



***Hickory Hills Highlights***  
***News from the Hickory Hills Chapter of Illinois***  
***Audubon Society***  
***Stewards of Bremer Sanctuary***  
**Winter 2012-2013**

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**“If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than sorrow, we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology. We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created, not just as it looked when we got through with it.” Lyndon Baines Johnson (from a sign at Bryce Canyon, Utah)**

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**ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL OWL PROWL**

A terrific program, a cooperative Barred Owl, and plenty of good food contributed to the success of the 2012 Annual Owl Prowl. Guest speaker Steve Sands of Alton presented a very informative program on light pollution to the 50 or so people who attended. He is a member of several astronomical associations as well as the International Dark Sky Association. According to the IDSA, light pollution is defined as any adverse effect of artificial light including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night, and energy waste. Mr. Sands discussed light pollution in relation to human health and safety, to astronomical research, to its effects on wildlife, and to its energy inefficiency. He also addressed ways to reduce light pollution including shading outdoor lighting such that light is directed downward where it is needed.

After the program, participants headed out toward the west prairie where Vicki Hedrick played Barred Owl calls which elicited a flyover by a Barred Owl. Later, the group heard this owl (or another) call from a more distant vantage point in the woods.

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**12 VOLUNTEERS MAKE SHORT WORK OF SEED COLLECTING**

12 volunteers, including 2 high school students completing community service activities, collected several types of woodland seeds at Ken Schaal's property in Hillsboro. Those seeds will eventually be used in restorations at Bremer.

**Bremer grassland burn November 2012:**



Favorable weather conditions and sufficient help allowed stewards to conduct a prescribed prairie burn . Approximately 15 acres in the northeast corner of the prairie were burned.

A woodland burned is planned when weather conditions permit.

*Wouldn't you like to get the newsletter hot off the presses and in glorious color? If so (and you do not already receive this via email), email Vicki at [vikij5@yahoo.com](mailto:vikij5@yahoo.com).*

**Welcome New Members:**

**Kirk Hess**  
**Larry & Pauline Thorsen**  
**James & Melissa Gregory**

***Hickory Hills Chapter of the IAS is governed by a Board of Directors:***

- Henry Eilers - Restoration**
- Vicki Hedrick - IAS Chap. Rep, Bluebird Trail, Newsletter**
- Jim Hefley - Bluebird Trail, Building**
- Gale Johnson - Building**
- Geri Kinneman - Education Chairperson**
- Don Krefft - Treasurer & Restoration**
- Sonya Lockett - Bulletin Board**
- Jerry Prater - Secretary & Building**
- Dick Rompasky - Building**
- Carl Savage - Membership Chairperson**
- Ken Schaal - Restoration Chairperson**



Watching bird feeders can often produce interesting observations. The top photo was forwarded by Nancy Redman. Judging from the markings on the bird and the distribution of color, the bird is an American Goldfinch. It has more white feathers than are typically seen on goldfinches.

The bottom photo is of a bird that has been visiting Vicki Hedrick's feeder this winter. On first glance, this bird appears to be an albino but its head and rump feathers have a pale tan wash. The bill and feet are pink, but the eyes appear dark. This one is more difficult to ID to species but the shape and robustness of the cone shaped bill and the fact that it will utilize perches on tube feeders, suggests either a House Sparrow or a House Finch. At first Vicki thought it might be a junco, but the bill appears too large and the juncos have not mastered perching at tube feeders!

White feathers lack color-producing pigments such as melanin (which is the same pigment that causes our skin to tan). If the feathers should also show yellow or red but don't, then they also lack carotenoid pigments. The birds here might be considered leucistic or partial albinos. An interesting discussion of color (and lack of color) in birds can be found at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/>

### ANNUAL WINTER WALK DRAWS GOOD CROWD

**A brisk snowy landscape, hot soups and good friends: what's not to like?**

**Thirty hardy souls gathered at The Barn on New Year's Day to celebrate the arrival of the year with the annual Bremer Sanctuary winter walk. Although a chilly twenty-four degrees, the weather cooperated with little to no wind and bright sunshine. Walkers from six to sixty (and beyond) trudged through the fields and woodlands to no ill effects.**

**Gathering again at The Barn, the group finished the morning with a delicious selection of hot soups and chili, complimented by warm garlic bread and fresh baked cornbread. The desert table supplied everyone with a variety of cookies and cakes with plenty leftover to share.**

**Although the group this year was smaller than in the past, there is always hope that 2014 will bring out another enthusiastic crowd to share in the wonders of our natural landscape and its bounty.**

**(And perhaps catch another glimpse of Carl Savage's red longjohns!)**



## BREMER SANCTUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS: SPRING 2013

**Early Spring Bird Walk:** Sat. March 23, 7:00 a.m. coffee & intros, 7:30 a.m. birdwalk  
**Spring Woodland Wildflower Walk:** Sat. April 20, 1 p.m.

**IAS 2013 Spring Gathering: April 26-28**, hosted by Emiquon Audubon Society, Fulton & Mason Counties. The Harvester Inn, Canton, Illinois

**Early Summer Bird Walk & Breakfast:** Sat. June 1, Birdwalk: 7 a.m. Breakfast 9 a.m.

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### CRESS CREEK AND BREMER SANCTUARY

#### *Article and photo by Jerry Prater*

Much of the southern boundary of Bremer Sanctuary is framed by the twisting route of Cress Creek. Normally a rather lazy, slow moving brook, Cress Creek can demonstrate a dramatic change in its demeanor.

The creek forms the basin for basically the entire sanctuary watershed. Following a substantial rain, all the drainage through the woodlands funnels toward and into Cress Creek raising the water level to impressive heights. It is not unusual to find evidence of high water well above the creek banks, with debris tangled in tree limbs six feet high crossing Pipeline Trail.

Cress Creek originates in the farmland above Waresgrove Road as a shallow runoff from neighboring farms. As it winds its way in a southeastern direction it gradually widens, picking up other small tributaries before passing through Bremer Sanctuary on its way to its meeting with Shoal Creek and southward to the Kaskaskia and Mississippi Rivers.

The creek gets its name from an early landowner family arriving in the Montgomery County area around 1819. The Cress patriarch, Jacob (Johann) appears to be the first to establish a farm west of Hillsboro. Absalom Cress, son of Jacob Cress and Catherine Bost of Caborris County North Carolina, with his wife Catherine (Fogelman) settled north of Hillsboro on a small homestead around 1830. There they

raised a large family of eleven children, some of whom, along with other family members, later established farms of their own from 1830-1835 near the original farmstead. Eventually more than a dozen small Cress farms would dot the landscape around Hillsboro. Along the way they lent their family name to Cress Creek and donated land to become Cress Cemetery. Many of the early Cress family members are buried in the cemetery bearing their name. A number of Cress headstones can be found on the southern slope of the cemetery.

The Cress family and their namesake creek is only one of many fascinating details of early Montgomery County settlement. More information is available through the county historical society.





One can only wonder what this little hummingbird thought when presented with the scene in the top photo.

Its appearance in Valmeyer, IL was reported by a local news station on January 2. As of January 6<sup>th</sup>, the female Rufous Hummingbird was still there.

IAS member Vern Kleen, a licensed hummingbird banded and well-known for his ever popular Hummingbird Festivals banded and identified the bird.

The homeowner is providing a richer sugar/water mix than the usual 1:4 ratio. Not only does a stronger mix provide the hummer with the needed calories for energy production and survival but it also means the solution can tolerate a lower temperature before freezing. The homeowner takes down the feeder each evening and replaces it in the morning and keeps an extra full one on hand in case the one in use begins to freeze.

Photos used with permission. Top photo by Yvonne Brand. Bottom photo by Tony Rothering.

Now if you are receiving this newsletter by email, you get to see this little gem in her lovely colors. And, you are also helping Hickory Hills Chapter (Stewards of Bremer Sanctuary) save postage and printing costs and allowing the chapter to apply those savings to programs and restoration at Bremer! Thank you.

**Join us at Hickory Hills Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society! We are the stewards of IAS' Helen and Betty Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary.** Your membership provides the Hickory Hills newsletter, chapter email updates, voting privileges, the opportunity to head a committee or hold an office, Cardinal News, Illinois Audubon Magazine, admission to IAS sanctuaries, and the opportunity to attend chapter and state-wide events.

**IAS/HICKORY HILLS CHAPTER NEW MEMBERS FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES (all categories include Chapter dues):**

Friend \$ 35 \_\_\_\_\_ Steward \$ 60+ \_\_\_\_\_ Advocate \$510+ \_\_\_\_\_

Friend Plus \$ 40 \_\_\_\_\_ Guardian \$110+ \_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$1,010+ \_\_\_\_\_

Legacy \$5,010+ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: Illinois Audubon Society, PO Box 2547, Springfield, IL 62708-2457

Or by Credit Card by providing the following information:

Circle: Visa MasterCard Amex Discover

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date (MM) \_\_\_\_\_ (YYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please do not use this form to renew your membership.** Annual renewals will be sent out approximately one month prior to due date.

You may also join online: <http://www.illinoisauduon.org/JOIN/Join.html>

OR

You may join Friends of Bremer Sanctuary: yearly membership is \$10 payable directly to membership chair Carl Savage or mailed to Hickory Hills Chapter, PO Box 395 Hillsboro, IL 62049. Membership is due each January 1. A Friend receives the chapter newsletter, email updates (if email address is provided), has sanctuary privileges, is invited to all chapter activities and events and may volunteer for the Sanctuary. A Friend does not have voting rights in chapter business nor can a Friend hold office or chair a committee.

