



MCAS

December 2025

Established in 1961, the Morgan County Audubon Society was founded to provide interest in and education about birds and our natural environment. MCAS meetings are held beginning at 7:00 p.m. on the second Friday of the month from January through April and October through December at the First Presbyterian Church on the northeast corner of College Ave. and Westminster Street in Jacksonville, Illinois. MCAS is a Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society.

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the MCAS will be on December 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville. Colin Dobson will present ***From the Field to the World: Two Years of Master's Research on Passerines in Arkansas and 2025 Travels***. In January, Dr. Bernd Estabrook will discuss optics for birding and observing the night sky in a program titled, ***A Bird's Eye Perspective: Enhanced Observing Without Breaking the Bank***.

News and Upcoming Events

On December 13th, Pat Ward (217/473-1355) will lead an ***Eagle Watching Tour*** to the Illinois River from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (noon). Participants will meet in the First Presbyterian Church parking lot by 8:00 a.m. and caravan to the river. ***Bird Banding at Happy Hollow*** on February 7th from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Banding provides a unique opportunity to view birds up close and to learn more about avian biology. Plus, banding is loads of FUN! ***Gift Ideas:*** Chole Dalton's *Raising Hare: A Memoir* (2024) and Larry D. Kuster's *Fred Francis: A Prairie State Genius* (2025). In considering the loss of the ***Passenger Pigeon***, Aldo Leopold wrote, *Our grandfathers were less well-housed, well-fed, well-clothed than we are. The strivings by which they bettered their lot are also those which deprived us of pigeons. Perhaps we now grieve because we are not sure, in our hearts, that we have gained by the exchange. The gadgets of industry bring us more comforts than the pigeons did, but do they add as much to the glory of the spring?*

Ruddy Duck (Oxyura jamaicensis)

Ruddy Ducks (RD) are compact, thick-necked waterfowl with seemingly oversized tails that they habitually hold upright. Breeding males have a sky-blue bill, shining white cheek patch, and gleaming chestnut body. They court females by beating their bill against their neck hard enough to create a swirl of bubbles in the water. This duck breeds mostly in the prairie pothole region of North America and winters in wetlands throughout the U.S. and Mexico. The bright colors and odd behavior of male RD drew attention from early naturalists. A 1926 account states, "[i]ts intimate habits, its stupidity, its curious nesting customs and ludicrous courtship performance place it in a niche by itself.... Everything about this bird is interesting to the naturalist, but almost nothing about it is interesting to the sportsman." Pleistocene fossils of this duck, at least 11,000 years old, have been unearthed in Oregon, California, Virginia, Florida, and Illinois. (Source: www.allaboutbirds.org)



MCAS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Morgan County Audubon Society Schedule of Events

Next Meeting: December 12th



A male Ruddy Duck (Photograph by Allen Yow)