Why I Like Doing Big Days

General Meeting: Monday, April 1, 7:30 pm
Libertyville Village Hall 2nd Floor
Speaker: Beau Schaefer
Honors Biology and Human Genetics Teacher at Libertyville High School

After 5 years of monthly Big Days, Beau has learned a lot about birds and himself. He will share those things as well as discuss his basic Big Day route and some of the highlights of past Big Days including our Lake County record of 164 in 2016.

Beau began birding at an early age after he saw a Blackburnian Warbler in his back yard. His parents bought him the Golden Guide to Birds of North America which he memorized. In 2008 he started seriously listing his life birds after finishing his baseball coaching career at the high school. Since then birding has been his favorite activity. He’s done Big Years, Big Months, and Big Days and enjoys the competition and learning experience of birding.

His American Birding Association (ABA) check list is 521; Illinois: 326, and Lake County: 305.

Beau is in his 32nd year as an Honors Biology and Human Genetics teacher at Libertyville HS in Libertyville, IL. He has a bachelor’s degree in biology from Lawrence University in Appleton, WI and a Master’s in Biology from Northeastern IL Univ. in Chicago.

Beau’s previous speaking experience includes 2016 as a breakout speaker at The Birding America Conference in Chicago, and my “13 Things I Learned Doing Big Days” article was published Feb, 2016 in Birdwatching Magazine.

Avian Architecture

General Meeting: Monday, May 6, 7:30 pm
Libertyville Village Hall, 2nd Floor
Speaker: Emma England
President of Lake County Audubon Society

Nesting is one of the most interesting and complex of avian behaviors. Birds have developed an extraordinary range of nest structures to shelter, protect and help warm their developing eggs and chicks. Nests vary in their size, material and type, with designs including the cup, cavity, scrape and pendant nest. In this program Emma will teach us about the architectural ability of birds that has enabled them to diversify into so many habitats and to create some of the best engineered structures in the natural world. Specific examples of nest design, location and construction will be discussed from the tiny hummingbird nest to the enormous platform nest of the Bald Eagle. This will be a fascinating look into the world of our feathered architect friends and their creative constructions.

Emma has a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacology and worked in the pharmaceutical industry as a biologist for 18 years.

She has been a board member of the Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS) since 2014 and became president of LCAS in 2018. Emma is a member of the Lake County Forest Preserve District (LCFPD) Volunteer Stewards Network carrying out habitat restoration. She is also a LCFPD Education Volunteer leading nature walks.

Emma is a wildlife monitor for Eastern Bluebird and Purple Martin nest boxes, Bird Conservation Network bird monitor, and Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network monitor. She has monitored 5 years and has a keen interest in all aspects of ornithology.

Emma’s other passion is nature photography and she enjoys photographing the huge diversity of nature in Lake County with a specialty in bird photography. Emma is also Vice President of North Shore Camera Club.
Membership Renewal

by Jack Nowak

Those of you who come to our monthly speaker meetings have noticed that we have a table set up for annual membership. Sometimes we lose track of when our memberships expire, especially if we are members of multiple organizations. We recently made it easier to keep track of your membership. If you receive a hard copy of your Audubon Outlook newsletter, you’ll notice on the mailing address label, your date of expiration is listed above your name. We hope this clears up any confusion on keeping your membership up to date. Besides your bi-monthly local newsletter you also receive the National Audubon magazine for an annual cost of $20/year. As of February 2019 Lake County Audubon Society has 1,143 members. We thank you for your membership which goes toward supporting our mission statement, newsletters, and speakers.

You may also join our email list to receive advocacy opportunities, notifications of bird walks, reminders of speaker meetings, etc. Just send an email to lakecountyaudubonsociety@gmail.com and ask to be put on the email notification list. Also, email us if you would like to save on paper and receive the newsletter by email only.

The David Adler Cultural Center Partnership

by Paul Geiselhart

The Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS) will be partnering with Libertyville’s David Adler Cultural Center to create wildlife sanctuary on their property.

Our Birdscaping Program, or Plants for Birds, will promote the use of native plants to enhance and restore native habitats for birds, small animals, and other wildlife.

The primary threat to birds is habitat loss. Without a healthy environment in which to thrive, we would have no birds. Biological diversity of the world’s species of birds is at risk. It has been estimated that 200 species of birds could disappear worldwide within 20 years. Habitat fragmentation as a result of development has caused a 70% decline in common backyard birds.

Birds are a biological indicator for the state of our environment. Their health, abundance, and distribution can signal warning trends in the health of the larger environment. LCAS has a seven-year history of promoting conservation of birds and wildlife through native plant restoration in the greater Libertyville area. Their past and current efforts hope to increase environmental health with native landscaping, in addition to providing visitor and resident education and experiences.

The goal of the partnership program is to support Plants for Birds, or Birdscaping, activities through increased visibility, outreach, and impact of integrating nature with art programming at the Adler Cultural Center.

Volunteers from across the community will work to make a clear change in local landscaping culture. The cultural shift will be accomplished by moving away from the use of invasive, introduced ornamentals and lawns toward more native plantings and landscaping designs that retain stormwater and create a pollinator destination.

LCAS in partnership with The David Adler Cultural Center, Village of Libertyville, Morton Arboretum, Landscape Concepts, Inc., and local volunteers aim to create awareness of native floral and faunal loss in our community and beyond. The next step is to restore these losses.

Nature and Bird Walks for Spring of 2019

by Don Wilson

April 24, 7:30am at Sedge Meadow, the site of the Des Plaines River Wetlands Demonstration Project. It’s a living laboratory designed to provide scientists the research opportunities to study the function of wetlands. The preserve has been restored to its natural state with prairies, meadows, oak grove, and fully functioning wetlands that provide flood control, wildlife habitat, and improved water quality for the adjacent Des Plaines River.

The walk is on a gravel path passing several ponds, including one that has a beaver lodge, a wet prairie, the oak grove, small streams and wetlands. The walk will end where Mill Creek joins the Des Plaines River.

This walk will also include a “sitting” opportunity to observe wetland wildlife, especially waterfowl and wading birds. If you don’t feel like walking, or are limited in walking, this is a great site that overlooks the ponds, wetlands, and edge of the oak grove. Bring a lawn chair and binoculars. The parking lot is on the south side of Wadsworth Road just east of Rt. 41 directly east of The Shanty restaurant.

May 8, 7:30am at Greenbelt. This Forest Preserve has 5 miles of trails passing through fairly open landscape of oak groves, wetlands, and prairies. In addition to possibly finding 150 species of birds you can find a variety of wildflowers such as shooting stars, blue-eyed grass, and mayapples. The diversity of habitat and the location between the Des Plaines River and Lake Michigan draws a variety of migrating and permanent birds to this site. Meet in Greenbelt Cultural Center parking area on the east side of Green Bay Road between Route 120 (Belvidere Road), and 14th Street.

May 22, 7:30am at Ryerson Woods. See some of Illinois’ most pristine woodlands and several state threatened and endangered species. It is one of the best examples of a northern flatwoods forest, a rare northern Illinois landscape, and most of the floodplain forest left in northeastern Illinois can be found here. The preserve supports a variety of state threatened and endangered species. More than 190 bird species and nearly 600 species of flowering plants have been seen at Ryerson Woods. Springtime brings special wildflower magic and many migrating birds that use the Des Plaines River flyway. In addition to beautiful trails there is a small farm, Ryerson’s house Brushwood, and visitor’s center. There is plenty to see if you would like to extend your stay after the walk. The entrance is on west side of Riverwoods Road between Half Day Road (Route 22) and Deerfield Road, just west of the Interstate 94.
Almond Marsh Update
by Jack Nowak
The Lake County Forest Preserve (LCFP) is in the process of restoring Almond Marsh back to its natural habitat, which includes removing buildings, parking lots, and roads. This would make it difficult for the public to view the Herons nesting, and other birds. As I mentioned in my last Almond March Update, in the Oct-Dec 2018 newsletter, over the last couple of years the Double Crested Cormorants, which are more aggressive birds, have been migrating back earlier and taking over the Great Blue Heron nests. This, along with the loss of trees, will force the Great Blue Herons to look for another rookery site. For these reasons the LCFP would like to move in another direction this year with different educational birding program. You can find information on this program on their website or newsletter.

Since 2009 Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS) has supported the LCFP Rookery at Almond Marsh by putting up man-made structures to keep the Great Blue Herons nesting there. It’s been a great educational program. The Forest Preserve had volunteers at the marsh every Saturday morning during nesting season. LCAS hosted two events annually, the Welcome Back Herons, and Cheese and Crackers with the Birds. Both were very successful drawing over 100 visitors for each event. I would like to thank all of the volunteers for helping with the program, and all who went out onto the ice over the years to put up the structures to keep the herons in a habitat that the volunteers helped create. It’s always great to see people and nature working together.

Sharing Our Shore – Waukegan
by Emma England
Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS) is excited to announce that we are partnering with the City of Waukegan on a Beach Stewardship Program: Sharing Our Shore – Waukegan.

Shorebirds have declined 70% in North America since the 1970’s due to habitat loss, predation, climate change and human disturbances. Conservation of breeding, stopover and wintering habitat is crucial for shorebird survival.

Waukegan’s unique dune and swale habitat is home to a large diversity of plants and wildlife including threatened and endangered species and is excellent habitat for a wide range of birds. In 2017 and 2018 the Waukegan dunes were the only site in Illinois where the state endangered Common Tern attempted to breed. Federally endangered Piping Plovers also nested in Waukegan in 2018, a story that made front page news in the local press.

The Sharing Our Shore – Waukegan Partnership’s goals are to monitor bird species and increase public support for bird conservation at Waukegan Beach. The program will raise awareness of Waukegan’s special habitat and build on the reputation of Waukegan as a city dedicated to conserving its lakeshore.

In 2018 Waukegan was the first city in Illinois to proclaim 2018 as the Year of the Bird, a success that was nationally recognized by National Audubon. The Sharing Our Shore – Waukegan Beach Stewardship Partnership will achieve another first in Illinois for Waukegan.

LCAS is now recruiting and will be training Volunteer Stewards to monitor birds and to be part of the public outreach program which will have a presence on the beach on Saturdays from 1-3pm from May – July. Training will take place in April. Those interested in volunteering should contact LCAS via email at: lakecountyaudubonsociety@gmail.com

The program will begin with a kick-off event at 1-3pm on Saturday May 4, 2019. Event details will be released soon!

LCAS is delighted that we have this opportunity to partner with the City of Waukegan to increase public awareness of the extraordinary habitat at Waukegan Beach and to contribute to bird conservation on the lakeshore.

Bluebird Monitoring
by Jack Nowak
As the days get longer and we look forward to spring, the migrating birds will be returning to Lake County. Even though some Eastern Bluebirds over winter here the majority return to the warmer weather looking for cavities to nest in for the season. For years volunteers have been trying to attract them by supplying nesting houses and monitoring them to keep them safe from predators. Part of the monitor’s job is to record the number of eggs and hatchlings once a week during nesting season until they leave the nest. It’s a very rewarding experience. Nesting season runs from April through July in Lake County.

In March, Walt Sivertsen, who has been coordinating all Lake County Bluebird trails for the Lake County Forest Preserve for over 20 years is retired from this duty. He will still monitor the trails he has in Waukegan, but he wanted to pass on the data compilations and coordination. I would like to thank him for all his volunteer work and dedication over the years; he has been a great asset to this program.

There are many Bluebird trails in Lake County on Forest Preserve and non-Forest Preserve property that do not have monitors, and we could use more volunteers to monitor them. I will be taking on Walt’s duties. If you are interested in this great experience, please contact me at jackn17285@gmail.com. I will answer any questions you might have, and if you’d like, set you up with a trail with nest boxes, and training on the procedures.
We have achieved 501(c)(3) status. What do these sometimes mysterious numbers mean? This status means that we are not only an Illinois non-profit, as we have been, but have received the designation that will enable donors to deduct the value of gifts and property to the Lake County Audubon Society on their Federal Income Tax forms. We are “also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522.”

Note: Your donation will be used fully towards our mission; our society is all volunteers, there are no administration fees taken out. To enhance the ease of donating online, LCAS has a PayPal account linked to our website. www.lakecountyaudubon.org

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