



MISSISSIPPI CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Quad City Audubon Society



UPCOMING EVENTS *All activities open to the public.*

Vol. 35, No 4

Winter 2024

Thursday, December 12, 2024. Annual Meeting 6:00 pm – Pie Night/Officer and Board Member Elections. Butterworth Center, 1105 8th Street, Moline. Members bring a pie to share. The public is invited, there is no fee.

Saturday, December 14th, 2024. Bald Bluff Christmas Bird Count. Contact Jason Monson at jmonson75@hotmail.com to participate.

Sunday, December 15th, 2024. Davenport Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Tuesday, December 17th, 2024. Princeton-Camanche Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Wednesday, December 18th, 2024. Clinton-Savanna Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Thursday, December 19th, 2024. Louisa Y Christmas Bird Count. Contact Jason Monson at jmonson75@hotmail.com to participate.

Saturday, December 21st, 2024. Muscatine Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Sunday, December 22nd, 2024. Eastern Mercer County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Jason Monson at jmonson75@hotmail.com to participate.

Monday, December 23rd, 2024. Western Mercer County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Tuesday, December 24th, 2024. Andalusia-Buffalo Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Thursday, January 2nd, 2025. Buchanan County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Friday, January 3rd, 2025. Northwest Clayton County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Saturday, January 4th, 2025. Southeast Clayton County Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661 to participate.

Sunday, January 5th, 2025. Van Petten Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kelly McKay at 309-235-4661.

January 10th, 11th, 12th, 2025. Bald Eagle Days. QCCA Expo Center. 2621 4th Avenue, Rock Island. Visit qccaexpocenter.com to learn more.

Saturday, February 9th, 2025. Field Trip, Smith Island. Meet at Lock and Dam 14 for wintering waterfowl, gulls and resident woodland birds. Some walking through a woodland. Dress for the weather. For questions contact qcaudubon@gmail.com.

Sunday, March 16th, 2025. Field Trip, Princeton Marsh. Meet at Lock and Dam 14, LeClaire, Iowa at 8:00am. We will look for waterfowl en route to Princeton Marsh. This is a short half day field trip and will involve some walking. For questions, contact qcaudubon@gmail.com.

Saturday, April 12th, 2025. Field Trip, Cone Marsh. Cone Marsh can be an exceptional wetland complex for waterfowl, shorebirds and more. This is a full day field trip with an estimated return around 2:00pm. Meet at the Marquette Street Boat Landing at 7:00am for carpooling. For questions contact qcaudubon@gmail.com



Audubon

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

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Mississippi Currents is published quarterly by the Quad City Audubon Society P.O. Box 81 Bettendorf, IA 52722 www.quadcityaudubon.org

Direct all general emails to:
qcaudubon@gmail.com

From My Perch

December is Christmas Count month. Christmas Counts, began in 1900 as a counter to a traditional Christmas Day Hunt. They are Citizen Science at its best. Each count is a 15 mile diameter circle that remains the same every year. Volunteers divide the circle and tally every bird within the circle they can identify. Scientists use the long term trends generated by volunteers to track populations of birds worldwide.

Quad City Audubon does not have a scheduled December field trip because there are several Christmas Counts in which one could participate. Admittedly, the counts can be challenging. The weather can be cold, windy, or wet and roads can be difficult. An individual Christmas Count is almost never canceled or rescheduled.

Some field parties are out predawn for owls and last until nightfall. Others are able to cover their assigned territories in under a day. Many of us play Screech Owl calls. The woodland birds in particular want to know where the predator is and may come to the call en masse and the challenge becomes simply counting the birds.

Last year for me was memorable when we found what I believe to be an alder tree full of little cones. Pine Siskins by the dozen were hanging upside down from the tree like Christmas ornaments eating the seeds. Each winter there always seems to be a surprise.

If one would like to participate in a Christmas Count the compilers are listed in the newsletter. More Christmas Count information may be found online at this link www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count.

One other activity of note occurs this winter, Bald Eagle Days January 10, 11 and 12. For the past several years Quad City Audubon has set up spotting scopes, usually on Arsenal Island Causeway to show people Bald Eagles. This does involve setting up a spotting scope on the Eagles and some exposure to the weather but it can be very rewarding as people are generally thrilled to view these magnificent birds with our assistance.

If you would like to help email qcaudubon@gmail.com.

Tim Murphy

Loud Thunder Field Trip 10-19-24

Tim Murphy

On Saturday October 19 nine Audubon members met at Sunset Park to carpool to Loud Thunder, a Rock Island County Park. Loud Thunder is large, nearly 1500 acres. It's most prominent feature is Lake George a manmade lake. It is predominantly upland forest, deep ravines, interspersed with prairie restorations.

There is a small area adjacent to the Mississippi River which has a tiny bit of wetland and some bottomland timber. That is where we started and were greeted with the call of red-shouldered hawk as we left our cars. It sounded close but was not seen.

We observed common riverine birds including ring-billed gull, pelicans and cormorants. We walked the trail on the west side of the parking lot and observed/heard downy, red-bellied woodpeckers and northern flicker and brown creeper, fox sparrow as well as a late season warbling vireo. As the morning warmed yellow-rumped warblers were active and common.

From here we drove past the campgrounds and to the end of the horse corral and hiked the south sac fox trail. This trail goes up and down a couple of ravines through upland and bottomland timber.

The weather was sunny and mild with temps in the 50's to low 60's. Eastern towhees greeted us with their shriek and even some attempts at "drink you tea." Common forest birds, white-breasted nuthatch, chickadee, titmouse, and woodpeckers including pileated called. The open areas gave us Carolina wren, Eastern bluebird, cedar waxwing, white-throated sparrow, song sparrow and orange-crowned warbler.

The total hike was a couple of miles and took an hour and a half or so. For the day we had 38 species. Truthfully the highlight might have been Loud Thunder itself. To me this part of the park is a hidden gem of Rock Island County as it is a bit off the beaten path but well worth exploring.

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 February 25th, 2025. Submissions are gladly accepted. Send to: Jason Monson, (309) 221-1177, jmonson75@hotmail.com

Visit us online at:
www.quadcityaudubon.org