



CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY  
5801-C N. Pulaski Road Chicago, IL 60646-6057

Periodicals

# COMPASS

*Navigating the world of birds and nature*

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 4

JULY/AUGUST 2012



Robin bathing at Skokie Lagoons.

Photo by Alan Anderson.

## CHICAGO AUDUBON'S ANNUAL MEETING ELECTION and "NIGHT HIKE"

July 19, 2012, 7:30 p.m.

North Park Village Nature Center  
5801 North Pulaski Road, Building D

Chicago Audubon's Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 19, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at the North Park Village Nature Center. A quorum of 30 current members is required in order to hold the election, **so please plan on attending (even if you won't be able to stay for the hike)**. After the meeting, the Night Hike will be a leisurely hour-long walk through the preserve at dusk to enjoy a little night music from Bullfrogs, Nighthawks, Cicadas, Katydid, and other noisy nighttime critters. With any luck, we will witness the aerobatics of Little Brown Bats or Flying Squirrels. If the weather cooperates, participants can watch the Nature Center's own little theater screen which features blacklights and bait to attract nocturnal insects. For your comfort, bring bug spray and wear long sleeves and long slacks.

The Chicago Audubon Nominating Committee (Alan Anderson, Bonnie Duman, and Jeffrey Sanders) has nominated the following officers for two years, their terms to expire March 2014:

President: Roger Shamley  
Vice President: Chris Van Wassenhove  
Treasurer: Bobbi Asher  
Secretary: Annette Prince

Six board members are to be elected for three year terms, from April 2012 up to March 2015. The Nominating Committee has nominated:

Steven Bailey  
Michelle Devlin  
Alan Garrett  
Julie Sacco  
Craig Stettner  
Dave Willard

Nominations of officers and directors may be made from among the membership by nominating petitions signed by not less than five members and accompanied by a written consent to serve, executed by the proposed nominee. Petitions should be filed at the Chicago Audubon office either by personal delivery or certified mail not less than the 5th day before the annual meeting. A sample ballot is printed on this page. This meeting is open to the public. For information or directions, call the Chicago Audubon office at 773-539-6793.

### CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY NOMINATING PETITION

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to place my name in nomination for the July 19, 2012 election of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Audubon Society. I agree to serve on the Board if elected.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



We, the undersigned, certify that we are current members of the Chicago Audubon Society and support the nomination of the above candidate.

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Please try to attend the Annual Meeting, even if you won't be able to stay for the Night Hike!**

### Birdathon! 2012

Due to the NATO summit, the Beecher Cup competition was moved a week earlier than usual this year. The fallout from needing to move the date was that a number of people who were active participants in the past were unable to join the fun this year. Two teams competed for the 2012 title: Field's Flickers (John Bates, Nick Block,

Nathan Goldberg & Jason Weckstein) participated on Saturday, May 12. They sighted 148 species. Steel Belted Kingfishers (Mark Agnor, Joe Lill, Jeff Sundberg & Kris Sundberg) participated on Sunday, May 13. They sighted 146 species. Each team was limited to one day of birding, all within Cook County, and all species needed to be identified by at least two team members.

Funds raised through the Birdathon are used for the educational and environ-

mental missions of Chicago Audubon. Please note that it is never too late to participate in Birdathon as a donor. If you missed the initial pre-event donation period, please feel free to contribute at any time. This is one of our primary fundraisers each year, and we rely on your support. To make a donation on behalf of your favorite team, or simply to donate in support of Birdathon! 2012, you can mail a check to Chicago Audubon, 5801-C North

Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60646, or call the office at 773-539-6793 to make a donation using your charge card. For those donating per species, the total number of species seen by the two teams was 162. You may donate to this fundraiser at any time, even if the dates have passed.

*Congratulations to the Flickers!!!*





# Beeuuuutiful Binoculars for Kids

Chicago Audubon launches fundraiser

By Marci Buettgen

## “I saw it—and it was *beeuuuuutiful!*”

The “it” was a bluer-than-blue Indigo Bunting. The “I” was a thrilled-to-pieces third-grade girl using binoculars on a birdwalk at the North Park Village Nature Center. Each year, the Nature Center hosts hundreds of groups of grade schools and high schools students from every part of the metropolitan region. Thousands of children and their teachers take birdwalks and nature walks participating in field work

that brings classroom science, nature, and art studies to life. These youngsters are future birders, naturalists, ecologists—and perhaps even future Chicago Audubon members.

Unfortunately, the collection of binoculars at the Nature Center is wearing out after long years of constant use. According to Chicago Audubon President Roger Shamley, “The Nature



Indigo Bunting. Photo by Jerry Kumery.



Three youngsters and their Mom enjoying birds and binoculars during a Chicago Audubon walk at the North Park Village Nature Center. Photo by Julie Sacco.

Center staff does a great job with the current cache of binoculars, but our organization is now leading a fundraising effort to provide *new* binoculars that are lightweight and sturdy with high quality optics.” Gail Gammel, co-leader of the Chicago Audubon Saturday morning Spring and Fall birdwalks at the Nature Center, also understands the importance of this effort. “Because we have Chicago Audubon binoculars to lend out, many ‘newbies’ get excited and develop into dedicated birders,” she said. “I only hope we can help the Nature Center upgrade their stock of binoculars so visitors year ‘round would have this same opportunity.”

Toward this end, Chicago Audubon will be collecting donations throughout the summer. Small amounts of \$5 or \$10 are welcome, in addition to any larger amounts that might be possible. To contribute directly, go to our website at [chicagoaudubon.org](http://chicagoaudubon.org). If you prefer, you may call the office with your credit card information (773-539-6793). To contribute by mail, cut out the form on this page. The Chicago Audubon Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization; therefore, your donation is tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

In the fall, please plan on attending the “Family Breakfast with the Birds” program at North Park Village Nature Center for an introduction of the new binoculars and a celebration of birds and birding. The program will be on Saturday, September 29, at 10:00 a.m. The Nature Center is located at 5801 North Pulaski Road, Building D. Mark your calendars!

In the meantime, for more information or to help out with the Binoculars for Kids Fund project, please contact Marci Buettgen (773-878-4421), or email her at [mdbchgo@comcast.net](mailto:mdbchgo@comcast.net). Please tell your family and friends about this wonderful cause. Your support is greatly appreciated!



Red-tailed Hawk. Photo by Gil Miller. Courtesy of [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org).

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773-539-6793



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Layout Design: JustSayJoy

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Report sightings to: 773-539-6793

Report injured birds to Chicago Bird Collision Monitors: 773-988-1867

Website: [www.chicagoaudubon.org](http://www.chicagoaudubon.org)

Office Administrator: Skipper Wolters, 773-539-6793, [cas@chicagoaudubon.org](mailto:cas@chicagoaudubon.org).

Office hours: Monday–Thursday  
10:00 a.m.–4:15 p.m.  
Closed Fridays and holidays

### OFFICERS

**President:** Roger Shamley, 773-274-5362, [drongo@comcast.net](mailto:drongo@comcast.net)

**Vice President:** Chris Van Wassenhove, 773-477-4618, [cmvwhic@gmail.com](mailto:cmvwhic@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Bobbi Asher, 708-771-2085, [roberta.asher@comcast.net](mailto:roberta.asher@comcast.net).

**Secretary:** Annette Prince, 630-841-7110, [aprincebird@msn.com](mailto:aprincebird@msn.com)

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Awards:** Alan Anderson, 847-390-7437, [casresearch@comcast.net](mailto:casresearch@comcast.net)

**Birdathon:** Joe Lill, 773-631-3154, [trptjoe@aol.com](mailto:trptjoe@aol.com)

**Education Chair:** Roger Shamley, 773-274-5362, [drongo@comcast.net](mailto:drongo@comcast.net)

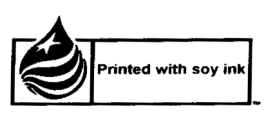
**Field Trips:** Jeff Sanders, 847-657-6431, [yellowstart5@yahoo.com](mailto:yellowstart5@yahoo.com)

**Stewardship:** Dave Kosnik, 847-456-6368, [skokielagoons@gmail.com](mailto:skokielagoons@gmail.com)

**Nominating:** Alan Anderson, 847-390-7437, [casresearch@comcast.net](mailto:casresearch@comcast.net)

**Program Chair:** Joe Lill, 773-631-3154, [trptjoe@aol.com](mailto:trptjoe@aol.com)

**Editorial:** Skipper Joy Wolters, 773-539-6793, [cas@chicagoaudubon.org](mailto:cas@chicagoaudubon.org)



## CHICAGO AUDUBON'S

# Binoculars for Kids Fund

I want to help kids see those beautiful birds! Here's my tax-deductible gift of:

\$5 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: **Chicago Audubon Society**  
5801-C N. Pulaski Road  
Chicago, IL 60646

OR CREDIT CARD: MasterCard Visa Discover

Card Number

Expiration Date

Name on Card

Your Street Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

Email

You may also charge a donation online by visiting the Binoculars for Kids Fund Binoculars for Kids Fund link on our website, [chicagoaudubon.org](http://chicagoaudubon.org). Or you may call our office at 773-539-6793 to make a charge on the phone.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



# ILLINOIS BIRDS: A CENTURY OF CHANGE

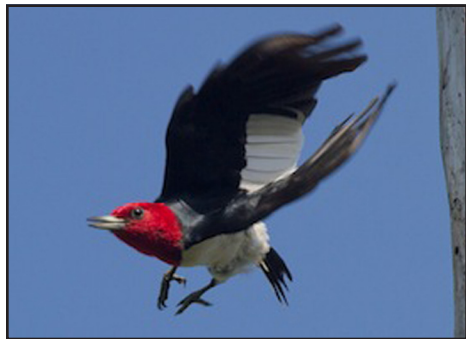
## Summary

Commissioned by the Illinois Natural History Survey, data compiled from bird counts at three fifty-year intervals, and repeated at the same locations, make up the oldest standardized survey in the nation.

## A Century of Counts

From 1906 to 1909, in a first study of its kind, Alfred Gross, a University of Illinois graduate, along with his assistant Howard Ray, crisscrossed Illinois counting birds for the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS). For three years, in all seasons, they traveled by whatever means possible—foot, train, horseback, steamboat—conducting transects across the southern, central and northern parts of the state, border to border. They compiled a species count of birds using a specific, repeatable method, forming a baseline for research and comparison in years to come.

Fifty years later, during the summers and winters of 1956 to 1958, husband and wife ornithologist team Richard and Jean Graber repeated these surveys. From 2006 to 2008, one-hundred years after the initial surveys, six naturalists retained by the INHS again conducted these surveys, adding point counts to their methodology. *ILLINOIS BIRDS: A CENTURY OF CHANGE* is a compilation of their research and a look back over time at land use changes and changes in bird populations.



Red-headed Woodpecker. Photo by Jay Paredes. Courtesy of [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org).

This is a benchmark book because of the time period and geography covered.

Though the research does not take into account all bird species and all locations, enough major bird groups were encountered to provide conclusions deemed reliable, along with implications and predictions for the future.

## Research Methodology and Results

Evaluating changes in bird populations is challenging and complex. INHS chose to look at occupancy rates, measured as increasing, decreasing, or stable. Eighty percent of the 133 species detected were encountered often enough to estimate how their populations changed over time, and 73 sites in the state were used as a basis for comparison.

In these counts, the number of species observed during transect surveys rose from 93 in the 1900s to 128 in the 1950s to 133 in the 2000s. The most recent count included 26 species that weren't found at all in the first, and only one that had disappeared, the Bachman's sparrow. However, there were other species not found in the 2000s surveys that were found in the 1906-09 surveys and are still seen in the state today, like the prairie chicken.

Though land use has changed substantially, and the human population has increased, one-third of the bird species surveyed had stable occupancy rates, and slightly more (40%) had increases rather than decreases. The northern region had the most stability (50%), and the central region had the greatest increases (46%). All three regions had roughly the same proportion of declining species, despite differences in landscape.



Bobolinks. Photo by Greg Massey. Courtesy of [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org).

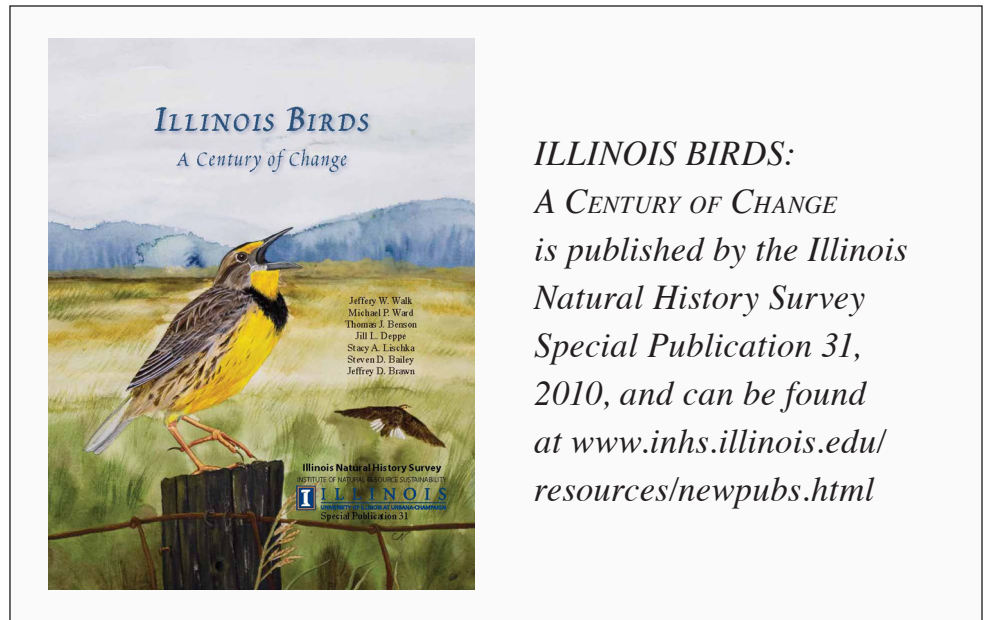
## Population and Land Use Changes

In the last century, Illinois' population increased from five to 13 million. Urban and developed areas, with 85% of the population, are the fastest growing land use category.

There are 4.5 million fewer acres of pastures, hayfields and grasslands. Prairies, savannas, and shrublands have also declined. Acreage of corn and soybean row crops increased, with greater yields coming from the same acreages. Forests have gained some ground, mostly in southern Illinois, due to population loss and abandoned marginal croplands.

## Factors Affecting Changes in Bird Counts

As land use changes, so do bird species. Shrubland and savanna birds like red-headed woodpeckers, brown thrashers, field sparrows and bobwhites have been in decline for a century. In the last fifty years, grasslands with meadowlarks, dickcissels, and bobolinks have given way to row crop fields with horned larks



*ILLINOIS BIRDS: A CENTURY OF CHANGE* is published by the Illinois Natural History Survey Special Publication 31, 2010, and can be found at [www.inhs.illinois.edu/resources/newpubs.html](http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/resources/newpubs.html)

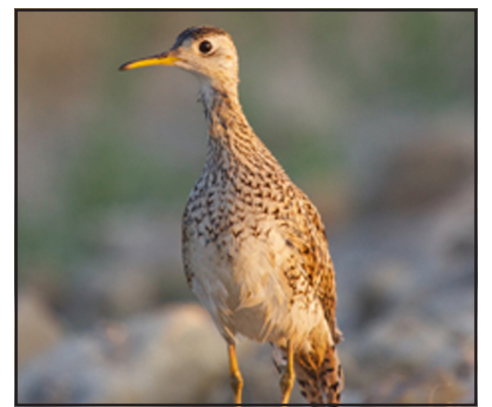
and blackbirds. Grassland ground-nesters like quail and pheasant are also among the “losers.”

Habitat quality and land management also affect birds. Habitat preservation and restoration are very beneficial. Illinois has preserved over 1.5 million acres of bird habitat (USGS 2010). The use of chemicals and pesticides less persistent than DDT, and improved water quality, has also helped sustain some species.

Notably however, are other factors influencing change. Among these are:

- The introduction of species (exotics, invasives) from other areas;
- Range expansions;
- Climate change; and
- Adaptation (the “wildcard”)

Some species are better at adaptation than others, and these are going to “win” out. Success favors the generalists, as opposed to the specialists. The implications of this are that the more we can do to preserve or create conditions preferred by the specialists, the more likely we are to avoid their extirpation.



Upland Sandpiper. Photo by Michael J. Andersen. Courtesy of [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org).

## Bird Findings

Over all three surveyed regions of the state, bird abundance has increased the most among four species: red-winged blackbirds, robins, starlings, and grackles. Seventy-six of the 133 species found now number one in a thousand, or rarer. The worst period for birds in Illinois was most likely between the late 1940s and early 1970s, when there was wider use of DDT and our waters were more contaminated. The Clean Water Act and the banning of DDT in the 70s has had a positive impact on raptors and fishing species like bald eagles, hawks, herons, and gulls.

While some species recovered following declines in the 50s, others did not, like the loggerhead shrike and Bewick's wren. Once a population declines, other factors like habitat change or competition from other birds inhibits or prevents recovery. It is wise to prevent damage in the first place by controlling the use of chemicals and contaminants on habitats preferred by birds.

Introduced species have had some impact on bird counts. Eurasian collared doves and house finches have “invaded” Illinois in recent decades. Like house sparrows and rock pigeons, these birds thrive in altered habitats, like urban areas. Climate is also expected to alter habitats and species in the coming century. Predictions are that by 2050, winters in northern Illinois will average 5 degrees warmer. By 2100, that temperature could increase to 10 degrees in the north and 5 in the south, making the climate in Illinois closer to that of northern Texas.

The authors have made some “guesses” or choices as to the species most likely to increase in the next 50 years, and to disappear.

	INCREASES	EXTIRPATED
Steve Bailey	Blue grosbeak	Common moorhen
TJ Benson	Red-shouldered hawk	Upland sandpiper
Jeff Brawn	Fish crow	Red-headed woodpecker
Jill Deppe	Trumpeter swan	Loggerhead shrike
Jeff Walk	Swallow-tailed kite	Bobolink
Mike Ward	Black-bellied whistling duck	Whipporwill

## How to Help?

According to the authors, the birds that need the most help are shrubland and grassland birds. While forest bird populations are generally in better condition, it is important to retain as many large tracts of old growth forest as possible, as they take a long time to acquire, and are not homogenous, therefore conducive to a variety of bird species.

Agricultural areas can help by not mowing ground covers during nesting seasons. Developed areas can help by planting trees and shrubs preferred by birds, and letting backyards get messy, for birds to take cover, particularly during migration periods.

*Gail Goldberger, a former board member and former editor of The Compass, is a writer. Her work spans human services, health care, ecology, nature and the environment.*





Bright lights from buildings, along with reflective or transparent window and lobby glass, are hazards for birds migrating through Chicago.

Each year Chicago Bird Collision Monitors recover more than 7000 birds that have suffered collisions in the downtown area.

With your participation our rescue and prevention efforts can be expanded and more birds can be saved.

**YOU CAN HELP:**

Join a **morning rescue team.**

**Monitor a building** where you live or work.

**Transport birds** to wildlife rehabilitation centers.

Support **collision prevention** work.

Assist in **public outreach** and awareness programs.

For more information:

[www.birdmonitors.net](http://www.birdmonitors.net)

**773-988-1867**

**Reminder to our readers:**

The Compass can be read and enjoyed in color on our website, [chicagoaudubon.org](http://chicagoaudubon.org). Just click on the word "Compass" in the top row of links on the homepage to visit our archives. Don't miss these wonderful birds in living color! For historical value, we have added a link to the very first Chicago Audubon newsletter. This link is sitting on top of the Archive list. Enjoy!



*Clymene Moth.*  
Photo by Roger Shamley.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS**

There has been some confusion about the difference between a National Audubon membership and a Chicago Chapter membership. A National membership by itself does not financially support the Chicago Audubon Chapter. National Audubon and the Chicago Chapter (and all other chapters) have entirely separate budgets (except for a small yearly stipend from National). In other words, the Chicago Chapter has always carried the burden of all costs of producing and mailing this newsletter and other types of mailings that we have been sending to both the Chapter members and the National members in this area. Because of this separation in budgets and because we need local support, we are asking that you consider becoming a Chapter member at this time. Chapter membership will not only help with our immediate need to reduce costs related to the newsletter, it will give direct financial support to our local programs and goals and enrich the energy and support of the Chapter membership base. If you would like to become a Chicago Audubon Chapter member, please fill out the form to the right and send it to our office at:

**Chicago Audubon Society**  
5801-C North Pulaski Rd  
Chicago, Illinois 60646

**Chicago Audubon Membership Form**

You may charge your membership online using our secure website, [chicagoaudubon.org](http://chicagoaudubon.org), or call the office at 773-539-6793 and charge your membership over the phone, or mail in this form.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Minimum yearly membership: \$25**  
*New Members at \$65 or above receive a nice hat.*

We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover.

**Name on card:**

**Card number:**

**Expiration date:**

*Chicago Audubon Society does not rent, lease, trade, or otherwise disclose any membership information whatsoever.*

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**Calendar of Events**

**July/August 2012**

**Workdays, Birdwalks, Special Events**

**CHICAGO AUDUBON ANNUAL MEETING. THURSDAY, JULY 19, 7:30 P.M.** We need current members to attend and vote for officers and directors. The meeting will take place at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 North Pulaski Road, Building D. See Page 1 of this issue. If you need directions or have questions, please call the office at 773-539-6793.

**CHICAGO AUDUBON BIRDWALKS WILL BEGIN AGAIN THE FIRST SATURDAY IN SEPTEMBER AT 8:00 A.M., North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 North Pulaski Road, Building D.** The walks will continue every Saturday throughout September and October. Come and join our popular birdwalks for the fall migration. Learn about birds and their habitats while walking through the beautiful woods surrounding the Nature Center. The walk leaders welcome questions from all levels of birders. For information or directions to the Nature Center, call the Chicago Audubon office 773-539-6793. You do not need to be a Chicago Audubon member to join the walks. Everyone is welcome!!

**SKOKIE LAGOONS WORKDAYS. 10:00 A.M. EVERY SECOND SATURDAY. These workdays are continuous throughout the year.** The Chicago Audubon Society sponsors regular monthly workdays at Skokie Lagoons every second Saturday of the month. Activities include buckthorn cutting, brush pile burning, and other management activities. Wear work clothes. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge. For further information, please call Dave Kosnik at 847-456-6368. Everyone is welcome!

**MONTROSE POINT MAGIC HEDGE STEWARDSHIP WORKDAYS.** Volunteers are needed to help with weeding, mulching, planting native shrubs and trees. We have also been establishing a prairie! Wear work clothes. For information about

work dates, to sign up, and for directions, please contact David Painter at 773-383-0721 or email at [dvdpaint@yahoo.com](mailto:dvdpaint@yahoo.com). Everyone is welcome!

**WOODED ISLAND BIRDWALKS. JACKSON PARK. EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 7:00 A.M. AND EVERY SATURDAY AT 8:00 A.M.** These wonderful walks continue throughout the year. Bring binoculars, field guides, and dress for the weather. Many species are seen. Meet at Clarence Darrow Bridge, just south of Museum of Science and Industry. For details and directions, contact Pat Durkin at [pat.durkin@comcast.net](mailto:pat.durkin@comcast.net). Everyone is welcome!

**FAMILY BREAKFAST WITH THE BIRDS. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 10:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M. North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 North Pulaski Road, Building D.** Sponsored by the Chicago Audubon Society in support of North Park Village Nature Center. A celebration of birds and birding plus a chance to see the new binoculars donated by Chicago Audubon. Guides will lead 30-minute introductory birdwalks, or feel free to just take a fall nature hike on your own. Binoculars may be checked out by adults. There will be crafts and temporary tattoos for kids. Light refreshments will be served. No registration is required. This event is free. For more information, contact Marci Buettgen, 773-878-4421, or email her at [mdbchgo@comcast.net](mailto:mdbchgo@comcast.net). Mark your calendars for this fun event!



**Coming in the Fall**

Our Annual Autumn Birdseed Sale will be here before you know it! Details of seed prices, order deadline, seed pick-up date and locations will be in the fall issue.