

By Mike Holinga

• Springfield Chapter History

The Springfield Audubon Society (SAS) has a very interesting history. In 1932, the Springfield Nature League was organized as a Member Club of the Mid-West Conference of the American Institute of Field Naturalists. The League sponsored many activities for its members including National Audubon Wildlife Films. In 1960, the Nature League voted to affiliate with the National Audubon Society and changed the name to the Springfield Audubon Society. In May 1979, the Chapter was accepted into membership in the Illinois Audubon Society and today is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Illinois Audubon Society's Adams Wildlife Sanctuary.

• Recent Memorable Program

SAS sponsored an Owl Prowl in October 2017, with live birds provided by the Illinois Raptor Center. Approximately 50 people, including families and young children, joined us on the trails to learn about owls, and heard our resident barred owl call after prompting from the owl brought by the Raptor Center.

• Defining Mission

Goals of the Springfield Audubon Society are to continue to provide quality programs for our membership and the general public; continue to restore and maintain the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary in conjunction with the Friends of the Sangamon Valley; and, expand our educational program to introduce the population in our Chapter area to the outdoors and wildlife, with a special focus on children.

SAS members participated in the annual bird feeder wash in October 2017 in exchange for donations.



Download the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary hike app at prairiestateconservation.org/pscc/hikeapp.

• Biggest Challenges for Conservation

The 40-acre Adams Wildlife Sanctuary is located within the city limits of Springfield and is surrounded by urban development. Originally an orchard, years of neglect resulted in a massive infestation of invasive species. With the assistance of the Friends of the Sangamon Valley most of the invasives have been removed and planting of appropriate species and trail improvement is ongoing. Recently, Illinois Audubon Society conducted a fundraiser to purchase a much-needed tractor and tools that help with maintenance of the Sanctuary.



A recent fundraising event netted a tractor that SAS members use to maintain the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary property.

• Places to Bird in the Chapter Area

Adams Wildlife Sanctuary is good for migrants and summer woodland species. Lake Springfield is a great site especially during seasonal migrations. Carpenter Park, located north of Springfield on the Sangamon River, is a good location to see pileated woodpeckers. Nipper Wildlife Sanctuary near Loami is the home of many grassland birds, including short-eared owls in winter.

• Education Programs

In addition to our monthly programs we support an educational program called Bird Detectives that focuses on educating children about birds and the habitat needed for them to survive. Most Bird Detective sessions are held at Adams Wildlife Sanctuary. Chapter volunteers will be assisting with Celebrate Adams Wildlife Sanctuary: A Day in Nature held on May 5, 2018, an event focusing on getting adults and children into nature.



Bio

Mike Holinga is the President of the Springfield Audubon Society and lead volunteer steward at Adams Wildlife Sanctuary. He worked for 35 years in a variety of capacities for the Springfield Public Schools, and today he and his wife work to enhance the natural values of their property.