

Hickory Hills Highlights
News from the Hickory Hills Chapter of Illinois Audubon Society
Stewards of Bremer Sanctuary

SUMMER 2012



Don't know a Gray-headed Coneflower from Rosinweed? Or one *Liatris* species from another? Come to Bremer on Saturday July 21 at 4 p.m. and find out what's in bloom in our prairies. Wiener roast follows. Bring wieners & a dish to share!

**HEFLEY'S HUMMERS SET NEW
RECORD by Jerry Prater**

Heat and humidity notwithstanding, a group of loyal hummingbird enthusiasts gathered at the home of Anna and Jim Hefley to participate in the annual banding of the birds sponsored by the Hickory Hills Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society.

Vern Kleen from The Illinois Audubon Society, and one of only three Illinois banders certified to band the tiny hummers, set up shop in a brief patch of shade. Kleen began with a few words about the birds and a 'thank you' to the Hefley's for hosting the event. This program was one of sixteen plus banding sessions held each year by Vern and his crew.

The Ruby Throated Hummingbird is our only local hummer and was in

abundance at the site. These tiny flyers winter in Central America (Costa Rica is a favorite spot) and along the western shores of Mexico. As spring nears, they migrate to Guatemala on the Yucatan Peninsula where they prepare for the five hundred mile non-stop flight to southern Texas. Fueling up on Texas nectar, they then fly north to our area and beyond. Males generally arrive in our area by late April to scout out and claim territory with females following a couple weeks later. Normal lifespan for a Ruby Throat ranges from three to five years but one bird captured in the past carried a band nearly eight years old.

Feeders with a mixture of 4 parts water to 1 part sugar should be put out in early April and changed often to prevent the mixture going off. Both sexes compete equally for the feeders

with males attempting to keep as many sites for themselves as possible. Female hummingbirds are generally larger than males since they do the brooding and feeding of new hatchlings. Only the male carries the bright red iridescent throat patch from which they get their name.

Kleen's assistant, Bill Ziereth, removes the birds for banding from a cage placed over the feeding station. Birds are transferred to the banding area where they are checked for previous bands and have their beaks and left wings measured as part of the ongoing data base.

A new record for the Hefley site was set this year with eighty-eight birds banded plus fourteen previously banded birds. A couple of the banded birds were caught a second time during this day's program.

Stay tuned for next year's event and come to participate.



Cage for capturing hummingbirds prior to banding.



Hummingbirds (in pink bags) await processing as master bander Vern Kleen shows an onlooker how he applies the bands.

***Save Trees - Save Postage - Save
Hickory Hills some money!***

***Receive your newsletter on-line and
in glorious color!
Email Vicki at <vikij5@yahoo.com>***

***Also, let us know if you wish to be
REMOVED from the snail mail list.***

***Remember, receiving your newsletter
by email will not only allow us to
spend more money on work at the
sanctuary, it is also
the "green" thing to do.***



Young volunteers Hunter Hollo, 11, and Willy Fry, 13, both of Hillsboro, check a bluebird box with Vicki Hedrick of Carlinville Thursday morning at Bremer Sanctuary in Hillsboro.

Above photo and caption courtesy of Mike Plunkett and The Journal News.

Two students are members of the monitoring team this year. Thirteen year old Willy Fry is a veteran volunteer at the sanctuary and eleven year old Hunter Hollo volunteered after having participated with her 2nd and 3rd grade classes in our field labs several years ago.

Both youngsters have become very accomplished at identifying both nests and eggs of each species that use our nest boxes and take turns checking boxes and recording data.

We look forward to their continued involvement next summer!

BLUEBIRD TRAIL UPDATE

Hearing reports of Bluebirds already nesting, the nestbox trail monitors began checking boxes the last week of March (2 weeks early). Already there were Bluebird eggs in several boxes.

By July 5, 49 Bluebirds had fledged – 12 more than last year at this time – and the birds were already into their 2nd nesting attempt. Also by July 5, Tree Swallows and House Wrens had fledged 50 young and 33 young, respectively. In early May, 1 pair of Black-capped Chickadees fledged a whopping 8 young!



Restoration chairperson, Ken Schaal, addresses Scouts from Mt. Olive and their families. (see article below)



Ken Schaal leads scouts and families along the west prairie.

The Mt. Olive Boy Scout troop & friends braved the heat to visit H&B Bremer Sanctuary the evening of July 5th. Ken Schaal led the Prairie Walk, 20+ plant species-- 10 kinds of insects & a Brown Thrasher singing his evening song were the subjects of his talks & POP quizzes which scouts & friends enthusiastically answered.

Ken briefly explained the benefits of the controlled burns performed on the prairie & in the woods.

Geri Kinnaman, Education Chair, brought up the back of the group asking & answering questions & telling of our seed collecting adventures.

Back at the Barn, Ken fascinated all with a talk on poisonous plants & their history.

Geri visited each group touring the Barn, directing attention to interesting displays, answering inquiries about membership & providing informative cards with our website & Facebook page listed.

At the end of the Educational tour, the 15 Boy Scouts met their requirements. They & 20 friends had a great time.

**Article by Geri Kinnamen,
Education Chairperson**

- Hickory Hills Chapter of the IAS is governed by a Board of Directors:***
- Jim Hefley - Bluebird Trl, Building**
 - Henry Eilers - Restoration**
 - Vicki Hedrick - IAS Chap. Rep, Bluebird Trail, Newsletter**
 - Gale Johnson - Building**
 - Geri Kinneman - Education chairman**
 - Don Krefft - Treasurer & Restoration**
 - Sonya Lockett - Bulletin Board**
 - Bob Mullins - Restoration**
 - Jerry Prater - Secretary & Building**
 - Dick Rompasky - Building**
 - Carl Savage - Membership chairman**
 - Ken Schaal - Restoration chairman**

Bremer Calendar:

July 21 (Saturday): Prairie Wildflower Walk & wiener roast, 4 p.m.

Sept. 8: (Saturday) Annual Chapter meeting, 4 p.m. Election of officers & chapter activities summary.

Sept. 21-23: IAS Annual Meeting, Springfield. (See Cardinal News for details)

Oct. 3: (Saturday) Owl Prowl and wiener roast. Date may change so watch for e-note updates & subsequent newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Do you have the desire to become a Sanctuary volunteer but are not able to do the physical labor needed at Bremer? Here's an opportunity or two for you. Both are needed ASAP!

1. **Newsletter Compiler/Editor:** PDF capability preferred, but Microsoft Word is OK. Printed quarterly.
2. **Webmaster:** Take over and maintain existing website (Mac computer necessary) or develop a new website.

If either or both of these positions appeals to you, please contact one of our Board members. Thank you.

“I THINK GREEN: EVEN SMALL THINGS HELP CARE FOR THE WORLD”

For four Thursdays in June, youngsters and their families met at Bremer Sanctuary to explore the natural world and learn about the critters that are present in both the soil and air.

As part of their exploration, they learned that, in the environment, nothing can exist independently and that even one small change has the ability to help or harm the whole environment. The program was sponsored by Montgomery County Master Gardeners, Montgomery County 4-H and H. and B. Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary.

Join us at Hickory Hills Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society! We are the stewards of IAS' H and B Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary.

IAS/HICKORY HILLS MEMBERSHIP: 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.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ St. _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Membership Category Dues: \$ _____

Hickory Hills Chapter Dues: \$ 10.00

Total Society-Chapter Dues: \$ _____

IAS Membership Categories:

FRIEND	\$25.00	FRIEND PLUS:	\$30.00
STEWARD	\$50-\$99	GUARDIAN:	\$100-\$499
ADVOCATE	\$500-\$999	BENEFACTOR:	\$1000+
LEGACY	\$5000+		

Clip & Mail To:

**Illinois Audubon Society
PO Box 2547
Springfield, IL 62708**

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.

