



Meet *Lynx rufus rufus* (Bobcat)

# Hickory Hills Highlights

News from Hickory Hills Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society,  
Stewards of Bremer Sanctuary, Hillsboro, IL

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*"Should we not be using this magnificent great 'Cathedral of the outdoors' to learn, then teach?" Jim Sturgeon*

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## Volunteers Weekly Monitor Bluebird Trail

by Vicki Hedrick

As of June 16, Bremer Sanctuary's nestbox trail had fledged 37 Bluebirds, 19 House Wrens, and 4 Eastern Tufted Titmouse. Although Tree Swallows arrived and began staking claim to nestboxes by the end of March, their first eggs were not laid until early May when one TS egg was found in a box on the May 5th check. Cool, wet weather which may have reduced the number of available insects, might be responsible – although it didn't hamper the few Bluebirds that were nesting by the end of April.

It is also important to mention that there have been problems along the trail this spring. During several weekly checks, a total of 5 nestboxes were found open. One of the opened boxes had two of four hatching Bluebirds missing – possibly having fallen from the box and becoming vulnerable to predators. The entire contents of a House Wren box (eggs and nest) had been removed.

Extreme weather swings or black flies might have played a role in the deaths of young and adults in several other boxes. On June 9, 3 boxes containing nearly-ready to fledge young were found to contain dead young. Each box contained young of a different species. On June 16,



Volunteers Shirley Sussenbach and Vicki Hedrick are regulars along the Bluebird Trail at Bremer Sanctuary, visiting each of the 50 nestboxes once a week from mid-April to mid-August. They keep detailed records of the species using the nestboxes, eggs laid and nestlings fledged.

two more boxes were found to contain dead young.

Raising children to become independent and productive adults is always a difficult task. Those of us who are parents are well aware of that. It is the same with birds. For some species, that first nesting attempt is the only chance they will have to reproduce for that year. Weather, preda-

tors, insufficient food are just some of the additional burdens young birds face that young of our species rarely deal with – at least in terms of survival.

All visitors to the sanctuary can help our nesting birds by stifling their curiosity and not opening the nest boxes.

Please give our birds a chance.

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## Mark Your Calendars For These Upcoming Programs

Hickory Hills Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society will be holding several interesting programs yet this summer. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

On Saturday, July 16, we will hold our annual Prairie Wildflower walk beginning at 4 p.m. This year the walk will be followed by a wiener roast. In addition, there will be musical entertainment following the dinner featuring the local Bluegrass

music group, *Scrap Iron and Gold*.

Full moon is July 15, so as the music is playing, the full moon will rise majestically in the east.

One of the chapter's most popular events is the Hummingbird Festival planned for Sunday, August 28, and being held again at the Hefley residence south of Hillsboro. The Hefley family has been kind enough to host the event for the past

several years.

Vern Kleen, IAS Master Bander will be on hand from 1-4 p.m. to band the captured birds. Last year over 200 visitors attended the event and 67 Hummingbirds were banded and released. Watch the newspapers and the Bremer Website for directions to the Hefley residence.

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# Students Also Volunteer To Work At Bremer

*They Do It For Academic Credit And For On-The-Job Experience*

Three young men put in hours of volunteer service at Bremer this spring and one continues through the summer.

Two Hillsboro High School students, Donny Atteberry and Dalton Mosely, put in long, hard hours helping chop and stack invasive honeysuckle. Their hours fulfilled a requirement of Terry Trader in her HHS Government Class. All students are required to complete 10 hours of community service.

But the spirit of service didn't end at the completion of their senior years at HHS for Donny and Dalton. They have both enlisted in the Marines and will report for basic training in September.

We at Bremer thank them for their service to the Sanctuary and wish them well in their service to our country.

Working a couple mornings a week through the summer is Isaac Young, a junior zoology major at SIU-Carbon-dale. Isaac, from the Fillmore area, contacted Bremer and said he was interested in volunteering. To also help him with his academic major, he has been teamed with Ken Schaal, a retired educator and zoology major at Eastern Illinois, and Henry Eilers, both involved in the restoration work at Bremer, and with Vicki Hedrick, who coordinates the Bluebird Trail monitoring and record keeping.

There's no doubt Isaac will pick up a lot of wisdom working at Bremer, especially in the morning around the coffee table with the regular volunteers.



In the top photo Donny Atteberry adds another honeysuckle branch to the pile that Bremer volunteers will burn next winter.

In the photo at right, Dalton Mosely tries to decide how he can get another branch to fit on the top of the huge pile.

The two worked with regular Bremer volunteers Ken Schaal, Don Krefft and Ed Buske.

In the photo bottom right, Isaac Young is still smiling after helping out a couple weeks at Bremer. But he has yet to get a chance to help with honeysuckle control as did Donny and Dalton.

Thanks to all three!



## Don't Miss These Great Programs!

*Continued from the front page*

A special program is set for Saturday, September 10, when the chapter will host Bob & Kathy Andrini who will present their "Amazing Birds" slide program. The program will begin at 4 p.m. and a dinner will follow. Members of the chapter will also hold a brief annual meeting. The location will be announced closer to the date of the meeting.

On Thursday, October 13, beginning at 5:30 p.m. we will hold our Annual Owl Prowl. There will be a wiener roast at 5:30 followed by a brief presentation about the owls, after which they will be called to voice their own opinions about the affair.

Join the fun at all of our meetings. The public is invited as well as all members and friends of the chapter.

See you there!

## New Field Guides Donated To Bremer

Thanks to Bremer members Joyce Burch and Gary Colin, visitors can take advantage of two new field guides, Peterson's *Eastern Birds' Nests* and Peterson's *Animal Tracks*.

While visiting the Barn, Joyce and Gary saw the tracks painted on the barn floor and decided visitors could use the guide to identify them.

## *Sonya Keeps Mike's Bulletin Board Up-To-Date*

The Bulletin Board has been a great addition to the Bremer Sanctuary. Thanks to family and friends of the late Mike Mathews, who directed that memorials to him be used for the project, the Bulletin Board was constructed.

Now, thanks to volunteer Sonya Lockett, the Board is packed with information about the sanctuary, including upcoming programs and meetings and the monthly plant and bird of the month.

Sonya works hard to change the material and keep it timely.

She and others have also been painting some inside walls and trim in the Barn. Sonya is now in the process of putting together a photo display area.

Come by and see all the work she and others have been doing.

And did we mention that Sonya, a retired elementary educator, is a regular volunteer in the education program? Thanks to her and others like her, Bremer is an overwhelming success.



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## *Guess Who's New At Bremer?*

A *Lynx rufus*, or more commonly, a Bobcat is rarely seen in the wild in Montgomery County, but can now be seen as part of the educational display at Bremer.

Complete details about this display will be available at the program on July 16 and in the next newsletter as well as posted on our website, [www.bremersanctuary.org](http://www.bremersanctuary.org).

Note in the background of the photo the sketching on the backboard? Geri Kinneman, the Chapter's Education Chairperson and artist, is painting an appropriate background and hopes to be finished by the program date.

Don't miss it.

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# Twenty-eight Species Of Birds 'Spotted' On Early Summer Walk

by Vicki Hedrick

Despite a starting time of 7 a.m., temperatures were well into the 70's and rapidly approaching the 80 degree mark for the June 4 Early Summer Bird Walk and Breakfast. The heat was, as is so common in Illinois, accompanied by high humidity.

Nevertheless, about 15 hardy souls joined me to search for nesting birds, and as is so often the case after leaf-out has occurred, it was much easier to hear birds than to see them. Therefore, "birding by ear" was the name of the game.

Eastern Wood PeeWee, Great Crested Flycatchers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were just a few of the birds heard rather than seen.

Participants did get good looks at a male Orchard Oriole singing in a treetop near the barn, a male Red-belly Woodpecker poking around near what might have been his nest hole in a snag, Tree Swallows near their nestboxes, singing male Indigo Buntings, a Dickcissel and Meadowlark out in the prairie, as well as both male and female Purple Martins.

Surprisingly, despite the heat with the possibility of convection currents rising off the ground to produce thermals, no soaring hawks or turkey vultures were observed. Also absent were any Eastern Bluebirds – perhaps off tending their nest-



boxes elsewhere on the sanctuary grounds. A total of 28 species were identified by either ear or eye, although not all species were observed by all participants.

The walk finished at 8:30 and everyone returned to the barn for a biscuit and gravy breakfast.

**Save Paper - Save Postage - Save Hickory Hills some money!**  
**Receive your newsletter on-line and in glorious color!**  
Send your email address to Richard through the "Contact" page [www.bremer-sanctuary.org](http://www.bremer-sanctuary.org) and he'll email each issue to you as a PDF file.  
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.

## Join us at Hickory Hills Chapter!

IAS/Hickory Hills membership: The following categories include IAS and Hickory Hills Chapter dues.

Your membership includes the Hickory Hills newsletter, Cardinal News, Illinois Audubon Magazine, admission to IAS sanctuaries, and the opportunity to attend chapter and state-wide events.

Student (\$22)	Supporting (\$75)
Individual (\$35)	Sustaining (\$100)
Family (\$40)	Eagle Club (\$500)
Friend (\$45)	Corporate (\$500)
Contributing (\$60)	Cardinal Club (\$1000)

Indicate your category and Hickory Hills Chapter and send to Illinois Audubon Society, PO Box 2547, Springfield, IL 62708.

OR

Friend of Bremer Sanctuary: A Friend is not eligible to hold an office or have voting power in the chapter, but is invited to all chapter meetings, events, and has sanctuary privilege and receives the chapter newsletter. **A donation of \$10 is due each January** and should be sent to PO Box 395, Hillsboro, IL 62049 or given to Carl Savage.

**WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR LOCAL CHAPTER AND THE ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY.**

Please help us speak with a stronger voice on Illinois conservation issues and consider volunteering your time at the Sanctuary. Volunteers are needed for sanctuary maintenance, habitat restoration, and environmental education. Our ability to accomplish our mission of promoting the perpetuation & appreciation of native plants and animals & the habitats that support them, depends on volunteers! Please join us.

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

Jim Hefley - Bluebird Trl.  
Henry Eilers - Restoration  
Vicki Hedrick - IAS Chap. Rep  
Jim Hefley - Building  
Gale Johnson - Building  
Jim Kenney - Restoration  
Geri Kinneman - Education chairman  
Don Krefft - Treasurer & Restoration  
Sonya Luckett - Secretary & Bulletin Board  
Bob Mullins - Restoration  
Jerry Prater - Building  
Dick Rompasky - Building  
Carl Savage - Membership  
Ken Schaal - Restoration chairman  
Richard Slepicka - Website, newsletter

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*This is the July 2011 issue of Hickory Hills Highlights. Watch for the latest news on the Bremer Sanctuary website: [www.bremersanctuary.org](http://www.bremersanctuary.org).*