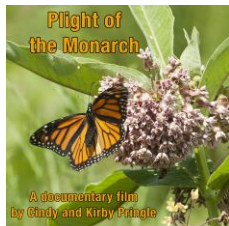


Hickory Hills Highlights

News from the Hickory Hills Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society -Stewards of Bremer Sanctuary FALL 2013

As we say 'good bye' to summer and 'hello' to fall, the Hickory Hills Chapter is bringing two special programs to Bremer Sanctuary. Both programs return us to summer by showcasing the plights of two of our many pollinator species. Joining us for the Owl Prowl is Bremer Sanctuary neighbor Ron Niehaus who will present a talk about bees, in particular the honey bee. The honey bee is an important pollinator of many crop plants, but colony collapse disorder (cause unknown) is resulting in a tremendous die-off of this once numerous species.



In November, professional art photographers Kirby and Cindy Pringle will bring their beautiful (but sad) video documentary 'Plight of the Monarch' to Bremer. As I write this in late September, we should be seeing lots of Monarch butterflies heading south. How many have you seen? I'd venture to say 'not many'. Why have their numbers dropped so dramatically and is there anything we can do to help them? Through outstanding photography (the Pringles rear Monarchs from found eggs), Kirby and Cindy highlight this charismatic insect's biology (including its transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly) and discuss conservation issues effecting its survival.

Owl Prowl, note the date change and special added program:

October 17, 2013 (Thursday) – not Saturday the 19th.

5:30 p.m.: Ron Niehaus (see above). He will have live bees (contained) with him.

6:00 p.m.: Wiener Roast

7:00 p.m.: Owl Prowl

Plight of the Monarch: video documentary and presentation by Kirby and Cindy Pringle.

November 9, (Saturday)

11:30 a.m.: program followed by soup and chili lunch.

Welcome to our new members: Gail Jindrich, Frank & Patricia Whitlock, Doug & Brenda Johnson.

Musings about Plants and Weather

■ article & photos by Henry Eilers

The only thing that is constant in nature is change. Last year we were facing seemingly endless drought and excessive heat. To say that it took its toll on plants and people is putting it mildly. This year we had at times an excess of moisture and a long period of unusually cool temperatures. More than one individual made the comment that they had never seen such exuberant and long lasting flowering. I fully concur. This would have hardly been predicted, had a survey been taken last summer. It is a reflection of the obvious and well known fact that native plant communities as a whole are adapted to such stresses. However at the species level it does have all sorts of impacts.



Gray-headed Coneflower

We tend to notice only short term effects. Well, sometimes not even that. I was asked a while back by an elderly gentleman about a reason why he lost so many White Pine trees in his border last year! With our forgetfulness it is all so easy to separate short term from long term impacts. While annual and perennial

herbaceous species may recover quickly that may not be the case for woody plants.

As we are looking at a nice green tree we are not seeing the many insects and fungi that might be munching on its interior. Adding to that complexity is the fact that both the very young and the very old of all organisms are more vulnerable to severe stressors.



Royal Catchfly.

Based on my visual observations, last year's drought led to local population reductions in numerous woodland species, from Birds-foot Violet to Yellow Ladies Slipper Orchid.

American Colombo and Goats-beard are part of a group that survived well but for the most part failed to flower this year.

So, why has the overall flowering display then been so spectacular so far? Could it be that the drought- induced thinning of plants gave the remaining survivors a big growing advantage? This thinning certainly gave our native winter annuals a huge advantage. Bluets by the acre covered thinned out turf in some areas. Also abundant in the Shoal Creek Barrens community were other annuals such as Venus Looking-glass, Sleepy Catchfly, Nodding Mouse-eared Chickweed and others. In the floodplain woods along Shoal Creek Blue-eyed Mary, Corydalis and Miami Mist were

abundant. So were some weeds such as Common Chickweed and Purple Hen-bit

Last year the south slope prairies at Bremer Sanctuary looked largely withered and brown.



This year, as you tried to make your way through the dense vegetation there was an exuberance of purple Bee-balm, Golden Alexander and many different yellow composites and punctuated by stately Compass-plant and Prairie Dock. Largely hidden away from the roadside view were purple Cone-flowers by the thousands. It must have been a spectacular sight that I however largely missed.

A real surprise has also been the profuse flowering of highly colonial species that in most years make few flowers. Our native world abounds in unsolved questions. It would be good to hear of observations and conclusions. Maybe someone needs to start a a blog and get reactions from our readers on their observations

Congratulations to new member Dr. Doug Johnson. Dr. Johnson was the winner of the Bremer Sanctuary picnic, wagon ride and trail walk. This was one of the prizes auctioned to benefit the Hillsboro Area Hospital in July.



The Bremer Sanctuary barn roof gets a face-lift with some much needed repairs and a new paint job. Photo by Don Krefft.



Restoration chairman, Ken Schaal, explains the ray and disk flowers of one of the Sanctuary's composite flowers.

BREMER SANCTUARY NESTBOX TRAIL

Once again the birds utilizing the nestboxes had a tough summer. Trail monitors found a number of dead Tree Swallow nestlings in the boxes along the east side of Bluebird Trail. Most were fully feathered and it is unknown what caused the deaths. Lack of sufficient insect food is one possible reason. The heat and drought last year reduced the insect population at that time which could have led to fewer insect eggs overwintering and hatching out in time for this year's nesting season. Snakes (judging from the intact nests) apparently found a ready source of food: it was not unusual to find a box with eggs one week, totally empty the next. Tree Swallows, Bluebirds, House Wrens, Titmice and Chickadees are the species that use our nestboxes. The latter two nest very early and only one time each season. Below is a table showing the totals for this year and previous years. Thank you to Nancy Redman, Willy, Hunter, Selena and Chloe for helping with the trail this year. Additionally, Geri Kinnamen, Jim Hefley, Shirley Sussenbach and several other Sanctuary volunteers filled in when needed. Thank you to all of you.

ALL BIRDS FLEDGED TOTALS						
YEAR	BLUEBIRDS	TREE SWALLOWES	HOUSE WRENS	CHICKADEES	TITMOUSE	TOTAL
2000	76		63	11		150
2001	126		137	6		269
2002	112	4	133			249
2003	117	5	196			318
2004	134	27	156	5		322
2005	133	48	169			350
2006	103	42	122			267
2007	59	81	148			288
2008	57	61	96			214
2009	64	73	157	3		297
2010	79	60	133			272
2011	55	49	88		4	196
2012	58	53	36	8		155
2013	54	46	82	0	0	182
TOTALS	1227	549	1716	25	4	3529



Shadowy image of a Praying Mantis taken through a Prairie Dock leaf. Photo by Vicki Hedrick

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

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 17, Thursday. 5:30 p.m. Bees, wiener roast and Owl Prowl

November 9, Saturday. 11:30 a.m. Plight of the Monarch, soup and chili lunch

December: Chapter Christmas Party. Date, Time and Place TBA

In addition to the individuals who visit Bremer Sanctuary to walk, picnic, or nature watch on a daily basis, various groups scheduled outings. Included in these groups were farmers from Raymond and Butler, and special needs children and their parents. The Sanctuary also served as the turn-around point for a 5K run benefitting Wounded Warriors.

Once again Jim and Ann Hefley hosted a Hummingbird Festival at their home. On July 13, bander Vern Kleen banded 89 new adult hummingbirds (37 males, 52 females). No juveniles were banded. 10 birds banded in previous years were recaptured: 1 female (2010), 1 male & 2 females (2011), and 3 males, 3 females (2012).

Help Hickory Hills Chapter save paper and postage by signing up to receive the newsletter via email. Send your name and email address to Vicki Hedrick at vikij5@yahoo.com. Include HH newsletter in the subject line. You will receive the newsletter in PDF format. To read the newsletter you will need Adobe or Adobe Reader (a free internet download). See our photos in glorious color and receive the newsletter 'hot off the presses'! No waiting for us to print, address and mail paper copies and the postal service to deliver them. A big THANK YOU to all those already receiving the newsletter electronically!

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 (if email address is provided), voting privileges, the opportunity to head a committee or hold an office, 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 by IAS 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.

