



# CFC News

*Saving Living Room for Living Things*

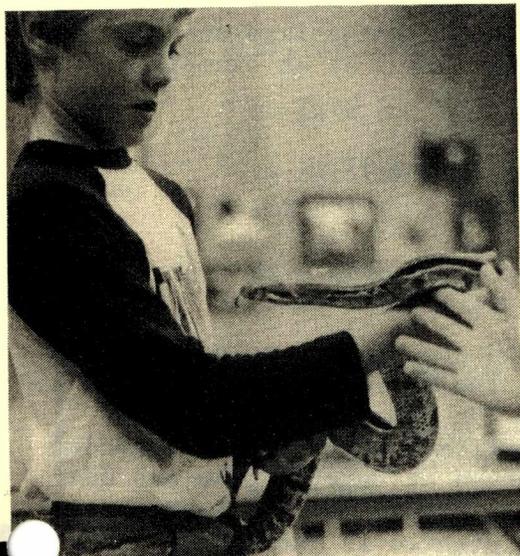
A conservation newsletter published by Citizens for Conservation, Inc.

Barrington, Illinois

Vol. 2 No. 3 Fall 1985

## SATURDAY SESSIONS

## REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS by Merritt Paulson



I really enjoyed the reptile class because of the wide variety shown by Mr. Humbert: indigo snake, red rat snake, hognose snake, Sonora mountain kingsnake, California kingsnake, bull snake, South American tree frog, green tree frog, milksnake, box turtle, map turtle, spotted turtle, etc., etc. I also very much enjoyed his willingness to let kids freely handle his specimens. He talked about what makes a reptile a reptile and what makes an amphibian an amphibian. He was interested about what we knew about reptiles and how we felt about them. Though he discouraged us from going out and buying a reptile or amphibian, he did tell us about keeping snakes, turtles, frogs and toads.

## BIRD MIGRATION by Cecily Fox-Hawthorne

On Saturday, October 26, I went to a class on bird migration taught by Mrs. Paulson.

The first thing we did was split up into four groups. Each group found out where a certain bird spent the summer, when it came through our area, and some special characteristics about the bird. The four birds were the green-winged teal, American wigeon, hooded merganser, and the white-throated sparrow.

Then we got into two groups and went outside. My group went to the observation shelter at Bulrush Pond where we saw two kingfishers and got a quick glimpse of a hawk, but it was too far away to tell what kind it was.

Then we went over to the blind at Crabtree Lake where Mrs. Paulson had a scope set up and we got to see green-winged teal, American wigeon, and a killdeer.



Coming up --

January 25	ANIMAL TRACKS
February 22	WHO'S WHO (Owls)
March 8	MAKING MAPLE SYRUP

Call 382-SAVE for information and to register.

## CFC RECEIVES BARRINGTON BOG

On September 5, 1985 Citizens was given final ownership of the Barrington Bog. This is a forty-one acre wetland located on the east side of Route 59 north of Miller Road, donated to us by Grandview Estates.

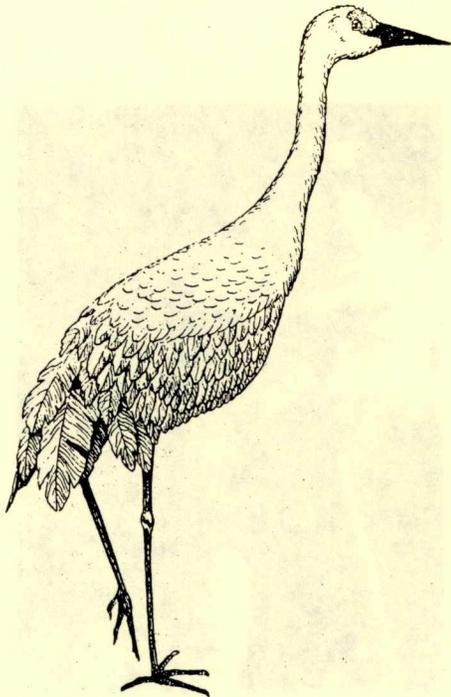
This is a significant addition to Citizens' inventory. It is one of two properties we own which are qualified by the state as natural areas. It harbors a wide variety of species which are rare and very restricted in geographic distribution in Illinois. Dr. Wayne Schennum says, "This site probably contains more rare and endangered plants than any other CFC property due to the rarity of the bog ecosystem."

Now opportunity is beckoning for Citizens to proceed, with the enthusiasm and energy exhibited at the Wagner Fen, to make the Barrington Bog stand out as an example of volunteer accomplishment.

- Bill Miller

## LOCAL COVERAGE

In the September 13 issue of The Reader, the column "Field and Street" told of the making of Cook County's first "Breeding Bird Atlas." In the surveys that were made during nesting season, Crabtree Nature Center was one of the two areas hosting the most species, seventy-eight, and the only one where a confirmed nesting of the hooded merganser was discovered. Seventy-four species were counted at Baker's Lake and Deer Grove Forest Preserve. The northern harrier (marsh hawk) and Brewer's blackbird were sighted at the Spring Creek Valley Forest Preserve in Barrington Hills. Anyone who would like to contribute to next year's atlas should contact the Chicago Audubon Society at 539-6793. Leave your name and address and you will be contacted early next spring.



Sandhill crane, northern prairie breeder, migrant through Illinois

If you'd like to know what prairie restoration means and how it's being approached, two November periodicals carry articles on the subject: in Chicago Magazine, "A Prairie Revival" ("With a little help from axes, brush loppers, and forest fires, volunteers are seeking to restore a small part of our native landscape"); and in the November/December issue of Sierra (published by the Sierra Club), "The Prairie Makers" ("Restoring an ecosystem is a project of imposing proportions -- a collaborative effort that begins with a miracle as small as a seed").

## TOUCH THE EARTH — MEMBERSHIP/1986

We live in the Barrington Area for a variety of reasons. Of great importance to many is our unique natural setting -- fresh, open-spaced, promising, protected.

Since 1970, Citizens for Conservation has worked diligently and enthusiastically to keep it this way. We're busy and growing! Now is the time to renew your membership or join us for the first time. Please use the enclosed envelope.

You will, of course,

- Receive our quarterly newsletter.
- Be invited to participate in Nature Sessions, field trips, etc. for children (parents invited), for families and individuals.
- Have opportunities to be involved with stewardship and many other activities if you choose.

We welcome your membership (and your participation!) to help...

- . . . save earth sounds
- . . . share earth knowledge
- . . . promote earth care
- . . . preserve earth space
- . . . protect earth creatures
- . . . here, in our own area

PLEASE JOIN US -- WE WELCOME YOU

### FROM THE PRESIDENT Corporate Matching Gifts

As Citizens for Conservation has grown, so have our responsibilities and our obligations to care for the properties we now own. In addition to caring for our existing properties, we have undertaken a broadened education program, we have sharpened our realization of our stewardship obligations and we are moving towards a program of prairie restoration.

It is possible that many of our friends may have a connection with one of the organizations which will match gifts to environmental groups. Enclosed with this newsletter is a brochure listing firms which have such programs, along with information on how to make your match. Note that many divisions, subsidiaries or affiliates are involved as well.

Citizens for Conservation will greatly appreciate any help you choose to give us. The funds will be used to enhance CFC's contributions to our community.

Waid Vanderpoel

## OF ACORNS AND BUR OAKS by Wendy Paulson

The acorns began to fall early this year. Even during the first week of August, I noticed mounds of acorns collecting on the driveway, where they had landed after a long roll down the garage roof. For weeks afterward, the small nuts pelted the shingles and joined their hundreds of siblings on the ground below.

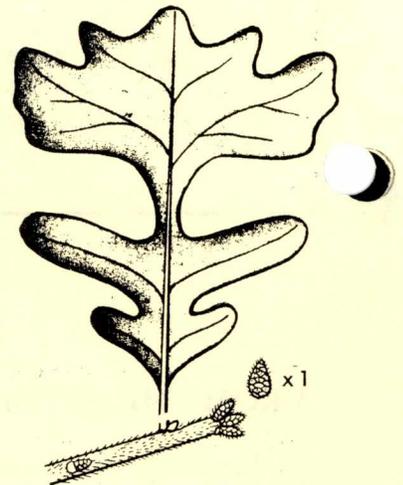
I can't resist collecting acorns. Not, as the native Americans did, for boiling, roasting, or mashing with grease. I collect them only for fun, for the pleasure of rolling their multi-textured forms in the palm of my hand and wondering at their various symmetries.

All acorns are alike in that they are borne in bumpy little cups or "caps" and have a plump, smooth form with a tiny pointed tip at one end. But from there the variations are numerous and delightful. Each species of oak produces a distinctive acorn, just as it does specific leaf. Equipped with a good tree guide, even the casual naturalist can identify most oak trees by their acorns.

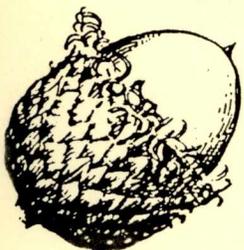
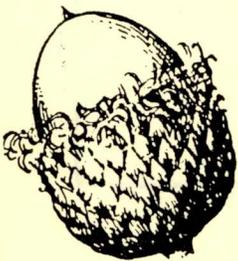
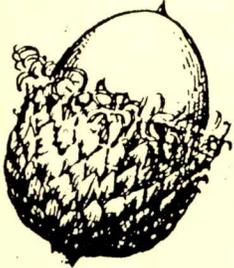
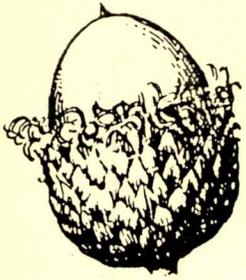
The largest in our area and certainly one of the most interesting acorns is that of the bur oak. *Quercus macrocarpa* is the scientific name for this tree, *Quercus* meaning fine trees and *macrocarpa* meaning large fruit. The cap of the bur oak acorn nearly covers the nut and is distinguished by a fringe of curls on the rim. The peculiarity gives the tree its other name of mossy cup. It's mostly bur oak acorns that I find around my house. I never tire of examining their fancy bonnets.

If you find a mossy cup acorn, look around for a leaf from the tree. It usually will have a pair of deep indentations which divide the leaf into two parts. If you hold the leaf with its stem at the top, perhaps you will see the "dancing witch" shape which makes it a favorite of leaf students.

The bur oak is the grand tree of the prairie, the one whose thick, grooved bark protected it from the sweeping prairie fires. It grows to majestic proportions, achieving a height of more than 100 feet and a diameter of three feet or more. One fine example whose age is estimated at 375 years can be found at Crabtree Nature Center on a path named for it: the Giant's Hollow Trail. Other individual and grouped bur oaks, some persisting since voyageur days and even earlier, are thriving throughout the countryside. They often are conspicuously picturesque on the slopes of glacial kames and moraines. Their full-branched, gnarled silhouettes dramatize the winter landscape.



MOSSYCUP



## OF ACORNS AND BUR OAKS - continued

It was in groves dominated by bur oaks that the first white settlers usually established homes in the prairie heartland. The towns of Long Grove, Elk Grove, Buffalo Grove took their names from these oak "groves" or "openings", wooded islands engulfed in a sea of tallgrass prairie. In his book, A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America (1950), Donald Ross Peattie described these groves:

"When the pioneers of the Middlewest had hacked their way through the forests of the Appalachians, they came, as they moved westward, to a new type of forest growth, something unknown in the aboriginal sylvia of the Atlantic seaboard. This was the groves of wide-spaced trees, almost devoid of undergrowth, and carpeted with short, sweet grass. Between these trees, and under their great boughs, they drove their lumbering wagons easily; deer could be hunted through these groves on horseback; here the wind blew refreshingly free, driving away the plaguing mosquitoes; here the ground was dry and the grass could not conceal snakes, nor were there thickets to hide lurking savages. So our forefathers called these groves Oak Openings....."

The oak openings of the pre-settlement prairie landscape have essentially disappeared. They have been cleared for building, farming, development, or lumber. Or they have been grazed to the obliteration of their native grassy and floral understory. Or they have been denied the protection and rejuvenation of prairie fire and have developed into messy woodlands choked with black cherry, honeysuckle, and buckthorn thickets. The old campground next to Baker's Lake is a local example of a remnant oak grove.

Though their native communities may have degenerated, individual grand oaks have survived to tell of landscapes long gone and to perpetuate their species through their annual shower of acorns. The pelting of my rooftop ended weeks ago. A host of wild creatures -- blue jays, raccoons, white-tailed deer, red-headed woodpeckers, and, of course, the chipmunks and squirrels -- have been harvesting the bumper crop ever since. Acorns for them mean survival. But for me acorns bring annual wonder: at these perfect, specific capsules that promise new birth, at the infinite variety of natural forms, at abundant provision. And lest I take for granted the cooling shade, the magnificent form, the life-sheltering boughs of the acorns' progenitors, there's the unavoidable reminder, the knocking of thousands above my head.



## BOOK BROWSING



Some books about the natural world to consider for Christmas giving (or any other time of the year!):

SUBURBAN WILDLIFE by Richard Headstrom  
A companion book to Suburban Wildflowers. Each of the more than sixty short chapters is rich in lore, observation, and factual information, all pulled together in very appealing text. Covers a great variety of creatures, from spring peeper to ballooning spider to bats and ichneumon flies. (\$8.95 at most bookstores, paper).

THE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIRD NAMES, Revised Edition, by Ernest Choate  
A recent review suggested that it "is difficult to say whether this book is more valuable for scientific information or for bedside reading." Includes origins of common and scientific names, biographical appendix, English/Latin glossary, interesting and humorous text. (\$17.95, hardcover; \$9.95, paper, The Harvard Common Press.)

UP ON THE RIVER, by John Madson  
Here's a book which I think most of you will like, and enjoy. And since most of us live near the Fox River, the environmental facts are quite appropriate. As a subtitle says, it is "An Upper Mississippi Chronicle". In a sense, it is like a great stew in that it is a mixture of environmental fact, history, along with big handfuls of "tall stories" (river stories), all flavored with the pungent comments of a man who knows and loves the river. You may find that the book is a bit slow getting into, but once you have, it is well worth it.

-FLS

For Children:

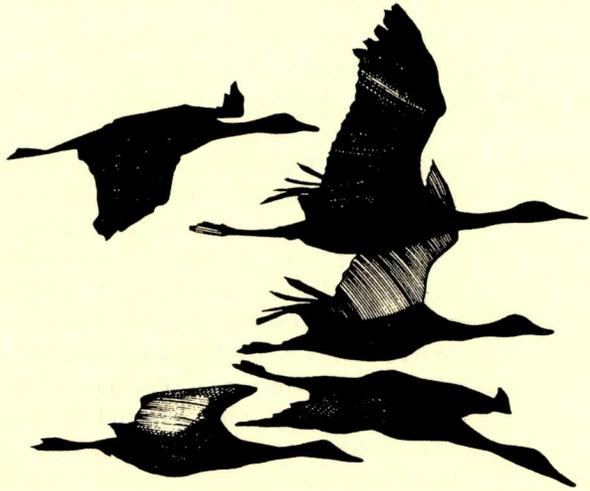
THE COMET AND YOU, by P. Moore and H. Couper  
About Halley's Comet and comets in general; ages 6-10; \$12.95.

SOME BIRDS HAVE FUNNY NAMES and SOME PLANTS HAVE FUNNY NAMES, by Diane Harding Cross  
Two books that show and explain the stories behind plant and bird names; ages 5-8; each \$7.95.

BETWEEN CATTAILS, by T. Williams, illustrated by Peter Parnall  
Beautiful picture book that shows the plants, animals, and insects that make the marsh their home; ages 6-9; \$12.95.

ANIMALS OF COURSE!, BY Jill Bailey  
Series of four board books that show close-up photos of parts of animals' bodies and invite the reader to guess the owner; ages 1-5; \$3.95 each.

MY FIRST BIRDS and MY FIRST BUTTERFLIES, by Cecilia Fitzsimons  
Two high quality pop-up books that show specific birds and butterflies in their special habitats; ages 5-10; \$8.95 each.



## WILLIAM H. MILLER CONSERVATION AWARD

Last year CFC established the William H. Miller Award to recognize "outstanding contribution toward conservation in the Barrington area." Nominations for the award, either for an individual or for a group, are welcome at any time. When a nomination is approved, the award will be made at the next annual meeting. To be considered for the award this year, nominations should be submitted by December 10th.

If you would like to nominate an individual or group for this conservation award, please use this form. Be as specific as possible when citing contributions and activities; use additional paper if necessary. Send to: Citizens for Conservation Award Committee, Box 435, Barrington, Illinois 60010.

I nominate \_\_\_\_\_ for the William H. Miller Conservation Award because

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**A**nd what is there to life  
if man cannot hear  
the lonely cry of the  
whippoorwill or  
the arguments of  
the frogs around a pond at  
night? The Indian prefers the  
soft sound of the  
wind darting  
over the face  
of the pond . . .  
for all things  
share the same  
breath—the beasts,  
the trees, the man.  
Chief Seattle, 1855



What! Sell Land! As well sell air and water.  
The great spirit gave them in common to all,  
the air to breathe, the water to drink, the  
land to live upon.

Tecumseh,  
Chief of the Shawnee

Office: 132 W. Station St.  
2nd Floor, BACOG Building  
Phone 382-SAVE

Wendy Paulson

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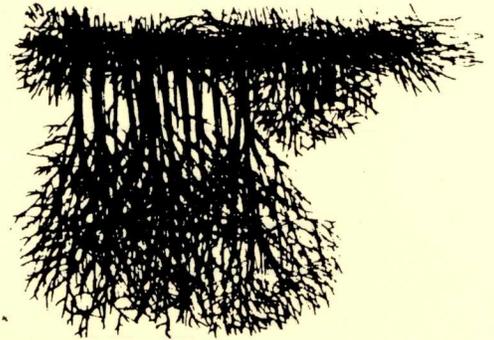
Wald Vanderpoel, President

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Citizens for Conservation, Inc.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ALMANAC

- January 9 Natural History Society of Barrington - 8:00 P.M.  
Barrington United Methodist Church 311 S. Hough.  
Speaker, Jim Witham, Research Biologist,  
Illinois Natural History Survey
- January 25 CFC Saturday Session, "Animal Tracks"
- January 30 CFC Annual Meeting featuring "Prairie Watching"
- February 13 Natural History Society of Barrington - 8:00 P.M.  
Program: "Members' Night"
- February 22 CFC Saturday Session, "Who's Who"
- March 8 CFC Saturday Session, "Making Maple Syrup"

PLANS SET FOR ANNUAL MEETING

Please mark your calendars for Citizens for Conservation's Annual Meeting on Thursday, January 30, 1986, at Barrington Hills Country Club. Fine food, facts, fellowship and a focus on "Prairie Watching" with Mary and Lloyd McCarthy, well known for their interest in conservation and wide ranging slide presentations. Watch for your invitation in early January.