

THE WARBLER
DES MOINES AUDUBON SOCIETY
VOLUME XXII, NUMBER 7
AUGUST 2015
EDITOR: JANE R. CLARK



FIELD TRIP TO NEAL SMITH NWR—SATURDAY, AUGUST 8th

The Des Moines Audubon Society field trip will be held on Saturday, August 8th and the destination will be Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at the McDonald's on University Avenue in Pleasant Hill at 7:30 AM. All the regular grassland birds should be out in full force, including Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows. The prairie should be in full bloom and it's always a treat to observe the bison. Please contact Denny Thompson for more information at cdnthomps@acm.org or 515-254-0837.

REMINDER
NO PROGRAM MEETING IN AUGUST

New Meeting Place Beginning in September!

Beginning in September, Des Moines Audubon meetings will be held in the lunchroom of the Northwest Community Center, which is located at 51st and Franklin Avenue. The Center is just west of Franklin Library and is not far from Westminster Church where we met for years. There is ample parking and the building is accessible. Our first meeting in this facility will be Tuesday, September 15, beginning at 7 p.m. If you have questions about this meeting place, please contact Jane Clark at 515-223-5047.

Des Moines Audubon Website and Facebook Page

By Karen Viste-Sparkman

Have you visited the Des Moines Audubon website? It can be found at www.dmaudubon.org. Ann Johnson designed the site and it provides information about meetings and field trips, upcoming events, and other news. The newsletter is posted on the website, and although you will still get the newsletter in the mail, you can always refer to the website if you misplace it or want to refer to past newsletters. The webpage includes beautiful photos by local photographers and features such as a monthly birding feature. You can also get more information through the "Contact Us" page. If you're on Facebook, search for Des Moines Audubon Society, "like" our page, and you'll get updates on our activities through your newsfeed. It's also a great place to have conversations and ask questions about local birding and conservation. We hope to attract new members to our chapter through these sites, as well as serve our members. Check them out!

Wren Song

By Carol Berrier

I am delighted that a male House Wren discovered my wren box this spring. The bubbling incessant song that emanates from this tiny bird awakens me in the morning as it did when, as a girl, I heard the same song out my window. How can such a feathered mite produce so much noise - - - I mean music?

Birds' respiratory systems are the most efficient known among vertebrates. Their long, sometimes coiled, tracheas add volume to their songs. The voice box of a bird is not like our larynx with its vocal cords. Instead the syrinx is a modified structure unique to birds, located at the end of the trachea where the two bronchi join. Vibrating tympanic membranes enable song birds to sing two different pitches simultaneously! The beautiful song of the Wood Thrush is a good example.

Back to the wren. Why does he sing? He sings to proclaim to other males his sovereignty over his nesting territory, and to attract a female to his site.

After filling the nest box with small sticks, the House Wren advertises his virility, hoping that a female will line his nest with soft grasses, lay eggs and raise a brood. In fact, that hopeful little bigamist may claim other promising sites in his efforts to allure yet another female to his territory.

The females of some species, including the Northern Cardinal, answer their mates with song. Expert birders know that the most accurate bird identifications are made from songs.

THE OLDEST BALD EAGLE

Early last month, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) reported a Bald Eagle killed alongside a road in Monroe County in upstate New York. The bird, a male banded with the number 03142, had actually been an individual that had been brought to New York from Minnesota as a youngster in 1977 and released at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. The USGS Banding Lab Longevity Records indicate that the eagle turned out to be the oldest banded Bald Eagle on record to date - older by a surprising five years. Once this 38-year-old male reached breeding age in 1981, he began nesting at Hemlock Lake, about 50 miles to the west of Montezuma NWR which is today part of Hemlock-Canadice State Forest. The Hemlock Lake nest territory continued, and this eagle became a steady and successful father to many eaglets fledged from that site for many more years.

"In my first year as the Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Program Supervisor, 1977," remarked Carrol Henderson, "I arranged for the capture of four Minnesota nestling Bald Eagle chicks for restoration in New York and accompanied Peter Nye of the New York DEC to northern Minnesota where we hired a tree climber and took a total of four chicks - a chick from each of several nests, leaving a healthy chick in each nest." One of those chicks was 03142.

Peter Nye, the now retired DEC Wildlife Biologist who spearheaded New York's Bald Eagle Restoration Program, commented on the bird, "His longevity, 38 years, although ingloriously cut short by a motor vehicle, is also a national record for known life-span of a wild Bald Eagle. All I can say is, hats off to you, 03142; job well done!"

From: The Birding Community E-bulletin July 2015

Des Moines Audubon Contributions Making a Difference

Des Moines Audubon Society has been the recipient of bequests from three families over the past several years. The first of the generous contributions to Des Moines Audubon Society came from Helene Peasley. She and her husband had been members for many years and she left \$25,000 to Des Moines Audubon. That money has been placed in interest-bearing accounts and has allowed the board members to fund many excellent projects since receiving the bequest.

Robert and Ruth Wiese established a trust fund which earns income on a yearly basis. The income generated by this trust fund is donated to a variety of charities and organizations in central Iowa, including Des Moines Audubon. Ruth Wiese was a member of Des Moines Audubon for a number of years previous to 1982.

Agnes D. Wilbois was an active member of Des Moines Audubon Society from at least the late 1940s through 1983. She died November 1, 1993 at the age of 98. Her family established a fund to which contributions could be made in her name. Four family members contributed a total of \$7,500.00 to this fund after the estate was settled in 1995.

A partial list of land purchases and research made possible with the help of contributions from Des Moines Audubon includes the Paint Rock historic landmark in northeast Iowa, the Broken Kettle Grassland in northwest Iowa, the INHF Heritage Addition to Effigy Mounds, Errington Marsh in Polk County, an addition to Engeldinger Marsh in Polk County, the Kellerton Bird Management Area in south-central Iowa and additional nearby properties, the Swamp White Oak Preserve in southeast Iowa, the Gladys Black Refuge at Red Rock, Angler's Bay on Big Spirit Lake, an addition to Ledges State Park, and two recent purchases by INHF--the Paint Creek Valley addition in northeast Iowa and the Turin Prairie addition in the Loess Hills. In addition, Des Moines Audubon contributions have supported research on Saw-whet Owls in the Loess Hills and in southern Iowa, and the continuing research done on Cerulean Warblers in northeast Iowa by Jon Stravers.

To help our organization continue this ongoing support of worthy projects, now is an excellent opportunity to make a contribution to Des Moines Audubon Society.

American Bird Conservancy Pushes Wind Industry Changes By Doug Harr, President, Iowa Audubon

The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has petitioned the U.S. Dept. of Interior (DOI) for new regulations to reduce impacts of windfarms on migratory birds. The petition includes new information to back requirements for setting limits on bird deaths and making possible enforcement by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

A key provision includes a new DOI permitting process for proposed new wind energy projects. ABC asked DOI to create a new system for assessing risks to birds prior to new turbine construction and collect bird and bat mortality data on turbines already in place. The wind industry does conduct some such assessments by using paid industry consultants, but these can be considered a conflict of interest. ABC proposes use of independent, third-party assessments for all wind energy projects. Firms would be selected by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service or a trusted consultant approved by the agency.

Iowa Audubon, the National Audubon Society, ABC and many other conservation organizations support wind energy as part of the plan moving us away from petroleum-based energy. But our mission is to conserve all natural resources, which include birds and bats, so we must press DOI and Congress, if necessary, to reduce wildlife mortality.

*From: Volume 11, Number 2, August 2015
Newsletter of Iowa Audubon*

**Des Moines Audubon Society membership is for one year, from June to May.
Dues should be mailed to our Treasurer,
Jim Clark, 9871 Lincoln Avenue, Clive, IA 50325**

Please make checks payable to “Des Moines Audubon Society”

Membership Levels and Dues:

Student (under 18).....\$1.00
Individual Adult..... \$10.00
Family.....\$15.00
Life.....\$125.00
(May be paid in five annual payments of \$25.00)

*Additional Contribution for Conservation Projects _____

*Additional Contribution for Bird Feeding Projects _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

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