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MAY/JUNE 2009

Emiquon Audubon Society

A Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society
A Friends Group with the National Wildlife Refuge Association

EAS MEETING – May 7, 2009 7:00 PM, UIS Emiquon Field Station *Waterfowl on Weather Radar: Tracking Clouds of Ducks*

Learn how University of Illinois Ph.D. Candidate Ben O'Neal and his advisors Josh Stafford and Ron Larkin are using a novel approach to address questions about dabbling duck migration - weather-service radar. Often referred to as NEXRAD, weather-service radar captures flying animals in the same fashion it detects clouds and can be used to passively monitor waterfowl movements, day or night, over entire seasons and many years. Some of their preliminary findings have been surprising and have the potential to provide valuable information to aid conservation planning for waterfowl and change how we think about the ecology of migrating dabbling ducks.

The UIS Emiquon Field Station is at The Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Preserve, located between Havana and Lewistown. Entrance to the field station is on Prairie Road, located off Illinois Rts. 97/78, approximately one-and-a-half miles north of the Dickson Mounds turnoff.

Coming on June 1

bluebirds & botany

Emiquon Audubon Society
June Dinner & Hike
UIS Emiquon Field Station

Explore a bluebird trail and identify plants along the way. We will meet at 6:30 and dine, then take a leisurely hike along Cindy McGrew's bluebird trail on the Emiquon Preserve. Rhonda Ferree will join us to help identify plant life along the way.

Enjoy submarine sandwiches, chips and dessert – \$5 per person. Please RSVP to Jo at joskog@gmail.com or 309.338.0070 by May 27.



Bring in Spring Bluebird Workshop Report

The Emiquon Audubon Society in partnership with the University of Illinois Springfield Emiquon Field Station and Dickson Mounds Museum hosted a Bluebird Workshop on Saturday, March 21st from 1:00-3:00 in the afternoon. The workshop was held at the UIS Field Station on The Nature Conservancy's Emiquon Preserve. The first 30 participants were promised a bluebird kit and the chance to build it following the workshop. Cindy McGrew's presentation provided information as well as inspiration to attendees eager to learn how to start or maintain their bluebird trails. Following many great questions and discussions, the group went outside to construct their boxes in the beautiful new-spring weather. —More pictures on back page.

Letter from the President

Nancy I. Glick

Recently I've spent 2 weeks in northeastern Wyoming & southwestern South Dakota—the Black Hills, the “badlands,” coal mining country. Besides the usual sights like Mount Rushmore, Thunder Basin Grassland, and Devil's Tower (which were totally amazing), I was struck by the abundant amount of antelope, mule deer, prairie dogs, and buffalo—and the dearth of bird life this time of year. Aside from the occasional hawk or kestrel, I saw and heard virtually no birds. A stark sage green, beige, and grey landscape with touches of black and orange red—almost hiccups of rocky terrain with clumped grasses in rocky mud. I saw snow and vast vistas of grassland, surface coal mining and rutted clayey roads and one lone raven perched in a pine on the way to Devil's Tower. . . Such a contrast when I arrived back in central Illinois. Spring has arrived. Green is the color with splashes of purplely blues, yellows, and subtle rosy pinks. Plowing and planting has begun (finally). The background of birds calling is constant and many species are visible.

I am so entrenched in the American Arts & Crafts movement--in the designs and output of individual artists. The classic simplicity of Richard Bach's sculpture Flower in the crannied wall created for the entrance hall in Susan Lawrence Dana's Frank Lloyd Wright house in Springfield has always represented spring to me.

As much as I enjoy touring & visiting places, it's good to be back in the Midwest. I feel more at home here. Isn't it odd that each vista that we personally experience in observing the natural world becomes individual somehow in compartments of our lives and in memory?

I hope that you take up the beckoning of outdoor pursuits whether in a favorite hike or walk (for me Pere Marquette or Matthiessen State Park), a photograph, or an entirely new venture to celebrate the changing of the seasons!

Nancy I.

By the way, I changed birdseed & some has been eaten, but not a lot—I've come to believe that it's that audience of cats window watching!

“Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand, Little
flower-but if I could understand What you are, root
and all, and all in all, I should know what God and
man is.”

--Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1869

Share your photographs with the EAS membership. If you have photographs of local wildlife or recent nature hikes, please submit them to the EAS Newsletter. Send them to joskog@gmail.com

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The **EAS Newsletter** is published six times a year. Comments, suggestions and articles for submission may be sent to joskog@gmail.org. The EAS executive board reserves the right to submit or reject information submitted based on content and timeliness.

News from the Refuge

Durinda Hulett, Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Conserving the Nature of America

Lee Albright, new refuge manager, has arrived! Lee, a Peoria native, arrived at our station in early March. He has been busy getting ready for the field season as well as getting to know the refuge partners. Lee plans to attend the upcoming EAS meeting.



It has been a long wait, but the Emiquon Refuge South Globe kiosk signs are finally here! Refuge staff installed the signs a couple of weeks ago. The refuge would like to thank EAS for applying and administering the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for this project, as well as the volunteer help in constructing the kiosk. (See picture below.)

The refuge will be hosting two Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) crews this summer. The crews will be working on maintenance and habitat restoration projects throughout the refuge complex. The refuge was awarded the additional crew after the stimulus funding package was signed.

High water will likely delay International Migratory Bird Day activities at Chautauqua Refuge. If the water recedes and repairs are complete, the refuge may attempt to hold the event on May 16. An update will be provided at the upcoming EAS meeting.



The Hummingbirds are Coming!

Wondering if its time to start getting your feeders out? According to Hummingbirds.net our area has already seen its first hummers of the season. For lots of great information, check out www.hummingbirds.net/map.html

Illinois Audubon Society 2009 Hummingbird Festival Schedule

Aug. 6	5 pm-7pm	Sullivan's Farm, Rushville
Aug. 8	9 am-Noon	New Salem State Historic Site
Aug. 16	2 pm-5 pm	Hummingbird Haven (Smithfield)
Aug. 22	9 am-Noon	Forest Park Nature Center (Peoria)
Aug. 30	1 pm-4 pm	Hillsboro
Sep. 5	10am-2 pm	Sugar Grove Nature Center (Funk's Grove)

Bluebird box construction



Deanne Doolen with bucket-O-tools.



Inside the Box: Bluebird Nest Observations by Cindy McGrew

Spring in Illinois reminds me of some of my new students on the first day of school. It peeks in tentatively then retreats into a bluster of winter or a cold subdued gray day. But, just like those new students, the Illinois spring is eventually won over by possibilities and curiosity. A new bluebird season begins!

My bluebirds have convinced me that spring is finally here to stay. After a somewhat slow start, we are off and running. Of the 12 Emiquon Refuge Boxes and 15 Emiquon Preserve Boxes that I am monitoring this year, 23 are being used at some level (85%...not bad at all). Seven have nestlings in them, seven have eggs, and nine have completed nests.

Thirty-one nestlings are hatched (5 should be fledging this week), and all have had their box sprayed with eucalyptus oil. The first black flies arrived on May 5 last year, so I planned this year to be proactive with my nurturing. As an added bonus, I have found that the eucalyptus oil also repels those tiny ants that can make birds miserable and nests messy.

I replaced many Emiquon Refuge boxes to new areas this year. The boxes I moved had not seen any activity in the 2 years they had been in place. Using what I had learned from the Emiquon Preserve boxes, I relocated several to better locations. This turned out to be a good idea. Every box that I moved has a nest and/or eggs in it. Location, location, location!

As you can tell, it is pretty exciting to monitor a bluebird trail and watch the progress as flashes of blue fill the skies of Emiquon. In that spirit, **The Emiquon Audubon Society is hosting a Bluebirds and Botany trail walk on Monday, June 1 at 6:30.** I hope you will join us for a light supper and a relaxing walk along a portion of my bluebird trail. Rhonda Ferree has agreed to join us to help with plant identification between the nest boxes, so it should be a well rounded and enjoyable evening.



Happy Bluebird Trails!