



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

Periodicals

COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

Advanced Publicity Announcement *Saturday, March 19, 2016* **CHICAGO AUDUBON'S** **BIRDING AMERICA XI**

Our eleventh biennial Birding America conference will take place on Saturday, March 19, at North Park University in Chicago. This exciting all day event will be filled with an amazing array of programs presented by experts who will speak on topics ranging from local, to national, to international birding areas.

International, national, and local speakers and the general topics they will cover include:

Keynote Speaker: Kevin McGowan, Ph.D. Project Manager, Distance Learning Bird Biology of the Cornell

Lab of Ornithology will present *Social Behavior of Birds. To Know the Crow: Surprising Findings from Over a Quarter Century of Studying Crows.*

Beau Schaefer: *Birding the Chain of Lakes area.*

Doug Stotz of Field Museum: *Birding the Hennepin Wetlands and Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge.*

Wendy Paulson: *Birding Central Park, New York City.*

Sam Burckhardt: *Birding Eastern Michigan; Kirtland's Warbler nesting areas.*

Amar Ayyash: *Gull Identification.*

Charlotte Adelman and Bernard L. Schwartz: *Creating Bird and Butterfly Friendly Backyards and Gardens with Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants.*

Brad Bumgardner, Naturalist, Indiana Dunes State Park: *Birding the Indiana Dunes and other Indiana Lakeshore Locations.*

Josh Engel: *Birding Bhutan.*

Peter Kasper: *Birds of Australia.*

Mary Lou Mellon: *Birding the Seychelles Islands.*

Kevin McGowan: *A talk about birds in New York State—A Dynamic History of the Birds*

of New York, looking at the change in bird distributions over the last 200 years, including the dramatic changes described in his book, The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State.

Closing Speaker: Joel Greenberg: *Of Birds and Murder: The Life of Nathan Leopold.*

More speakers will be announced as they become finalized. Look for complete registration information and list of speakers in our January-February issue and on our website (chicagoaudubon.org). Mark your calendars now. You don't want to miss this!



Great Hornbill. Photo by Josh Engel.



Yellow-cheeked Tt. Photo by Josh Engel.

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL

Happy Happy New Year Everyone!!

May Your New Year be Filled With Many Many Birds!



American Crows. Photo by Kevin McGowan.

This is migration time ... just a friendly reminder...

What to do if you see a Whooping Crane



Whooping Cranes.

Photo by Steve Hillebrand, US Fish & Wildlife.



Whooping Cranes.

Photo by Laura Erickson.



Whooping Cranes.

Photo by Larry Ditto.

Please keep the following guidelines in mind when viewing a Whooping Crane.

The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership asks anyone who encounters a Whooping Crane in the wild to please give it the respect and distance it needs:

Do not approach birds on foot within 600 feet; remain in your vehicle; do not approach in a vehicle within 600 feet

or, if on a public road, do not approach within 300 feet.

Also, please remain concealed and do not speak loudly enough that the bird can hear you. Finally, do not trespass on private property in an attempt to view Whooping Cranes.

Also, to keep the amount of attention it receives to a minimum, please do not report the bird on a birding list such as

In-bird or IBET or any social media or to the news media.

To safely report a Whooping Crane sighting, go to fws.gov/midwest/whoopingcrane/sightings/sightingform.cfm.

For general information on the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, go to bringbackthecranes.org/index.html.



Whooping Crane. Photo by Klaus Nigge, National Geographic.

Reminder to our Readers receiving printed copy of our newsletter:

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



For Sale: Little Cabin in the Woods—

A one of a kind home sitting on three secluded and restored hardwood forested acres adjacent to a 40-acre wetland conservation area. If this property is sold through our advertisement, Chicago Audubon will receive a donation of 2.5% of the sale price. Interested parties please contact Jim Pitsch at 815-342-8080 or jim@oldoakhollow.com.

"We can never have enough of nature."
Henry David Thoreau

COMPASS

CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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www.chicagoaudubon.org
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Report injured birds to Chicago Bird Collision Monitors: 773-988-1867

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The Great Crested Flycatcher

As a group, flycatchers can be challenging to identify since many species have similar plumages. The Great Crested Flycatcher, however, with its olive brown head and back, gray throat and breast, lemon yellow belly, and cinnamon wings and tail, stands out from the crowd in its range. It pairs its distinctive looks with a singular call, a loud whistled *wheep!* which gives away its presence even when it is hidden high in the treetops.

They do indeed spend much of their time in the canopy, where they fill a niche distinct from other flycatchers who tend to hunt lower in trees.



Great Crested Flycatcher. Photo by Isidor Jeklin.

Despite its name, flies are only a small part of what Great Crested Flycatchers eat, which includes beetles, dragonflies, butterflies, moths, grasshoppers, bees, wasps, and other insects. They also eat fruit, and will swallow berries whole and later regurgitate the pit.

Great Crested Flycatchers live in semi-open habitat on the edges of deciduous forests, where they can be found perched on a dead snag, bobbing their head and peering around intently for prey. When they spot a potential meal flying nearby or resting on a leaf, they swoop out after it, sometimes slowing to hover above their prey before grabbing it, while at other times crashing almost full speed into the foliage in pursuit.

A male courts a female by swooping down toward her. He is very protective during nesting season and confronts intruders with calls, escalating his threats by raising his crest, pumping his head, and snapping his bill, ultimately giving chase or fighting and pulling feathers if the intruder remains undeterred.



Great Crested Flycatcher. Photo by Roger Shamley.

With the male close by, the female does most of the work of nest building. The nest is built in the cavity of a dead tree or in old woodpecker holes, nest boxes, or other existing cavities. Although their population is believed to be stable, they are in decline in areas including the Midwest, possibly due to competition with other birds for nest cavities. You can find plans for building a nest box for Great Crested Flycatchers at nestwatch.org.

The female uses all sorts of material to make the nest, including grass, leaves, twigs, bark, moss, feathers, hair, fur,

snail and sea shells, paper, cloth, and often shed snake skin! Where snake skin isn't readily available, other crinkly materials such as cellophane, plastic wrappers, and onion skin prove suitable replacements. She lays four to eight eggs, which are incubated by both parents and hatch after a couple weeks. The chicks are fed whole dragonflies, butterflies, and moths—wings and all. But good parents that they are, they oblige the chicks by crushing the insects if they are initially rejected as too big a mouthful. *Thanks, Mom and Dad!*

Like other birds that nest in cavities, Great Crested Flycatchers sometimes have trouble finding nest sites in places where tree holes are scarce. They quite readily take to nest boxes, so consider putting up a nest box to attract a breeding pair. Make sure you put it up well before breeding season. Attach a guard to keep predators from raiding eggs and young. For best results, mount a hanging or swinging nest box roughly 12 to 20 feet above the ground, in an open woodland with clear flight paths to the box opening. In addition to nestwatch.org mentioned above, for more information about the Great Crested Flycatcher and instructions for building and placement of a nest box, go to allaboutbirds.org.



Great Crested Flycatcher in nest box. Photo by Tommy P World.

Calendar of Events

EVERY SATURDAY BIRD WALKS, ALL YEAR, WOODED ISLAND IN JACKSON PARK, 8:00 a.m. Weather permitting, 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.

EVERY SECOND SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH, ALL YEAR: 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

Birdwalks, Workdays, Programs

lagoon bridge. Everyone is welcome! For further information, call Dave Kosnik at 847-456-6368 or email skokielagoons@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars now for these 2016 events—because “next year” always arrives sooner than expected!

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2016: Birding America XI at North Park University in Chicago. Our eleventh biennial all day conference for everyone interested in birds, wildlife, and the environment. See Page 1 for a partial list of outstanding sessions and speakers. This exciting array of programs will be presented by national and international experts. Registration information will be available on the website around the first of the year (chicagoaudubon.org) and will be

published in the January-February issue of this newsletter. Mark your calendars now!

APRIL 2016. Eagle Optics Day at the North Park Village Nature Center (Date to be determined). This is our all-day yearly event with Eagle Optics presenting examples of optical equipment in a wide range of products and

prices. The experts will be on hand between 10 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to answer your questions and demonstrate equipment. Watch our website (chicagoaudubon.org) and the next issue of this newsletter for the exact date. Everyone is welcome!

Please watch for our 2015 Annual Appeal mailing coming in November. This is one of our most important fundraisers of the year. We thank you for your past support and hope you will be able to help us again this year.



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 or renew your existing membership, please fill out the form to the right 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.

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Chicago Audubon Membership Form

If you wish to become a new member or to renew an existing membership, 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).

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Minimum yearly membership: \$25. At \$65 or above, new Membership or Membership renewal includes an official Chicago Audubon hat.

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