



SCHEDULE & FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

2026 Illinois Audubon Society Annual Gathering

Down by the River

May 1-2, 2026

Field trips guided by Red Hill Birding

Lodging, Banquet and Program at
Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center
101 18th Street, Moline, Illinois

[Click here to access the room block with special rate](#)

Registration Cost:

Saturday field trip, lunch, afternoon hike, social, program and banquet (\$100)

Friday Down by the River Social & Pizza Party add-on (\$15)

Saturday night banquet only (includes social and program) (\$40)

Down by the River Social. Kick off the Annual Gathering on Friday night with pizza and socializing on Living Lands and Waters Mississippi River Institute Barge at Beacon Harbor. Soda and water available, Adult beverages allowed, please bring your own. (Note: this is a special add-on feature for those who register for the full Saturday schedule.)



Saturday night
featured speaker
Chad Pregracke
presents
From the Bottom Up

Sponsored by



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Weekend Schedule

Friday, May 1

4-5:30 p.m. Optional short hike at Illiniwek Forest Preserve

6-8:00 p.m. Down by the River Social, [Beacon Harbor](#)

Saturday, May 2

6:30-11:30 a.m. Field Trips (see descriptions on next page) followed by lunch (included in registration)

1-3:00 p.m. Botany & Insect Hike, with Isaac Stewart & Jamie Arntzen at Illiniwek Forest Preserve

5:30 p.m. Social and Cash Bar

6:00 p.m. Program "From the Bottom Up"

7:00 p.m. Banquet with taco bar and dessert

Saturday evening events will take place at
Stoney Creek Hotel & Banquet Center



Saturday Field Trips

All trips begin 6:30. a.m. at the locations indicated below. Early breakfast will be available for those booked at Stoney Creek Hotel. Lunch is included and will be held at Illiniwek Forest Preserve. Please select one of the field trips below on the registration form. There is a maximum limit of 15 persons per trip. Snacks and water will be available.

Sylvan Island

Once an abandoned industrial site with a unique history of steel production and hydroelectric power, Sylvan Island is now a powerhouse for nature and recreation. The restored woodlands and swales play an important role in flood mitigation. We will check the woodlands and swales for migrant passerines like Yellow-throated Vireo, Lincoln's Sparrow, Northern Parula, and Tennessee warblers. Different vantage points of the Mississippi River should offer us some views of migrant waterfowl, pelicans, and if the water levels are lower, shorebirds. If time allows, we will drive upstream to Ben Butterworth Parkway to search for waterfowl, check some migrant trap trees, and hopefully find a good concentration of gulls to pick through. This location is 2 miles from the hotel. [Find it here.](#)

Nahant Marsh & Credit Island

Across the river in Scott County Iowa, Nahant Marsh and Credit Island create a nice combination of marsh and woodland birding. We will start at Nahant Marsh, where we hope to pick up waterfowl like Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, and some lingering ducks like Canvasback and Bufflehead. If water levels are low, we will check for shorebirds, and Sandhill Cranes breed in this area. The surrounding scrub and woodlands could hold a number of migrants and breeders like Eastern Warbling Vireo, Prothonotary Warbler, and American Redstart. We will then move on to spend the rest of the morning at Credit Island, which was once a major fur trading point, and was the site for one of the westernmost battles in the War of 1812! History aside, we will spend our time checking the woodlands and wetlands for waders, migrant waterfowl, and migrant passerines. This location is 12 miles from the hotel. [Find it here.](#)

Black Hawk Forest Nature Preserve

Black Hawk State Historic Park, which includes the Nature Preserve, is an IDNR property that includes a museum, nature center, and, most importantly for birders, some high quality upland forest along the Rock River. The well-maintained trails here provide access to this forest, where we hope to find a variety of migrant and breeding warblers, including Yellow-throated, Blue-winged, Ovenbird, and Northern Parula. Acadian Flycatcher and Scarlet and Summer Tanager breed here and we will hope to find them if they have arrived for the summer. Red-headed and Pileated Woodpecker and Tufted Titmouse are resident here as well. This location is 6.5 miles from the hotel. [Find it here.](#)

Loud Thunder Forest Preserve

Loud Thunder is Rock County's largest forest preserve, which surrounds Lake George, a reservoir created by damming Big Branch Creek. It hosts a variety of habitats that provide excellent springtime birding. Like many of the woodlands along the Mississippi, this area attracts many migrants, both for breeding and as stopover habitat. Among the breeding species are Yellow-throated and Kentucky Warblers, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Vireo, both Scarlet and Summer Tanager, and possibly Blue Grosbeak. And who knows what migrants will show up in early May, but we'll keep an eye and ear out for migrants like Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers and many others. We'll also scan the lake in case a tern or some waterfowl have dropped in. This location is 23 miles from the hotel. [Find it here.](#)

REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 1, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

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