



MISSISSIPPI CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Quad City Audubon Society



UPCOMING EVENTS *All activities open to the public.*

Vol. 33, No 2

Summer 2022

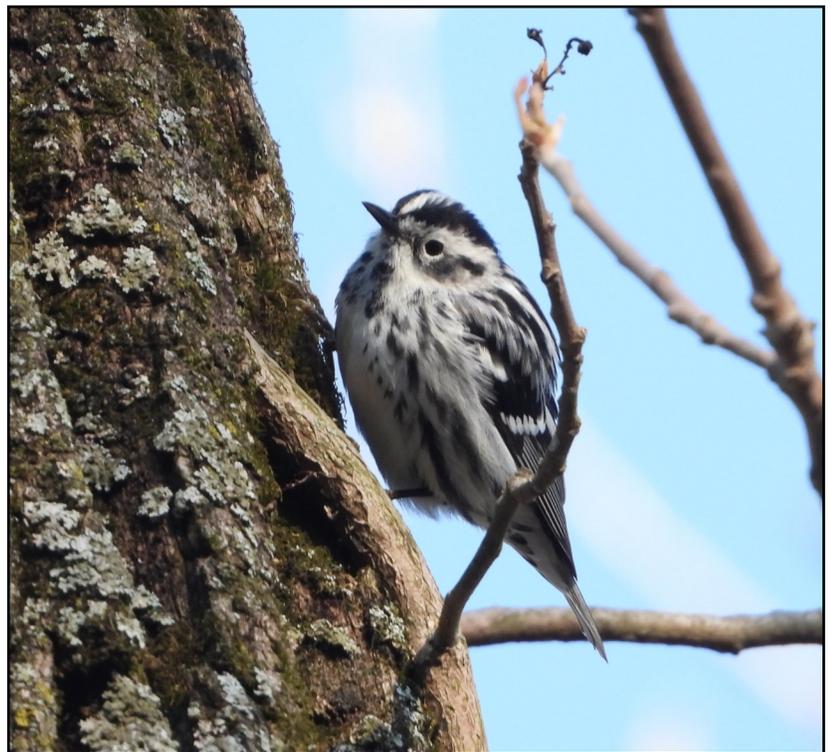
Please observe current COVID-19 protocols during membership meetings and field trips. Thank you for your help in these constantly evolving times.

On the web at www.quadcitaudubon.org, and on Facebook.

Sunday June 5th, 2022 - Field trip to Mississippi Palisades State Park. This is an all-day event. Those interested in attending should meet at Shuler's Shady Grove Park/boat ramp in Rapids City at 6:00 am. Carpooling will be at discretion of participants. This has typically yielded good views of Yellow-throated, Parula, Kentucky, Cerulean Warblers and many other species.

IFriday June 24-Saturday June 25— Bioblitz, Sunderbruch Park 4675 Telegraph Road, and Fairmont Cemetery, Davenport, Iowa. **CALLING ALL CITIZEN SCIENTISTS!** Put your species identification skills to the test and help us find as many species as possible during this 24 hour event! Partner with an expert to learn local flora and fauna. Fun for all ages! **FREE PUBLIC ACTIVITIES! • GUIDED HIKES • NATURE TALKS • INTERACTIVE NATURE STATIONS • & MORE!**

If you have any events you would like us to post, please let us know by sending a note to qcaudubon@gmail.com



Black and White Warbler photo by Susa Stonedahl



Audubon

The Quad City Audubon Society is a Chapter of National Audubon Society

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President's Corner....

I hope everyone was able to enjoy viewing the great diversity of birds that pass through during migration. Included in this Newsletter are reports on our spring field trips. If you missed them, you should consider joining us for the June 5 field trip to the Thomson/Savanna area. This trip has some of the best bird viewing as many of the birds are nesting and remain close to their nesting territories. Highlights in previous years included blue grosbeak and yellow-breasted chat.

Later on in June is the BioBlitz—this year held at Sunderbruch Park and Fairmont Cemetery. Details are listed in the events on the first page of this Newsletter. The BioBlitz is always a great event and attracts a wide community of scientists and nature-loving citizens. If you have never been before, come out to Sunderbruch and see what it is all about.

For the rest of the summer, I will be nursing my flower bed and my clover patch. Last year, tired of mowing in difficult spots in the yard, I bought some “deer attracting” red clover seed from Farm & Fleet and planted it in early spring. Now in its second year, the clover is blooming already by the end of May—sooner than many of my bedded flowers. Hopefully, the hummingbirds will get by on the red clover until some of my bigger flowers bloom.

Watch our website (quadcityaudubon.org) for new events that we will post as we hear of them. Also watch for QC Audubon events and field trips starting up again in September. Hope to see you out birding—Have a great summer!

- Jody Millar



Yellow-breasted Chat

Photo taken in Bettendorf by Susa Stonedahl.

Illinois Spring Bird Count May 7, 2022

Tim Murphy

May 7 was the 50th annual Illinois Spring Bird Count. The count began in 1972 and the goal has been to document the number and species of birds by county in the State of Illinois. This is truly a project of Citizen Science and has allowed the documentation of our changing bird populations over time. The current project is coordinated through the Illinois Natural History Survey and records are available on line.

Rock Island County through Quad City Audubon Society has participated in this count since inception. I have been compiling Rock Island County since 1986 and the following summary of this year's count and past records are from my files from 1986.

This year the count was held on Saturday May 7. This is a relatively early date but a field trip at Black Hawk State Park had yielded a good number of warblers and it was possible the early date prior to heavy leaf development and good weather would bring a large number of migrants.

This though was not to be. In spite of cool temperatures that helped keep birds active throughout the day, a rather low number of species, 123 was recorded in Rock Island County.

Waterfowl in general proved to be scarce with only Canada goose, mallard, wood duck, trumpeter swan and green-winged teal reported. Shorebirds were practically non-existent. Rivers were running full but they had not flooded and though we had a rainy spring, farm fields had little standing water, yielding very little shorebird habitat.

We actually did fairly well with warbler numbers, 19 species but overall number of warblers was low. Palm warbler, yellow-rumped warbler and American redstart were fairly common with 50, 140 and 81 birds, respectively, reported.

Unusual sightings included 1 trumpeter swan, 1 least bittern, 1 whip-poor-will, 1 osprey, 1 white-eyed vireo, 1 northern mockingbird. Record high numbers were found for bald eagles (20), purple martins (100), and blue-gray gnatcatchers (74). Relatively large numbers of red-headed (57) and downy woodpeckers (49) were recorded. Finally, a pine siskin and 2 golden-crowned kinglets were found lingering late for this time of year.

On the low side, 2 chimney swifts was a record low number and 2 ring-billed gulls is a very low number compared to previous years.

One should keep in mind that in the last 30 years it has been documented that 30% of the North American bird population has been lost. This is surely reflected in count numbers.

This year we had 6 field parties and 11 participants. I would like to thank Pat Carlson, Elizabeth Russell, Jeanne Hedges, Chris Swanson, Janelle Swanberg, Don Fish, David Van Landegen, Jo Ann Whitmore, Cathy White and Claudia Scharf for all their work and documentation.



American Redstart
and Song Sparrow

Photos by
Susa Stonedahl

To Feed or Not to Feed your Backyard Birds

By Jody Millar

The Illinois DNR has posted that as of May 31, backyard bird watchers may again fill their feeders with caution about keeping the feeder and feeder area clean. The IL DNR states that the greatest risk of avian flu or HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza) transmission is seed/grain feeders and bird baths where waterfowl and songbirds may interact, or those in the vicinity of poultry operations or backyard flocks. If one chooses to leave their bird feeders/baths up, IL DNR recommends following the guidance of weekly cleaning with a solution of 9 parts water and 1 part bleach, then thoroughly rinsing. Songbirds have always been considered low risk for bird flu, but caution was recommended during migration when birds might move throughout your area and carry it on to others. A look at the map put out by the USGS Madison Wildlife Health Lab indicates that avian flu is concentrated in the Minnesota/Wisconsin area into northern Illinois and western Iowa.

Nectar/hummingbird feeders are not currently a concern. If you would like to encourage hummingbirds into your backyard, plant native blooming flowers in a variety that will bloom throughout the season. Humming birds also like water, perches, insects as an additional food source and nest material (don't destroy those cobwebs!) In regards to feeding hummingbirds, Audubon suggest the following:

- Hang several feeders far enough apart that the hummingbirds cannot see one another; this will prevent one bird from dominating the rest.
- Fill the feeders with sugar water, made by combining four parts hot water to one part white sugar, boiled for one to two minutes then allowed to cool after mixing. Never use honey, artificial sweeteners, or red dye.
- Hang your feeders in the shade to prevent the sugar solution from fermenting.
- Be sure to change the sugar water regularly -- before it gets cloudy, or about twice a week in warm weather.
- Clean the feeders with a solution of one part white vinegar to four parts water about once a week. If your feeder has become dirty, try adding some grains of dry rice to the vinegar solution and shake vigorously. The grains act as a good abrasive.
- Rinse your feeder well with warm water three times before refilling with sugar solution.
- Check [eBird](#) to find out when the first hummingbird sightings occur each spring, and hang your feeders up a couple of weeks before that. In the fall, keep your feeders up for two weeks after you see the last bird using it.



*Ruby-throated hummingbird on feeder
Photo by Jody Millar.*

Cone Marsh Field Trip Report, April 9, 2022

Tim Murphy

It was a nice day for a field trip to Cone Marsh. A jacket day but moderate temperatures and dry. Four of us met at Marquette Street Boat Landing and headed out. The best bird on the way down was a male bluebird perched on a stop sign just outside Muscatine.

There were very few passerines around Cone Marsh. We did not see longspurs or shrikes which have been present in past years. The marsh itself held waterfowl, we viewed 17 species including many the most numerous probably lingering snow geese. All the expected puddle ducks were present including wood duck, blue-winged teal, shoveler, gadwall, wigeon, mallard, pintail, and green-winged teal. Diving ducks included redhead, lesser scaup, bufflehead, hooded merganser and ruddy duck.

Sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans and pelicans gave us the bigger marsh birds. The marsh overall held a decent amount of water, and few shorebirds were present, though a good number of black-bellied plover were identified at quite a distance.

Finally, just as we were ready to leave an eastern towhee called and a brown thrasher popped up right next to us. On the way out both eastern and western meadowlarks called.

For the trip we totaled 59 species, good weather and companionship.

Illiniwek and Dorrance Parks Field Trip Report, May 13, 2022

Tim Murphy

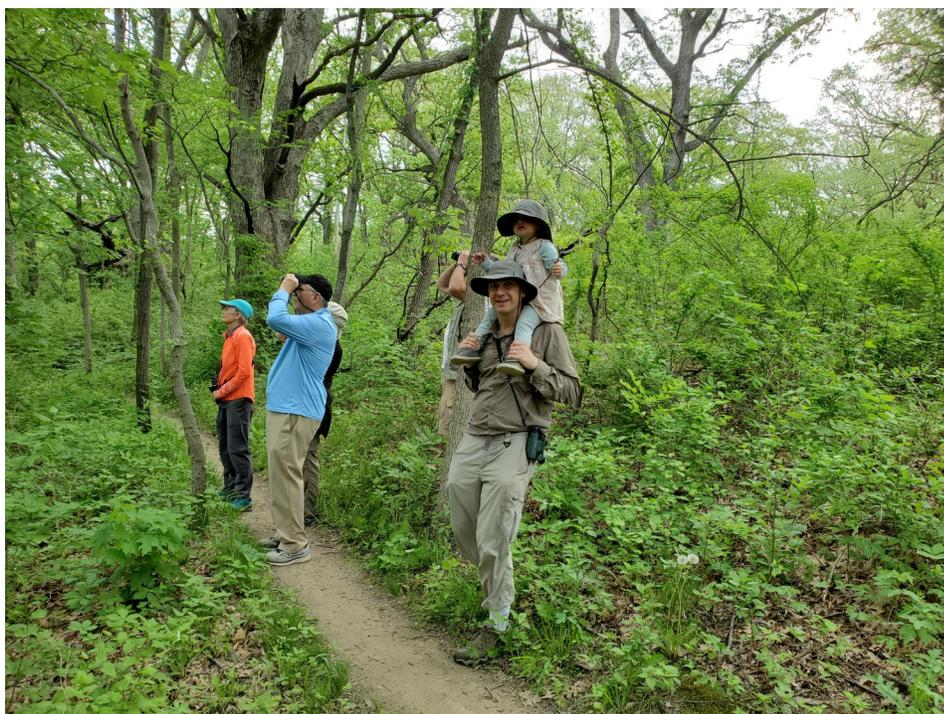
A great, no wind, weather day greeted six birders at Illiniwek Park at 7:00am. We were hoping for a warbler bonanza, but migration had seemed to be kind of over and what presented itself were residents. American redstarts and yellow warbler were common as we walked along the new oak planting. The leafy trees made viewing a bit of a challenge. Still, we picked out a red-eyed vireo in a tree top as we worked our way through the forest. Eastern pee wee, red-headed, red-bellied, downy woodpeckers along with rose-breasted grosbeak and Baltimore oriole kept track of our progress up the hill. On top a hummingbird was spotted and yet more redstarts.

Possibly the spot of the day was when Forrest observed a barred owl fly onto a roosting branch nearly covered from our view. Still with patience the group found the small hole in the greenery and could see the owl blending with the tree on which it sat.

We took a quick trip to the campground along the river to see if we could find yellow-throated warbler. It was not to be but we did see blackpoll and parula warblers.

We traveled upriver to Dorrance Park and the birding there seemed better. We heard and saw scarlet tanagers, blackburnian, chestnut-sided warbler, a flock of cedar waxwing and red-headed woodpeckers.

We quit the field around 11:00am. For the day we had 59 species.



Barred owl and Field Trip

photos by Susa Stonedahl

**Purple Martin House
Dedication at
Davenport Cemetery.**

**Signage supported by
QC Audubon**



Building Bird Boxes at Nahant Marsh



photos by Jody Millar

Membership Application

I would like to join as a new member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter. Please send me *Audubon Magazine*, *Mississippi Currents*, and my membership card. Enclosed is my check for \$35 payable to National Audubon Society. (include **Chapter # H63** on your check)

OR

I would like to join only as a member of Quad City Audubon in lieu of National Audubon. Please send me *Mississippi Currents*. Enclosed is my check for \$10 payable to Quad City Audubon.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Send to: Quad City Audubon Society
P.O. Box 81
Bettendorf, IA 52722
www.quadcityaudubon.org

Mission Statement

The Quad City Audubon Society is dedicated to the enjoyment of birds; a better understanding of the natural world; stewardship of natural areas and habitats; fellowship; improvement of community awareness of environmental issues; and education of youth for the benefit of future generations.

Thanks to those who contributed to this issue of *Mississippi Currents*. The next deadline is August 15th, 2022. Submissions are gladly accepted. Send to:

Jason Monson
(309) 221-1177
jmonson75@hotmail.com

Visit us online at:
www.quadcityaudubon.org



Left: Red-eyed vireo

Above: Ovenbird

Below: Worm-eating warbler

