



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

Periodicals

COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 3

MAY/JUNE 2014

Birdathon! 2014

Saturday, May 17

The word *Birdathon* is a combining of the words *birdwatching* and *marathon* to describe a friendly sport which originated in England years ago. For the past fourteen years, the Chicago Audubon Society has held the Annual Dr. William S. Beecher *Birdathon!* Cup Challenge as one of our major fundraising events.* It involves teams of people competing to see how many different species of birds they can identify within a specified time limit.

Here's how it works: Birdathon teams identify as many species as they can within that one day within the county they have chosen. The team that identifies the most species in the designated time period will gain possession for one year of the coveted Beecher Cup.*

Anyone interested in participating on May 17, whether part of a team or individually, should contact Dave Willard (dwillard@fieldmuseum.org) as soon as possible. New birders are encouraged to participate—this is much more about fun than competition!

There are a number of ways to donate or pledge. You may donate a flat amount (as many have done in the past), or you may pledge an amount based on the total species count of all teams, which last year was 163.

If you wish to donate or pledge by credit card, please go to our website (chicagoaudubon.org), or you can call our office to use your card over the phone (733-539-6793).

The form on this page can also be used to make a credit card donation, or you can fill out the form and send it to us with your check. All donations and pledges are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

All funds raised through Birdathon! go toward Chicago Audubon programs. More than ever before, your support is essential and greatly appreciated!

Good birding!

Dave Willard
Birdathon Coordinator
Chicago Audubon Society
dwillard@fieldmuseum.org



Yellow-throated Warbler.
Photo courtesy of ibc.lynxeds.com.

It has become more important than ever that each local Audubon chapter raise more of their operating expenses on their own. Our efforts in education, preservation, restoration and advocacy continue to be well received, and we look forward to continuing our goal of creating more awareness of the natural environment that surrounds us all. This is a major fundraiser and your support is greatly appreciated!

**Dr. Beecher was Director Emeritus of the Chicago Academy of Sciences and one of the pioneering birders of the Chicago area. Some years ago, he honored Chicago Audubon by consenting to allow us to use his name for our annual fundraising event. Indeed this was a great honor! Last year, the Cup was awarded to the Field's Flickers team (John Bates, Nick Block, Josh Engel and Jason Weckstein), who identified 155 species in a single day! The Steel Banded Kingfishers (Jill Anderson and Joe Lill) sighted 141 species. A new team, the Bobolinkers (Steve Bailey and Sheryl DeVore) tallied 112 species. And a second new team, The Meandering Mollymawks (David Willard, Kevin Swagel, Mary Hennen and Ben Marks), identified 88 species without using a vehicle!*

Five Competition Categories

Open

The traditional Big Day challenge, with the slight variation that a team limits itself to Chicago and the collar counties: Cook, Lake, DuPage, McHenry, Kane, Will, and Kendall; all species identified anytime between midnight on May 16th and midnight on May 17th, using any type of transportation.

Site/Area Big Day

A team chooses one site (a city park, a forest preserve, etc.) and then birds the heck out of it! This is the perfect choice for a team that can only bird for a few hours.

Muscle-powered (on foot)

Once the clock starts, all species must be identified without using any other mode of transportation.



American Goldfinch. Photo by Jerry Sibell.

Muscle-powered (bicycle)

Once the clock starts, all species must be identified without using any motorized form of transportation.

Backyard sightings

Any species seen or heard in or from the backyard, from midnight May 16 to midnight May 17.

Birdathon! 2014 Pledge Form

My tax-deductible donation of \$ _____ is enclosed.

OR

I am happy to pledge \$ _____ per species.

Your name _____

Street address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

Make check payable to **Chicago Audubon Society**.

OR pay with credit card:

Visa MasterCard Discover

Name on card _____

Card number _____

Expiration date _____

You may also charge a donation or pledge online by visiting the Birdathon link on our website, www.chicagoaudubon.org, or you may call our office at 773-539-6793 to make a charge on the phone.

Mail your completed form to:

Chicago Audubon Society • 5801-C North Pulaski Rd • Chicago, IL 60646

BIRDING AMERICA X Symposium

A Great Success!

By Sheryl DeVore

Nearly 200 “armchair” nature lovers birded foreign lands, watched hawks and reveled in the tales of squirrel-proofing bird feeders at Chicago Audubon Society’s 10th Annual Birding America Symposium held March 8 at North Park University in Chicago.



Steve Kelling of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Opening Speaker at Birding America X. Photo courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Steve Kelling of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology delivered the keynote talk, which delved into the use of eBird, and how the knowledge gained from this powerful online bird reporting tool is helping scientists understand population trends and other information about avian life. Following Kelling’s talk, attendees selected from among many concurrent sessions that took them into the wilds of Africa, the home of the antpitta whisperer and the night-time sky filled with migratory birds. Attendees also learned about birding Colombia, Costa Rica and New Mexico as well as places closer to home including the Calumet and Palos Preserves regions, Minnesota and the Greater Kankakee Ecosystem.

In addition, sessions offered tools for beginning birders to take their hobby to the next level as well as ways to get involved helping the birds by monitoring them in the Chicago area. Attendees also learned about the interconnectedness of nature at a workshop on birds, bees and butterflies—and they got a bird’s eye view—from the sky—as Ron Larkin, an Illinois Natural History Survey scientist, talked about using radar to track birds.

Larkin, who drove from Champaign, Illinois, to present his talk said, “I was impressed with the symposium, and the many interesting talks.”

As a bonus, former Chicago Audubon Society Board Member and Past President Joe Lill discovered a White-winged Scoter a few blocks from the venue and took a group of happy birders to see it



Bee-eaters, South Africa. Photo courtesy es.upphotos.net.

during the lunch hour. During breaks, attendees also enjoyed visiting various booths and displays including works of local artists.

The closing speaker, author Al Batt, of Minnesota brought the house down laughing as he regaled stories of his many attempts to quash squirrels from raiding his bird feeders.

“Each symposium gets better and better,” said Alan Anderson, Chicago Audubon Board Member and chair of the Birding America committee. “We appreciate all the volunteers who help make the event be a success, as well as all the speakers who gave their time to enlighten us about birds and conservation.”

Chicago Audubon Society presents Birding America Symposiums every other year, bringing nationally and locally renowned speakers, birders and conservationists to enlighten Chicago area birders. The next Birding America is scheduled for March 2016. We hope to see you there!



Snowy Owl.

Photo by Joy Schmoll.

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

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Closed Fridays and holidays

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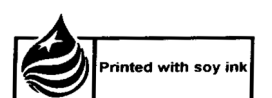
EAGLE OPTICS DAY Will Be Held on October 11 This Year



Mark Your Calendars With The New Date!

Please note that the Chicago Audubon Eagle Optics Day has been moved from our traditional month (April) to **October 11**. The location will be the same as usual: North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 North Pulaski Road, Building D. This is our annual visit from the largest independent dealer of high quality binoculars, scopes, and all types of optical supplies. A variety of equipment will

be on display and experts will be available all day to answer questions and give guidance. For those of you who have never attended one of our Eagle Optics Day events, please note that this event is open to the public. Plan on bringing family and friends! We will also offer an early morning bird walk at Montrose Point on Eagle Optics day. See the Calendar on Page 4 for details.





Red-headed Woodpeckers. Photo by Bill Dalton.

Those Gorgeous Red-headed Woodpeckers

With their brilliant crimson heads, snow-white bodies, and white and black wings, these stunning birds are interestingly different from other woodpecker species. They are one of only four North American woodpeckers known to store food away. They hide insects and seeds in the crevices of trees, the cracks of fence posts or old trees or underneath bark and roof shingles. And they will often shift items such as acorns, beech nuts, corn, and cherries from place to place before consuming them during the long cold winter months. Also unlike most other woodpeckers, they are adept at catching insects in the air.

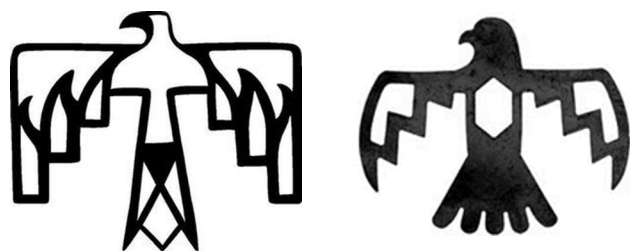
The male and female build the nest together. But first the male selects a site for the nest cavity in a dead tree or dead parts of a live tree—mostly pines, maples, birches, cottonwoods or oaks—in fields or open forests with little vegetation on the ground. The smooth surface of dead tree parts may be a deterrent for snakes. If the selection is done in an urban area, he might choose a site in a utility pole or on a building. After he selects the site, the female may then tap around the area he selected. This action may signal her approval. The male then proceeds to do most of the heavy excavation for the nest cavity. He often starts with just a crack in the wood and digs out



Red-headed Woodpecker. Photo courtesy Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

a gourd-shaped area. This exhausting work can take from twelve to seventeen days. The result is an area about three to six inches across and eight to sixteen inches deep, with an entrance hole about two inches in diameter. Unlike many woodpeckers, the Red-headed often reuses a nest cavity for several years in a row. No surprise there, considering how much work goes into creating one!

The Red-headed Woodpecker is a fierce defender of its territory. In honor of that trait, many American Native tribes revere an image believed to be based on the silhouettes of both hawk and Red-headed Woodpecker—the Thunderbird. And the species has been at home here on earth for a very long time. Pleistocene-age fossils up to two million years old of the Red-headed have been unearthed in Florida, Virginia, and Illinois.



Red-headed Woodpecker influence reflected in Native America symbols.



The American Birding Association (ABA) has developed and promotes the following Code of Birding Ethics. Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must always respect wildlife, its environment and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment comes first. Here are the ABA guidelines:

Code of Birding Ethics

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

- (a) Support the protection of important bird habitat.
- (b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming. Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds, and never use such methods in heavily birded areas, or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, or of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area; keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas, and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover. Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.
- (c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings, and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance minimized, and permission has been obtained from private landowners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.
- (d) Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law and the rights of others.

- (a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.
- (b) Follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.
- (c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behavior will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures, and other artificial bird environments are safe.

- (a) Keep dispensers, water, and food clean, and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.
- (b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.
- (c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

- Each individual in the group, in addition to the obligations spelled out in Items #1 and #2, has responsibilities as a Group Member.
- (a) Respect the interests, rights, and skills of fellow birders, as well as people participating in

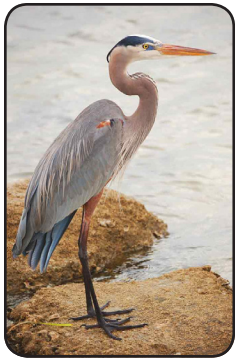
other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

(b) If you witness unethical birding behavior, assess the situation, and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action, and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behavior continues, document it, and notify appropriate individuals or organizations.

Group Leader Responsibilities (amateur and professional trips and tours).

- (c) Be an exemplary ethical role model for the group. Teach through word and example.
- (d) Keep groups to a size that limits impact on the environment, and does not interfere with others using the same area.
- (e) Ensure everyone in the group knows of and practices this code.
- (f) Learn and inform the group of any special circumstances applicable to the areas being visited (e.g., no tape recorders allowed).
- (g) Acknowledge that professional tour companies bear a special responsibility to place the welfare of birds and the benefits of public knowledge ahead of the company's commercial interests. Ideally, leaders should keep track of tour sightings, document unusual occurrences, and submit records to appropriate organizations.

For more information, please go to www.aba.org. Thank you.



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 5000 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
 773-988-1867

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 assistance 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 below and send it to our office or you may join online at our website (chicagoaudubon.org).

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

Chicago Audubon Membership Form

If you wish to become a new member, you may either mail in this form or charge your membership online (chicagoaudubon.org). You may also make a straight donation with this form or online. If you prefer, you may call the office with your credit card information (773-539-6793).

Your name _____

Street address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

Minimum yearly membership: \$25

Visa MasterCard Discover

Exact name on card _____

Card number _____ Expiration date _____

Mail your completed form to:
 Chicago Audubon Society • 5801-C North Pulaski Rd • Chicago, IL 60646

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Calendar of Events

May/June 2014

Birdwalks, Workdays, Programs

APRIL AND MAY, EVERY SATURDAY: CHICAGO AUDUBON BIRD WALKS AT 8:00 A.M. AT THE NORTH PARK VILLAGE NATURE CENTER, 5801 N. PULASKI ROAD, BUILDING D, CHICAGO. Our popular spring bird walks will continue the first Saturdays of April and May to view the spring migration. Learn about birds and their habitats while walking through the beautiful woods surrounding the Nature Center. The walks are led by expert birders who welcome questions from all levels of birders. *For information or directions to the Nature Center, call the Chicago Audubon office at 773-539-6793. You do not need to be a Chicago Audubon member to join the walks. Everyone is welcome!!*

MAY 17: BIRDATHON! 2014. Come join a team for a day of counting species! The goal of each team is to see how many species can be identified on Saturday, May 17, 2014. The team with the highest number of species will take home the coveted Beecher Cup. *See Page 1 of this issue for full details.*

OCTOBER 11: REMINDER! EAGLE OPTICS DAY. This year the Chicago Audubon Eagle Optics Day will be held on Saturday, October 11 at North Park Village Nature Center. **Be sure to put this new date on your calendar (it was usually held in April).** We will publish times and details in upcoming issues and on the website. Also, plan on an early

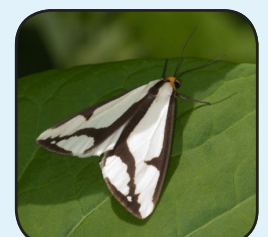
morning bird walk at the Magic Hedge at Montrose Point. Meet at Montrose at 7:00 a.m., leave around 9:30 for North Park Village Nature Center to warm up with hot coffee, tea, and some bird talk. Then starting around 10:00 a.m., enjoy Eagle Optics Day which takes place right there at the Nature Center and runs until 4:00 p.m. For more information or questions, contact Jeff at yellowstart5@yahoo.com.

WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR: WOODED ISLAND BIRD WALKS IN 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. Everyone is welcome! *For details and directions, contact Pat Durkin at pat.durkin@comcast.net.*

MONTHLY, EVERY SECOND SATURDAY. SKOKIE LAGOONS WORKDAYS AT 10:00 a.m. These workdays are sponsored by Chicago Audubon and are continuous throughout the year. Activities include buckthorn cutting, brush pile burning and other management endeavors. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge. Everyone is welcome! *For further information, please call Dave Kosnik at 847-456-6368.*

Reminder to our readers:

The Compass can be read and enjoyed in color on our website, chicagoaudubon.org. Just click on the word "Compass" in the top row of links on the home page 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.