



MISSISSIPPI CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Quad City Audubon Society



UPCOMING EVENTS *All activities open to the public.*

Vol. 35, No 3

Fall 2024

Saturday, November 9, 8:00am -2:00pm. Quad City Audubon Society Field Trip Rapids City to Spring Lake for migrating waterfowl. Considered a full day field trip. Meet for carpooling at Shulers Shady Grove Boat Ramp, Rapids City at 8:00am. For further information contact Tim Murphy at 309-764-9779

Thursday, December 12, 2024. Annual Meeting 7:00 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.

December 14th, 2024 - January 5th, 2025. Christmas Bird Counts. The CBC season is just around the corner. Final dates for the local counts will appear in the Winter newsletter in December.



Audubon

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

OFFICERS

President

Tim Murphy - 2025

Vice President

Jody Millar - 2025

Treasurer

Bernadene Bowles-2025

Secretary

Brian Peer - 2025

BOARD MEMBERS

Cathy White-2025

Rob Porter - 2025

Adrianna McBride-2025

Susa Stonedahl - 2026

Krista Kefauver - 2026

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation

Bob Bryant

Field Trips

Board Members

Membership

Tim Murphy

Newsletter

Jason Monson

Iowa Audubon Liaison

Walt Zuurdeeg

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

I have been a member of Quad City Audubon for close to 40 years. One of the constants during this time has been regular membership meetings. These meetings followed a familiar pattern for those attending. First a brief review of current and future club activities and an environmental program presented by either an Audubon member or a guest speaker.

I have seen some great programs, from Whales in the Arctic, to Galapagos Islands, Ecuador and Greenland. Marvelous pictures of insects, fungi, plants and of course birds. Timely programs reviewing climate change, water quality and ecosystem restoration efforts. Of course we also presented programs designed to help people be better able to identify birds from waterfowl to warblers.

However, our programs have been increasingly poorly attended with an even greater drop off following Covid Pandemic. In person attendance has hovered around 5 people. We offer the meeting on zoom as well and we may have 5 more people viewing on zoom.

In addition it has become more difficult to find speakers. In the "olden days" there seemed to be kind of an informal networking among the environmental community and programs were relatively easily identified. This no longer seems to be the case and we struggle to book speakers.

Finally publicity as changes greatly from the club calendar pages of our newspapers to social media. Many of us older people struggle to transition from a press release to Instagram.

The upshot is the QCAS Board voted to discontinue membership meetings outside our December Pie Night, which will become an annual meeting. This is a painful step for me as I viewed the membership meetings as a chance to engage members on a more personal level, especially for those members unable to attend field trips.

Field trips will continue.

The Board did discuss offering "gatherings" which might revolve around fellowship, a project, or a skill. Last year for example we offered a workshop in which participants built nesting boxes.

The membership is encouraged to provide the Board with any suggestions, insights or potential projects that would help us engage our organization better. I would ask though, that any suggestion would also include implementation. For not only could we use ideas but we would need some participation to put those ideal into practice.

Thank you,
Tim Murphy,
President QCAS.

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 November 25th, 2024. Submissions are gladly accepted. Send to: Jason Monson, (309) 221-1177, jmonson75@hotmail.com

Visit us online at:
www.quadcityaudubon.org.

Dispensary/Truck Stop

The City of Rock Island have announced that they have plans to develop a piece of property on Illinois Route 92, across from the Bally Casino and Hotel. The development of the site is to include a dispensary and a truck stop. The site itself is upland and does not appear to present any environmental concerns other than it is surrounded by permanent and seasonal wetlands.

However only a few hundred yards from the site is a portion of Milan Bottoms that has long served as a night roost for overwintering Bald Eagles. It has been documented that hundreds of eagles have used this area. A night roost gives overwintering eagles a place protected from the wind in winter and is considered essential to Bald Eagle survival in this area.

There is great concern that a development of this site, especially for a truck stop, will negatively impact this night roost to the point that it could be abandoned or its use greatly diminished. Indeed it is difficult to imagine that 24 hour noise and lights would not affect roosting Bald Eagles.

Since night roosts are hard to come by degradation of this site may well mean a loss of wintering eagles to our area.

The Audubon Board is considering how best to manage a response to this project. We will keep the membership informed.

Tim Murphy

Three years ago, the world of bird conservation was forever changed with the publication of a groundbreaking study in *Science* confirming the losses of nearly three billion birds in North America between 1970 and 2019. Nearly two and a half billion of those birds represented migratory species, which makes efforts to protect them complicated given the need to address threats they face on breeding and wintering grounds and on their migratory journeys in between. If we want to secure a future for bird life, our conservation efforts must stretch across the entire hemisphere in a coordinated fashion informed by the best-available conservation science.

Luckily, this summer, scientists from the National Audubon Society published a study in the journal *Conservation Science and Practice*, presenting a framework that uses hemisphere-scaled processes, like migration, that are necessary for bird conservation, and translates them to targeted, on-the-ground conservation actions.

"To complete their life cycles, migratory birds often move across continents or even hemispheres. This requires conservation plans be designed to stop their population declines as we consider these broad distances covered," said Bill DeLuca, PhD, senior manager of migration ecology for Audubon and lead author of the study.

"The tricky part is that conservation actions, like forest restoration or preservation, happen at very local scales. In this paper we layout a framework for translating conservation plans developed for migratory birds across the Western Hemisphere into localized conservation actions using two example landscapes, Colombia and coastal North and South Carolina."

The framework's basic idea is that it integrates tracking data, generously shared with Audubon by hundreds of scientists, band re-encounter data from the US Geological Survey Bird Banding Lab and Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird Status abundance data to identify broad landscapes across the hemisphere that are integral for protecting a connected network of habitat for migratory birds. Based on organizational capacity and interest, a subset of those regions can be selected for more detailed analysis that considers local conservation needs to select specific sites and the conservation actions to implement. In other words, we combine bird migration science at hemispheric and regional scales and on-the-ground practicality, for example, local partnerships and benefits to surrounding communities, to focus conservation efforts across the entire hemisphere, protecting the most important places where conserving birds is most possible and has the largest impact on slowing declining bird trends.

Ultimately, the most important ingredient to effective conservation is people. Regardless of what a scientific analysis may find, if people do not have the capacity or interest to implement the conservation action, its success is unlikely.

Gloria Lentijo, working lands strategy director for Audubon Americas, adds, "We have to work beyond the maps and analysis to make it real for birds. We need to get to those places and understand the local context. We need to consider what people need and what the necessary actions are to protect birds. Only then can we negotiate a workplan that is tailored for each site to achieve conservation together with local communities."

This approach, sometimes referred to as translational ecology, is the key to successful conservation of migratory birds. Together, conservation scientists and on-the-ground conservation practitioners work hand-in-hand during the entire process to ensure that the science aligns with possible conservation actions.

As Audubon begins to roll out a new strategic plan called Flight Plan, it will be incorporating this new framework to ensure that the full annual cycles of migratory birds are included in this hemispheric effort with the goal of reversing declining trends in bird populations documented over the past 50 years. The stakes are significant. There are billions of birds that are depending on Audubon and our partners making sure we are using the best-available science to inform our conservation efforts.

Reprinted from National Audubon Website