



**Champaign County Audubon Society
Records, 1940- 2006**

COLLECTION 31

Champaign County Historical Archives

Compiled by: Kimberly Scherer, 2009.

Creator/Corporate name: Champaign County Audubon Society.

Inclusive Dates: 1940-2006.

Physical Description: 1 box, (.5 linear feet).

Provenance: These records were donated by John Dunkelberger, in October 2008. Additional items after 1986 added in 2013 and 2015.

Access: The records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

Organizational History:

The Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS) was formed on May 9, 1940 at the home of Mrs. R. R. Snapp and was originally known as the Urbana-Champaign Bird Club. Seven charter members were present at this meeting: Mrs. R. R. Snapp, Mrs. V. Vaniman, Mrs. P. E. Henwood, Mr. and Mrs. J. Murray Speirs, H.R. Wanless and Mrs. W.P. Ames. Dr. Kendeigh was named an honorary member. A constitution was written by J. Murray Speirs and Harold R. Wanless. The purpose of this group was to “enjoy, study, and protect birds.” Executive officers included a President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Librarian, and Recorder. Groups of five or more who wished to develop special projects such as population surveys, banding, or trips were asked to elect a chairman. Most early meetings were held in members’ homes or at a place of interest where birds could be observed, such as a vivarium or a park.

In 1945 the Urbana-Champaign Bird Club voted to become a chapter of the National Audubon Society and changed its name to the Champaign County Audubon Society. The National Audubon Society is considered, “one of America’s oldest and most influential conservation organizations.” Over the years, the CCAS extended its scope to include local environmental issues, conservation, environmental education, and restoration.

Through field trips, newsletter, film series, classroom and community programs, the CCAS fostered a love of nature in Champaign County. The CCAS contributes to ornithological research through seasonal bird counts and bird sightings. They have conducted census hikes for all types of flora and fauna along the CSX rail line in Champaign County. Members enjoy field trips and bird walks at Busey Woods on Sunday mornings in the spring and fall. The CCAS also created birding checklists for many Champaign County parks. Restorations projects conducted by the society include prairie restoration at Meadowbrook Park, Weaver Park, and the wetland by Dog Park.



**Champaign County Audubon Society
Records, 1940- 2006**

COLLECTION 31

Educating the community about the environment is part of the mission of the CCAS. The education committee offers mini-grants to educators that can be used to purchase environmental education materials such as books, puppets, water testing supplies or bird feeders. Audio visual materials pertaining to environmental education are also available for use. The Audubon Adventures program offers activities and classroom materials that have been developed by the National Audubon Society. Currently they share their message online through their website and with the *Meadowlark Messenger*, their newsletter.

Insight into the Champaign County Audubon Society can also be obtained by studying other parts of the Champaign County Historical Archives at The Urbana Free Library. The Champaign County Audubon Society's newsletter, *The Meadowlark Messenger* is on file under "Local Organizations" in the Champaign County Historical Archives. These newsletters cover 1959-1974 and 1980-present. Also included are a few copies of the newsletter *Nature Notes for Teachers*, which highlights environmental education activities, resources, and programs for educators of children in Kindergarten through sixth grade.

Scope and Content:

The Champaign County Audubon Society collection includes information from the club's inception in 1940 through 2006. The meeting minutes, treasury, and membership information for the early years are recorded in a ledger entitled "Bird Club 1940-1948." This ledger also includes the constitution and organizational structure, as well as the charter members of the Urbana-Champaign Bird Club. Board meeting minutes document planning for club activities. These minutes include annual board retreats where the purpose and functions of the club are reevaluated and new goals are set. Meeting minutes highlight guest speakers and members who presented programs on birding in their travels and local birding field trips. Local happenings that pertained to birding and conservation are also included. The financial ledger shows any transactions from 1946-1982. Some examples include membership dues, printing costs, postage, and film expenses. The loose financial report papers include reports from 2000-2006 with some statements of transactions through the nature store and occasional financial business interfiled. The board membership lists begin in the 1940s and extend through 1999. There are some items of miscellaneous society business which include a recipient list for complimentary newsletters, a 2004 letter to the Governor, 1988 projects and memorandum, 1989 and part of 1994 chapter charter renewals, the Society 1989 annual report, the transcript from a Society program, and instructions for a phone answering network.

The membership brochures include information about the organizational structure of the CCAS and its mission. The program brochures have descriptions for field trips, programs, and bird walks that were offered from 1983–1986. The film series brochures describe the films that CCAS showed as a public



**Champaign County Audubon Society
Records, 1940- 2006**

COLLECTION 31

program to create interest and awareness for the environment. The Human Resource File for Environmental Education created in the early 1980s was created as a resource for local educators. Teachers, scout leaders, and others seeking an educational program for children or adults could consult this resource to find local experts on various nature related topics. The first section of this resource is an index of topics including birds, botany, nature photography, and stars. The second section is listing for each expert that includes contact information and details on the programs they could offer. Presenters include local naturalists and University of Illinois professors.

Arrangement:

The Champaign County Audubon Society records are arranged chronologically by subject and divided into the following series:

Series One: Administrative Functions

This series includes meeting minutes and financial information that gives insight into the origins of the club and later causes and happenings within the club and the local community. These records are organized by record type.

Series Two: Publications

This series includes brochures publications created by the CCAS, including membership brochures, program brochures, film series brochures, and an environmental education contact information packet. These records are organized chronologically and by function.

Subject Terms:

Champaign County Audubon Society
Birds – Illinois – Champaign County
Birds – Illinois – Piatt County
Birds – Illinois – Vermilion County
Bird watching - Illinois
Conservation – United States
Bird watching – Societies, clubs, etc.

Container List

Box 1

Series 1: Administrative Functions

Folder 1: Annual Cycle, undated
Folder 2: Board Membership Lists, 1940–1999, 2014
Folder 3: Board Meeting Minutes and Reports, 1940–1948



The Urbana Free Library

210 West Green Street • Urbana, Illinois 61801 • 217-367-4057 • urbanafreelibrary.org

**Champaign County Audubon Society
Records, 1940- 2006**

COLLECTION 31

Folder 4: Board Meeting Minutes, 1985, 1989, 2000–2004

Folder 5: Board Meeting Minutes, 2011-2014

Folder 6: Financial Ledger, 1946–1982

Folder 7: Financial Reports and Funding, 1981, 2000 –2006, 2010-2014

Folder 8: Programming, 1983–2005, and undated

Series 2: Publications

Folder 9: Membership Brochures (3), undated

Folder 10: Film Series Brochures (2), 1945 – 1946 and 1951 – 1952

Folder 11: Program Brochures (7), 1983 – 1986

Folder 12: Human Resource File for Environmental Education, 1983