



WingTips

A Publication of the Lake/Cook Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society ♦ January 2017

On the Fly

Every day, it seems, I read a new story about wildlife, the environment or climate change that a friend has shared on my Facebook account. In the past few months alone, the posts have included stories about an initiative to form a National Habitat Conservation System, a Chicago bird sanctuary that I knew nothing about, survival threats to giraffes, a 75% decline in the UK's butterflies, why migrating birds pile up along the shores of the Great Lakes, a new conservation approach focusing on adaptation, and more.

You can help increase our collective environmental IQ by sharing the relevant stories you find on the Lake/Cook Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lakecookaudubon.

If we all contribute, we can learn from each other and become better environmental citizens

– Rena Cohen, Chapter President



Highland Park Expands Support for Bird-Friendly Buildings

In October, the City of Highland Park took another step toward preventing deadly bird/window collisions by adding bird-friendly design to its list of 'public benefit' options available to developers seeking approval for new construction projects. The change has already prompted the developer of a new three-story Simply Self Storage building in the city's Briargate business district to upgrade its proposed facade with a special bird protection glass featuring a patterned, UV-reflective coating that makes windows visible to birds for collision avoidance while remaining virtually transparent to the human eye.



Canada Warbler killed in downtown Highland Park last spring after hitting a store window. A Black-and-White Warbler met the same fate a few yards away, with many more fatalities during spring migration.

While the city declined to update its building code to require bird-friendly construction for these projects, as recommended by a task force that included Lake/Cook members Donnie Dann and Stuart Koch, the change to the municipality's public benefit guidance list marked Highland Park's latest action to reduce local bird deaths caused by window strikes. The city's building code has required bird-friendly design in all new public buildings since 2011, and the new Rosewood Beach Interpretive Center that opened in 2015 features bird-friendly glass.

Collisions with glass kill up to one billion birds a year across the country. Only habitat loss and outdoor cats are bigger sources of human-caused bird mortality. For more information on bird strikes, visit <https://abcbirds.org/program/glass-collisions/>



Birding Your Patch / LaBagh Woods: Next Program Tuesday Jan. 17

Since fall 2014, a team that has been restoring LaBagh Woods has documented 178 bird species – including rarities like Northern Goshawk and Swainson's Warbler – as well as 350 butterfly species and other wildlife from muskrat to mink at this 80-acre Cook County Forest Preserve site.



On Tuesday, Jan. 17, team member Jeff Skrentny will share their sightings, conservation efforts, and insights into why this patch of floodplain and upland woods deserves the attention it's getting. The program – **Birding Your Patch: One Year+ at LaBagh Woods** – is at 7 pm at Heller Nature Center, 2821 Ridge Road, Highland Park.



Lake/Cook Chapter Funds 2 Grants for Ornithological Research

For the fourth consecutive year, thanks to member dues and chapter fundraising programs like the annual seed sale, Lake/Cook Chapter is funding bird-related research projects by college students in Illinois. The chapter funded two projects in support of the Illinois Ornithological Society's 2016 Grants Program, which evaluates research proposals and solicits donations to underwrite students' work.

In one Lake/Cook-funded project, Illinois State University's Taylor Joray is examining the summer origins of American Kestrels wintering in Illinois using stable-isotope technology to track the birds' movements. The chapter selected the project because of concerns about the declining kestrel population, the paucity of information about this species' migratory patterns, and the need to understand these patterns to assess the impact of climate change on these falcons in Illinois and elsewhere.



In the other project, which Lake/Cook has supported for two years, Franklin College's Ben O'Neal and the Illinois Natural History Survey's Heath Hagy are studying the breeding ecology of waterbirds at Emiquon Preserve southwest of Peoria. The chapter chose this project because half of Illinois' threatened and endangered bird species are wetland birds, making nesting studies important for Emiquon and beyond.

The last WingTips reported partial results of the Emiquon study. Researchers identified more than 40 Black-necked Stilt nests at the preserve, with scores more assumed to be present in inaccessible areas, despite the fact that Illinois is outside this species' primary breeding range. These findings indicate that Emiquon may be one of the most significant and northernmost locations in the central U.S. to host breeding colonies of this striking species.

Lake/Cook contributed \$2,267 to these projects, which were two of the 13 funded through the 2016 IOS program. This more than doubled the chapter's previous donation and marked our first support of more than one project in a year.



NEW! Chapter Trip to Cape May, NJ Scheduled Oct. 4-8 – Register Now

If you haven't been to Cape May – one of the "Fifty Places To Go Birding Before You Die" in the book of the same name – here's your chance! We've arranged a member-only chapter trip Oct. 4-8 that will be led by the Field Museum's Josh Engel and timed to coincide with the best of Cape May's fall migration.

Expect amazing numbers of warblers, sparrows, hawks, falcons, shorebirds, ducks and seabirds – including three species of scoters, Clapper Rail, Brant, Parasitic Jaeger, Northern Gannet, Common Eider, Seaside and Saltmarsh Sparrow, and other species not found in Chicagoland. Maximum attendance is 16. Email renabird3@gmail.com for an itinerary and costs.



Reptiles Up Close & Warblers 101: Bonus Programs Feb. 2 & April 26

In addition to Lake/Cook's regular monthly programs, mark your calendars for two upcoming extras.

Reptiles at Risk: A Close Encounter (Thurs., Feb. 2) will be a meet-the-animals evening with some of the denizens of Lake Forest's Wildlife Discovery Center including fox snake, Blanding's turtle, gopher tortoise and American alligator, along with a discussion of the threats that are facing many North American reptiles.

Spring Warblers 101 (Wed., April 26) will help you brush up your warbler identification skills just in time for the first wave of spring migration with ID tips and tricks as well as information on each species' foraging practices, habitat preferences and likely Chicago arrival date from popular Morton Arboretum ornithology instructor Denis Kania.

Both programs start at 7 pm at Heller Nature Center and are co-sponsored by Heller. See a full list of upcoming programs and field trips at www.lakecookaudubon.org.



Welcome New Members

Terry Bonace, Chicago	Henry & Eva Moss, Highland Park
John Cullinan, Homewood	Dana Muller, Highland Park
Alice Curry, Deerfield	Enlin Pan, Lake Forest
Megan Humphrey, Chicago	Kevin Petersen, Mount Prospect
Lin Johnston, Chicago	Peter Quagliana, Chicago
Joanne Kalnitz & Marshall Sorkin, Chicago	Ryerson Conservation Area, Deerfield
Dena & Ron Kilgus, Winnetka	Thomas & Karen Scheidt, Lindenhurst
Beth Lange, Evanston	
William & Annette McClellan, Waukegan	



Combating Climate Change with a Carbon Fee & Dividend Policy

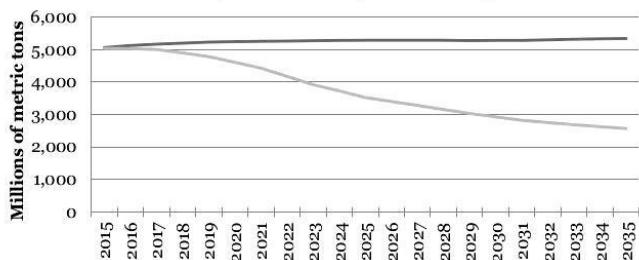
Citizens' Climate Lobby is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. This article by Lake/Cook Chapter member Henry Moss, who is active in the group's Lake County chapter, outlines the group's proposed climate solution.

Climate change is widely considered to be one of the major challenges we face as a planet. The chief cause, according to scientific consensus, is carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels that trap heat and increase the carbon dioxide content of the Earth's atmosphere.

The health, environmental and economic effects are potentially catastrophic. Historically unprecedented extreme weather events that have been linked to climate change have already disrupted livelihoods and food supplies around the world. Habitat loss associated with climate change is expected to drive 100 bird species to extinction as early as 2050, according to National Audubon Society's 2014 *Birds and Climate Change Report*. And scientists believe global warming will exacerbate problems like hunger, water shortages and insect-borne diseases.

Yet in most places there is no financial penalty for adding to the carbon pollution that drives climate change. As long as carbon pollution remains free, the true costs of fossil fuels will be hidden, and may appear to be cheaper than low-carbon alternatives even as they put long-term health and economic prosperity at risk.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions (annual forecast, national level)



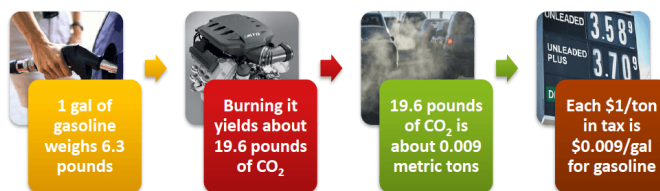
The top line represents emissions with business as usual. The bottom line shows the projected reduction with the Carbon Fee and Dividend plan.

To help slow the carbon emissions rate, Citizens' Climate Lobby has proposed a national Carbon Fee and Dividend system that would impose a fee on carbon and other greenhouse gases, and return the fees collected (minus administrative costs) to households as a monthly energy dividend.

In just 20 years, studies show, this strategy could reduce carbon emissions to 50% of safe 1990 levels while adding 2.8 million jobs to the American economy.

CCL's proposed Carbon Fee and Dividend legislation would:

- **Place a steadily rising fee on fossil fuels** at the source of extraction (well, mine or port-of-entry). This "carbon fee" would start at \$15 per ton of CO₂ emitted and increase by \$10/ton/year. Clean energy would become less expensive than fossil fuel within 10 years, bringing carbon emissions to safe levels.
- **Return the revenue collected to American households as a monthly dividend**, minus administrative costs. About 2/3 of all households would break even or receive more in their dividend checks than they would pay in higher prices due to the carbon fee, protecting the poor and middle class.
- **Impose border tariffs on imports from countries without a carbon fee**, maintaining a level playing field for American businesses while also discouraging them from relocating to countries where they can emit more CO₂. Additionally, since the U.S. represents 70% of global trade, the world economies will be motivated to adopt similar pricing policies or face severe disadvantages in selling their goods to the U.S.



This revenue-neutral plan will not increase the size of government and will implement a free-market strategy rather than government taxes, regulations or subsidies. It will also trigger a chain of positive effects in which:

- Fossil fuels become less desirable.
- Cleaner sources of energy become more competitive.
- Millions of jobs are created through the dividend.
- Carbon emissions go down.
- Reduced air pollution saves tens of thousands of lives.
- And climate change is brought under control.

Even with a new President, EPA Director and Attorney General who have expressed resistance to climate change initiatives, there is hope for meaningful legislation. There are now 20 members of the bipartisan House Climate Solutions Caucus, and a Republican-sponsored resolution calling for action on human-caused climate change that was introduced by Rep. Chris Gibson (R-NY) currently has 15 GOP sponsors. Public support for these measures can make a difference. For more information, visit citizensclimatelobby.org

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A 70-Species 'Big Day' in Lake County in December (!)

If you thought that local birding would be a bust in December, consider the Lake County Big Day experience of local birders Steve Bailey, Beau Schaefer and Andy Stewart on December 3. With 32 stops in 14-1/2 hours that included 55 miles of driving, the group tallied 70 species beginning with a Barred Owl at 3:45 am in Libertyville and ending with a Virginia Rail at 5:15 pm at Volo Bog.



In between, highlights included Black Scoter and Winter Wren at Illinois Beach State Park South Unit, Red-throated Loons at both IBSP North and South Units, Snow Goose

at North Point Marina, Cackling Geese and Northern Pintail at Pine Dunes, Short-eared Owl at Rollins Savanna, and Trumpeter Swan at Sullivan Lake.

For Schaefer, who does a Big Day every month, it was his best December Big Day total ever, beating his previous record by five species. Yet the group missed some expected birds, including Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Fox Sparrow, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, and – “our worst fail” - Northern Saw-whet Owl.

“We tried four known locations for that bird and failed all four times,” Schaefer said. “Our best spot had three coyotes and four Great-horned Owls all calling at the same time while we were trying to call in a Saw-whet Owl. It’s not hard to see why that bird kept silent.”

They also missed several species seen by other birders at the same locations, including Eastern Phoebe, Northern Shrike and Lesser Scaup, but Schaefer isn’t complaining. “December is the most difficult month to plan a Big Day because of the short day and how spread out the birds are,” he said, “but it was an awesome day with no wind, no precipitation, mild temperatures and some personal bests.” It’s proof that winter birding can be fun.