

BIRDSONG CHAPTER

Vol. 7 | Issue 2 | Summer 2025

Birdsong Chapter 2025 Schedule

Meetings are held at
2:00 pm at
Amboy Marsh
1701 Mormon Rd.
Amboy, IL 61310
unless otherwise noted.

June 6-8 , 20-22– Scouts at
Gremel

June 8 - Birdsong Chapter
meeting Minit BioBlitz!-
2pm Amboy Marsh

July 25 - Master Naturalists
at Amboy Marsh

August 1 - IAS Field Trip at
Gremel

August 2 - IAS Field Trip at
Amboy Marsh

August 16 - Wild Ones
Field Trips at Amboy Marsh

August 24 - Birdsong
Chapter meeting at
Sinadinos Site - 2pm

August 30 - Master
Naturalists at Amboy Marsh

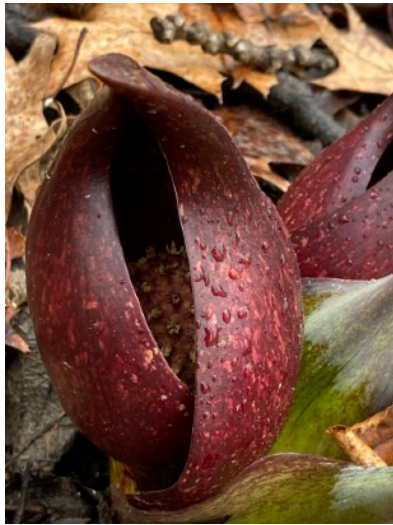


Whooping Cranes - Photo by Deb Doyle

Look...it's a bird...it's a CRANE!

Volunteers were treated to an aerial view of a pair of whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) as they flew around Big Marsh during a recent work day. These endangered birds are few and far between, and it is encouraging that we usually see a few whooping cranes each spring during migration. Whoopers are the tallest bird in North America, standing almost 5 feet in height, and they have a generous 8-foot wingspan. For such a large bird, they only weigh 10 to 19 pounds.





Skunk Cabbage - PU!

The plant, *Symplocarpus foetidus*, is a BIG plant! You won't miss it when you are gently exploring fragile wetland habitats.

Skunk cabbage emerges early in the spring when few other green plants are growing. Although its leaves contain calcium oxalate, and are inedible to most herbivores, hungry snapping turtles, just coming out from hibernation, do munch on the leaves.

Look for it now, because by the end of summer, the leaves have withered away!



Work Days

Volunteers make all of the work at Amboy Marsh and Gremel happen! We can supply tools and training. You could assist with invasive plant removal, maintenance, and other general stewardship tasks. This summer we will work the one Saturday of the month, with Wednesday workdays for the rest of the month.

Saturday, **June 21** - Wednesdays - 4,11,25

Saturday, **July 12** Wednesdays, July 2,16,23,30

No experience is necessary. Interested?

Please contact John McCrosky@
johncmccrosky@gmail.com

BIOBLITZ!

Get ready for an exciting **June 8, 2025** Birdsong Chapter meeting! We will meet at 2 pm at the Volunteer Center at Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve, and then divide into teams to carry out a **mini bio-blitz**. Each team will list as many flora and fauna species as possible in one hour. Then we will reconvene at the Volunteer Center and add them all up! Yes, you can use Merlin and Seek aps to help your team I.D. things you see and hear.



MHS Student Intern Lends a Hand

We were fortunate to host a B.E.S.T. program intern for ten weeks (through June 14). Mendota High school student Cole Kleckner soon learned about invasive species, especially common mullein and garlic mustard. He monitored bird houses, learned to identify birds and plants, and experienced nature in many forms. We sincerely hope that Cole enjoyed his work days, and that he will leave with a better understanding of why we strive to preserve and protect natural areas. Cole is a budding artist – see his great horned owl picture. Thanks, Cole, for working with us this year!



Summer Reminder...

Summer is nesting season for many creatures. So please be aware and sensitive to species trying to mate, and raise young at our sanctuaries. It's fun to get up close, but please don't. Wild mothers are very protective of their young, and will abandon nests and dens if they feel threatened.

ISGS has chosen Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve for a Site Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) this summer. The team of researchers will take in-situ measurements of surface water bodies using a hand-held water probe.



Bluebird - photo by Deb Doyle

Yearly Report

Each May 1, our chapter must create an annual report of all activities at all our sanctuaries – Amboy Marsh, Gremel, Ryback, Grigalauski, Queen of the Prairie and Sinadinos. This detailed report shows what happens day to day. Volunteers worked 4,143.5 hours on 1,017 acres of protected land in 2024. If you would like a copy of the report, let us know by emailing amboymarsh@illinoisaudubon.org.



American Bullfrog - photo by Amy Brewer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PjTChHkLZU>

Link to hear Blanchard's Cricket Frog call

Calling Frog Survey Update

The summer Calling Frog Survey is underway, with two of three rounds completed. Recording mating calls reveals that in April, chorus frogs and Northern Leopard frogs are abundant at Amboy Marsh's eight survey points. During May, cricket frogs and Cope's gray treefrogs take the stage. The April frogs are still there, just not calling any more, except for one lonely chorus frog. Round three will start in June and a final report can then be made for 2025.

Birdsong Chapter was hatched in 2012. The chapter was created in response to the purchase by IAS of Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve, 1701 Mormon Road, Amboy. Four years later, IAS purchased Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary at 1881 Lewis Road, Amboy. The sanctuaries total about 1,017 acres, and the daily management is the privilege of the volunteer members of the Birdsong Chapter.

Birdsong Chapter Officers

President-Deb Carey

Vice President-Diana Rod

Secretaries - Cassandra Rodgers/Jan Williams

Treasurer-John McCrosky

Websites:

amboymarsh@illinoisaudubon.org

<https://amboymarsh.wixsite.com/amboymarsh>

FaceBook-Birdsong Chapter-Stewards of Amboy Marsh/Gremel

Contact us-amboymarsh@illinoisaudubon.org

