



MAY 2015 EDITION

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Craig Kruse

Dubuque Audubon's trip to Chicago to find the Monk Parakeet was a huge success. Thanks to ebird(.com) we located eight Monk Parakeets at a power plant about a mile from our hotel within 20 minutes of getting to town. That left us free to just wander around town and explore. On the first day we spent some time at the Field History Museum and walking the lake front. From the museum campus, we must have seen a hundred Horned Grebes, Red-breasted Mergansers and other waterfowl. The skies were clear, and the weather was perfect.



We ate Chicago hot dogs nearby as Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds begged for crumbs at our feet. At the museum we split up so everyone could see what they wanted to see. I particularly enjoyed a traveling exhibit on voodoo. It was there that I learned that voodoo dolls are never used in voodoo. They are something that Hollywood created. Of course, we spent a lot of time in the museum's huge bird exhibit, too.

On day two we decided to forgo Jackson Park and instead try our luck at Montrose Point, a bird sanctuary just north of Lincoln

Park on Lake Michigan that has 300 species to its name. We were glad we did. We got fifty species for the day and made some new friends in the process. While chasing Fox Sparrows and Winter Wrens around this small gem on the lake, we ran into Roger and Geoffery, two very friendly and knowledgeable local birders. Roger had the Winter Wren hot spot staked-out and told us all about the bird's habitat and also showed us where the Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have been feeding. Geoffery showed us the true value of birding by ear as he found and located a Rusty Blackbird just by hearing it in the distance. It was a very cool experience. Among the other things we got to see at Montrose point were a White-winged Scoter, Caspian Tern, Eastern Towhee and a ton of Hermit Thrushes. All in all, it was a great trip that we are looking forward to repeat next year with more of an emphasis on birding the area. If you're interested in reading more about Montrose Point, check out this website http://www.lakecookaudubon.org/Montrose_Point.html



Two more things of note before I let you go. May 9th is the **Spring Bird**

Count. As usual, we will be meeting at the back entrance to Eagle Point Park at 8:00 that morning. It's always a fun day. Also, our next meeting will be on May 14th and Nate Johnson will be talking to us about his experiences living in the backwoods of Ohio. We hope to see you there. Until then, we will see you in the field.





SPRING BIRD COUNT

By Charlie Winterwood



Join Dubuque Audubon Society for our annual spring bird count on Saturday, May 9, 2015. Every year, we count the different kinds of migrating and resident birds in the Tri-states. We typically see more than a hundred different kinds of birds. All you need is a pair of binoculars to join. Meet at the North entrance (tennis courts) of Eagle Point Park at 8 AM. This is an all day event, but you can stay as long as you want. We start at Eagle Point but continue to other habitats like the marsh behind John Deere. Each habitat has its own unique population of birds: warblers at Eagle Point Park, shore birds and water fowl at John Deere Marsh. We will tabulate our results at 5 PM at the Swiss Valley Nature Center. Audubon will provide the brats and hot dogs, and you provide your tableware, drink, and a dish to pass. If you are new to bird watching, this is an excellent opportunity to learn more about birds. We want you to succeed in seeing new birds. Some of these birds we only see once a year so we still get excited by their presence, and we take great pleasure in seeing them for the first time through your eyes. Come share the excitement. See you there!

To Feed, or Not to Feed

*Backyard feeders are good for birds,
as long as you follow these simple
guidelines.*



Jennifer Huizen

Published Apr 24, 2015

A lot of people like to feed birds. More than 40 percent of Americans make it a regular habit. But a nibble of backyard suet or peck at the communal feeder may hold hidden risks for birds, reports a recent study in *Ecology Letters*. Daniel Becker, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Georgia's Odum School of Ecology, and his team wanted to better understand on how the various ways we humans feed wild animals—whether intentional (feeders or tourist hangouts) or not (landfills or loose garbage cans)—affects their risk of infectious disease. So Becker and his team analyzed what was out there—20 published research papers on host-pathogen interactions in human-fed wild populations—finding intentional feeding changed wild animal behavior and diet enough to give parasites and viruses the upper hand. Out of these

20 studies, only a handful considered feathered species, but none were happy cases. “Feeders can bring unexpected species together and bring birds together more frequently than normal, creating ideal conditions for parasites and other contaminants,” Becker says. That birds often crowd into tight spaces to get at the tasty morsels also makes it easier for pathogens to leap between birds.

Feeders, they found, have contributed to outbreaks of House Finch Eye Disease (Mycoplasmal conjunctivitis) and virulent strains of the fungal respiratory disease Trichomoniasis (check out this old-school video explaining the malady). Dependable human-supplied meals can also alter wild animals' behavior, they found. In one study, Spanish White storks skipped their typical North-African winter migration in favor of sticking around their landfill-loaded breeding grounds. This means sick birds that would normally be subject to “migratory culling,” as Becker delicately puts it—meaning they wouldn't survive the flight—are allowed the chance of continued life, becoming a constant source of exposure to their peers at the benefit of the pathogen infecting them.

How to Feed the Birds Without Feeding Disease.

So should we stop feeding birds? “Absolutely not,” says Becker, “there are plenty of simple things we can do to avoid many of these potential outcomes.” Feeding birds is particularly important in the wake of winters like the one just past. Migrating species on the East Coast are returning to snow-covered soil prompting wildlife groups to ask for the public's help in feeding. Stephen Kress, director of Audubon's Project Puffin, says safe bird feeding includes completely scrubbing out feeders with a 10 percent non-chlorinated bleach solution at least a few times a year, and certainly between seasons. It also means researching the favorite foods of the species you want to attract, and the feeder style they like best and where to hang it.

“Bird seed mixtures targeted to a wide range of species are the cheapest, but most wasteful, packed with fillers like milo that most birds pick through, resulting in a mess under the feeder,” says Kress. The mess can quickly become a sludgy mixture that can make birds sick, so it should be cleaned up in the winter or raked out when conditions are drier, says Kress. To avoid exposing ground-feeding birds to the goo, he adds, put up a platform that drains well.

“To avoid this you can buy specific seeds for specific feeders—for example cracked corn and millet to put in one and then just sunflowers in another,” he says. “This decreases interactions between the species that eat the different seeds, and waste, dramatically.” So go ahead and feed the birds—but if you do, realize you're taking on the task of cleaning up after them, too



DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May, 2015

May 9 – Sat.	SPRING SPECIES COUNT	8:00 am. Meet at the North Entrance to Eagle Point Park. This event is great for beginning bird watchers. Experienced bird watchers will help with locating and identifying resident and migrating birds. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. 5:00 pm. Meet at the Swiss Valley Nature Center to tabulate the results and share experiences. Audubon will provide the brats and hot dogs. Bring your own table service, beverage, and a dish to pass.
May 14 – Thurs.	DUB. AUDUBON PROGRAM: LIFE IN THE BACKWOODS OF WYOMING	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Nate Johnson, Iowa DNR Officer, will recount his first years as a wildlife officer in the backwoods of Wyoming
June 6 – Sat.	BIRDING TOUR OF LITTLE MAQUOKETA RIVER DELTA	8:00 AM. Meet in the parking lot on Riverside Road off Peru Road. The class will be held at The Little Maquoketa River Delta (John Deere Marsh), located on Riverside Road off Peru Road and located behind the John Deere Plant. Craig Cruise, member of the Audubon Society (563-582-0328 for more information) will lead the class. Please bring binoculars; scopes will be available for use.
June 11 – Thurs.	AUDUBON SPRING POTLUCK	Come to enjoy good food and good company. More information next month.

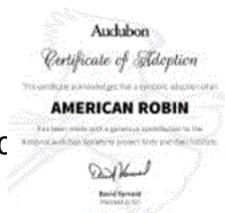
Spring is here!



Bird Adoptions in Audubon gift center
On the Audubon Web-Site.

www.audubon.org

Adopt a Bird today.
Give a Gift to Someone Special
& Protect Birds!!



OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us!

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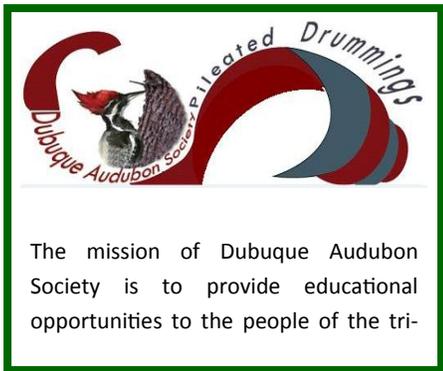
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Dubuque Audubon Society

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DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you are a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically a member of the local Audubon Society and do not need to sign-up separately.

Do NOT use this form to renew a membership in National Audubon Society. Use the form mailed to you by the National Audubon. There are two categories of memberships in the Dubuque Audubon Society

CATEGORY A: This category includes membership in National Audubon Society and the local chapter. You will receive 6 issues of Audubon Magazine and 9 issues of the local chapter newsletter, Pileated Drumming.

National Audubon Society Free Membership INTRODUCTORY ONLY – FIRST TIME MEMBERS ONLY

CATEGORY B: This category of membership is local chapter only. You will receive 9 issues of the local chapter newsletter, Pileated Drumming. All funds will remain with the local chapter. Membership year is from July to June.

Local Chapter Dues \$10.00

**Dubuque Audubon Society
PO Box 3174**

NAME _____ TELE-
PHONE _____