 1 |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 2 | Yellow-rumped Warbler 3 |
| Carolina Wren 4 | Northern Cardinal 5 |



Northern Parula. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

Bird of the Month

Roger Digges, CCAS Vice President

One of the brightest, boldest, most colorful members of the avian family is coming to our area this month, all the way from Central America. Soon the woods will be filled with its melodious whistling song. But you don't need to rush out to see or hear this spectacular bird. Some will be around all summer.

The Baltimore Oriole is a member of the blackbird family, although its black head and back are never the first thing you notice about the male bird. What attracts our attention is the almost impossibly intense orange of its breast and belly as we look up at it perched or gleaning insects near the top of a mature tree. There is no mistaking it with any other bird. The females, as we've come to expect in this blog, are naturally more subtle, feathered in more camouflaging dull yellow and orange, with a yellow tail and yellow under the tail. Female Baltimore Orioles can be mistaken for the females of the other, less common, oriole in our area, the Orchard Oriole, which has no trace of orange. Male Orchard Orioles have a chestnut-colored breast and belly rather than orange.



Baltimore Oriole. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

Where can you find Baltimore Orioles in May (and beyond)? You're much more likely to hear them first than see them. I've mentioned the [Merlin app](#) before, which is probably the best way to detect and identify a



Baltimore Oriole. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

Baltimore Oriole song or call. Once you've determined that a male Baltimore Oriole is nearby, look up. Look way up. He will be mostly hidden by the foliage of a tall tree near you, usually one on the edge of a woodland or stream, in a small grove of trees, or your own neighborhood if it hosts a number of mature trees. If you don't see him right away, keep looking. He'll eventually pop into sight among the leaves. And enjoy!

If you want to attract Baltimore Orioles to your yard, plant fruit-bearing shrubs and trees like raspberry, crab apples, and other dark fruits. [All About Birds](#) suggests cutting oranges in half and hanging the halves from trees in your yard. We have had some success with commercially available feeders, which offer nectar to orioles and also have a place to affix orange halves and put grape jelly. Orioles love sweets and the insects drawn to them.

How are Baltimore Orioles doing? According to the [North American Breeding Bird Survey](#), their numbers have declined by 36% over the past five and a half decades. (I certainly remember them being more common in my childhood.) [Partners in Flight](#) estimate their population at 12 million, which is still a lot of orioles, but deforestation both here in the US and in Central America and the spraying of insecticides have contributed to the decline. Like many other birds, Baltimore Orioles are distracted by artificial lights and crash into tall buildings or cell towers. Oriole lovers need to advocate for the protection of forests as well as dark-sky friendly lighting.

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

Middlefork FPD Field Trip

Thursday, May 4, 8 am–12pm
Meet at the North Waterfowl Area parking lot
(coordinates: 40.385101, -87.979106) at 8 am!

Join us as we walk out to the Point Pleasant wetland to search for wetland species. We will also bird along the trail on the way out looking for neotropical migrants and other birds in the pools along the way. The walk is about a mile or mile and a half one way but we'll go slow as we'll be birding the whole way!

Illinois Spring Bird Count

Saturday, May 6

The Spring Bird Count is a yearly bird count on the Saturday between May 4th and 10th. Each Illinois county has a compiler responsible for recruiting volunteers and assigning them to survey areas.

Volunteers record all birds seen or heard, along with the number of hours they spend “owling” (pre-dawn hours) and looking for birds during the day, as well as the number of miles driven and walked.

If you are interested in participating, please email Beth Chato at ejchato@gmail.com. Learn more: <https://spring-bird-count.inhs.illinois.edu>.

Human-Bird Interactions Survey

At CCAS, we know that our members and friends care about birds. That's why we're excited about a new local bird research project that is seeking the input of people just like you who live in Champaign-Urbana!

For more information or to participate in the survey: <https://www.champaigncountyaudubon.org/our-blog-the-meadowlark-messenger/uiuc-human-bird-interactions-survey>.

CCAS Board Meeting

Monday, May 15, 7:00–8:30 pm

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

Danville Field Trip

Monday, May 29, 6 am–2 pm
Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center Parking lot at 6 am!

We will go birding at Kennekuk, Kickapoo, and Heron County Parks throughout the day! Bring a lunch as we will have a picnic lunch on this day! We will be looking for late migrants, some breeding species, such as Yellow-throated Chat, Prairie Warbler, and tanager, and some water species at Heron County Park.

Cedars Planted for Owls

Zachary (Zak) Sutton, CCAS Conservation Chair



On Friday, April 7, Blake Mackin and I were able to add 60 more eastern red cedars to those that were planted between the Saline Branch and the south end of the Anita Purves Nature Center parking lot in the fall. In total, between the cedars planted and the ones there

naturally, there are now over 100 cedars in that area!

We get to help improve that area even more on **April 29** by partnering with the Urbana Park District to install live stakes of native bird-friendly shrubs. The CCAS Conservation Committee could use plenty of help that morning, so please consider signing up and joining us! Email me at zaksutton2@gmail.com to sign-up or with any questions about volunteering with the Conservation Committee.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Photo by Jeff Bryant.

Kendeigh Grant Presentations

Thursday, May 4, 2023, 7:00–8:00 pm

Join us on [Zoom](#); Meeting ID: 881 8298 7442



A Bird in Hand: Exploring Children’s Value Development Through Mist-netting Experiences

Presenter: Seunguk Shin, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Seunguk will be presenting his research on how a hands-on mist-netting experience with birds affects children’s environmental values. This project focused on teaching children aged 6 to 12 about birds and provided them opportunities to handle and release wild-caught songbirds during Nature Day Camps at the Anita Purves Nature Center, Urbana. Seunguk’s proposal was to conduct surveys with the children and expected that

children who participated in the mist-netting sessions would show greater increases in their environmental values and connection to nature compared with the control group who were not involved in the sessions.



Grassland Bird Stopover Habitat Use and Migratory Behavior in Illinois

Presenter: Nicole Suckow, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

“The vast majority of Illinois’ grassland birds are migratory,” Nicole explains, “and this project aims to better our understanding of what constitutes...quality habitat [during migration] for these species throughout the state.” Nicole will investigate grassland birds’ habitat preferences, use automated radio telemetry to estimate how long migrating birds linger on stopover sites, and analyze poop samples to determine what

birds are eating while fueling up for their migratory flights. The project spans 24 grassland sites across Illinois, and will focus on the habitat preferences and stopover behavior of 12 species, 11 of which are listed as Species in Greatest Conservation Need.

Bird-a-Thon

May 7–13, 2023

The Bird-a-Thon is CCAS’s annual fundraiser where teams eagerly search for as many bird species as they can find. Pledge donations are based on the number of species seen or a flat amount. Please participate or choose a team and pledge your support! For more information, contact Beth Chato (ejchato@gmail.com).

Your contributions go toward the CCAS Kendeigh Memorial Fund, which supports ornithological research in Illinois. Learn more: <https://www.champaigncountyaudubon.org/research-grants>.

Welcome, New Members!

*Karan Keith
Aaitqa Nawaz*

Memorial Donation

Thank you to Beth Chato for her donation in memory of Charlene Anchor.

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.



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