



Curiosity

White-breasted nuthatch  
Photo by Jen Goellnitz



Respect  
for  
Nature

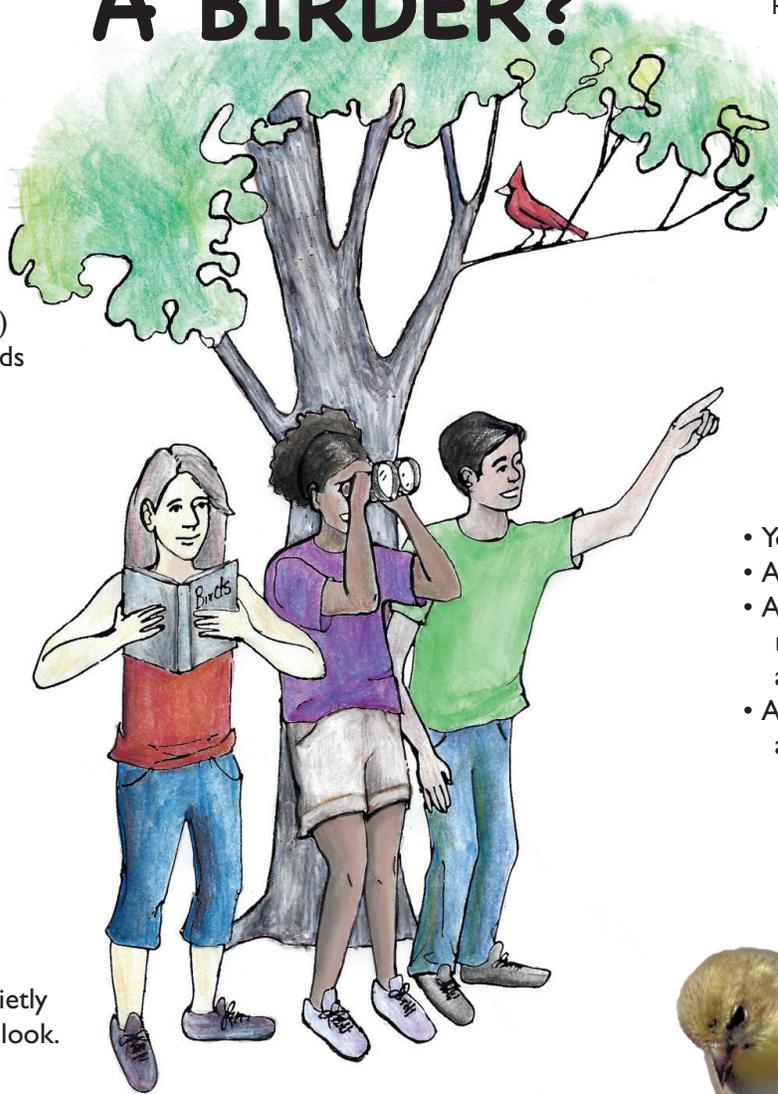


American robin  
Photo by Kenneth Cole Schneider

# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A BIRDER?

## Tools to Learn What is in Your Area

- People (find a chapter in your area at [illinoisaudubon.org](http://illinoisaudubon.org))
- Identification Books or Cards
- Apps, such as eBird, Merlin, Audubon and Sibley
- Birding Clubs
- TV Shows



## Equipment

It doesn't take much!

- Your ears and eyes
- Add binoculars as you improve
- A journal or notebook for recording observations and questions
- A camera can help capture a moment



## Patience

Walk slowly and quietly while you listen and look.

Great blue heron  
Photo by Phil Hauck

## Get Outside!

Be observant and look around you. Birds are everywhere. Look for what birds need — **FOOD, WATER, SHELTER** and **SPACE**. Look around your home, in parks, at lakes.



American goldfinch  
Photo by Kenneth Cole Schneider

# YOUNG BIRDERS AROUND THE STATE

## Illinois Young Birders Experience Greater Prairie-chickens



Photo by Leroy Harrison

By Oliver Burrus

The Illinois Young Birders Club started our morning at 4 a.m. in the lobby of our hotel and preceded on a 40-minute drive to Prairie Ridge State Natural Area (PRSNA). As we neared, some of the 12 participants spotted a few dark bird silhouettes, determined to almost undoubtedly be short-eared owls.

At PRSNA, Bob Gillespie discussed the history of the prairie-chickens and our agenda for the day. After a short drive, and a painstaking quarter mile walk through mud, we reached two wooden blinds in the middle of a field.

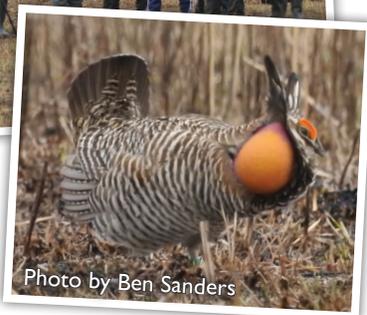


Photo by Ben Sanders

It took about an hour in the cold and dark blinds before the prairie-chickens flew in. At first glance, the birds looked rather drab, however, their displays were beautiful, and a few came within a close distance, giving great photo opportunities. During our time in the blinds we also viewed many Wilson's snipe, a rough-legged hawk, eastern meadowlarks and various species of sparrows.

Afterwards we stopped at Newton Lake where we found American white pelicans, Bonaparte's gulls, a red-shouldered hawk, barn and tree swallows, a common loon and a greater white-fronted goose. At a boat launch we found tufted titmice and purple martins. A few members headed to Ballard Nature Center, where Carolina chickadees, a red-headed woodpecker and Carolina wrens

were added to the list. The outing ended in pursuit of Smith longspurs in Arcola, with a definitive picture snapped before they flew away. It was a great way to end a fantastic day.

### BIO

Oliver Burrus considers birding great for many reasons, including getting a person outdoors and enjoying nature. The 14-year-old is homeschooled and has been a member of the Illinois Young Birders organization for two years. He joined as a beginning birder so he could meet people his age who share a passion for birding. His current plan is to become a data scientist. Burrus also is a trip leader and founder of the Whimbrel Birders Club. ■



Photo by Ben Sanders

## Junior Bird Feeder Challenge



Students watch for birds visiting their school's courtyard



Story & Photos by Bob Andrini

Birding has gone to schools in St. Charles, Illinois. Introduced by the Kane County Audubon Society (KCAS), the Junior Bird Feeder Challenge (JBFC) provides a bird feeder and some bird food to a classroom to help attract birds. Imagine the excitement experienced during a presentation on identification of birds commonly seen at Illinois feeders, followed by watching, identifying and counting birds for four months. Awareness of birds in the area grew as students noticed bird feathers on the school grounds. ■

Learn more about the Junior Bird Feeder Challenge at [illinoisaudubon.org/programs/junior-bird-feeder-challenge/](http://illinoisaudubon.org/programs/junior-bird-feeder-challenge/).

## Birding at Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary



### Story & Photos by Nancy Redman

“What do you know about nests?” Most of the children at an event at the Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary replied they were “in trees and made of sticks.” Their answers were considerably different a short time later.

The “Which Nest is Best?” program kicked off with the story *Mama Built a Little Nest* by Jennifer Ward, which illustrates types of bird nests and describes the birds that use them.

Post story, the participants had a much longer list of materials, such as moss, feathers, grass and mud, and were quick to point out that some nests were located “in” trees (woodpecker cavity), on the ground (meadowlarks or waterfowl) and that some birds had no nest at all (killdeer or falcon scrape).

Participants saw a variety of nests, learned about the local birds that construct them and played a nest matching game. During a short nature walk several nests were found, including an eastern bluebird nest box containing five eggs.

Learn about additional Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary programs at [illinoisaudubon.org](http://illinoisaudubon.org). ■



## Bird Detectives



### Story & Photos by Kathy Andrews Wright

Bird Detectives are exploring Adams Wildlife Sanctuary. For the past four years 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students from St. Patrick's and DuBois schools, and a group of homeschooled students, have participated in the program led by Donna Holinga and Mary Grundel, both Master Naturalists and Springfield Audubon Society members. The exciting five-week program introduces participants to the wonders of nature.

*We learned many of the backyard birds in Springfield. We hiked in the woods and found all kinds of wildlife.*

—Javan Scott

*This was a great experience. We learned about different types of birds.* —Nevaeh Metts

*We learned about birds, their habits and habitats, where they go in winter and how to identify birds.* —Trinity Molton

*I really liked the program and want to use my binoculars to watch birds fly.* —Markayla Ousley ■



# YOUNG ARTISTS CAPTURING NATURE



**Sandhill crane**  
Jackie Kuroda

Share your artistic memories of birds you find during your outings. Submit to [editor@illinoisaudubon.org](mailto:editor@illinoisaudubon.org).

Young naturalists featured are Jackie Kuroda, age 13 and Simon Tolzmann, age 13.

*I have loved nature for as long as I can remember. Nature inspires me to bring it to life through my art on canvas. I love painting birds the most because they are so colorful and beautiful!* —Jackie Kuroda

*I am interested in birding because it gets me out in nature, connects me with like-minded people, and has made me friends that I will never forget!* —Simon Tolzmann



**Virginia rail**  
Simon Tolzmann



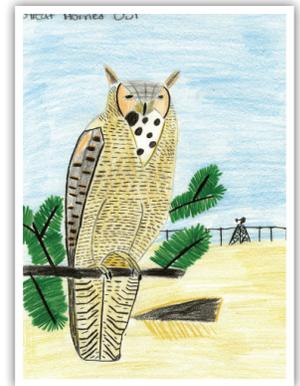
**Pigeon**  
Jackie Kuroda



**Ruddy turnstone**  
Simon Tolzmann



**Baltimore oriole**  
Jackie Kuroda



**Great horned owl**  
Simon Tolzmann

## CAREERS

Developing your skills birding can lead to some exciting careers, including park ranger, teacher, researcher, photographer, writer or wildlife biologist.



Design and illustrations by Sarah Marjanovic

## Now What?

-  Set simple goals for yourself. Learn to identify five common birds, such as the cardinal, robin, house sparrow, starling and mourning dove. Then add five more species and keep building as your skills improve. Challenge yourself by adding a woodpecker or a warbler or a duck.
-  Attract birds to your home with simple birdfeeders and houses to increase your observation time.
-  Join a birding group to visit amazing areas and learn from others.
-  Start your own eBird ([ebird.org](http://ebird.org)) account and keep track of your observations.
-  Attend birding festivals. Some in Illinois feature migratory birds, bald eagles and hummingbirds.
-  Go on a guided hike at your local park.
-  Look for online birding classes to learn birds by sight and sound.
-  Practice! The more time you spend outdoors the better your observation skills will be.