



MCAS

January 2026

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 January 9, 2026. 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***. In February, the program will be ***Members' Slides and Stories***. Everyone is encouraged to share photographs and tales with the group.

News and Upcoming Events

Bird Banding at Pat and Barb Ward's Happy Hollow home (2410 Ryan Lane, Murrayville, Illinois) on February 7 from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Banding provides a unique opportunity to view birds up close and to learn about avian biology. Be sure to invite your friends and family. The ***Illinois Audubon Society*** has purchased 80 acres of land in Jasper County that will further the conservation and restoration of native grasslands. To learn more, visit illinoisaudubon.org. ***For the Soul. It doesn't matter to me if I am imagining wild gray wolves of the forest or wild, wolfish muskellunge of the rivers, we need these places and these creatures of our nightmares and dreams. We need these beings to cause our hearts to beat a little quicker and set our imaginations on fire with the images of our ancestors. We need wild landscapes and rivers where we too can call out that feral part of our own souls, "I am here...I am still here."*** Steve Ramirez, *Casting Onward: Fishing Adventures in Search of America's Native Gamefish* (2022).

Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)

The Eastern Hemlock is a graceful native evergreen tree. This conifer is unusual in that the terminal leader often droops instead of giving the tree a typical pointed top like that of most trees in the pine family. The 5/16th to 9/16th inch needles are flat and green on top with white, shallow bands on the underside. They are attached with slender stalks and have a flattened appearance on the branch rather than spiral. It takes twenty to forty years for the tree to begin seed production. Flowers are produced in spring with cones ripening in the fall and releasing seed during the winter. Although slow growing, a tree can attain a height of 160 feet and a trunk diameter of 6 to 7 feet. At the present time, there is a naturally occurring and reproducing population of Eastern Hemlock at Starved Rock State Park in LaSalle County. Elsewhere in Illinois, the tree appears to be absent, except where it has been planted or cultivated such as the trees shown in the photographs. (Sources: <https://www.illinoiswildflowers> and https://www.nps.gov/shen/learn/nature/eastern_hemlock.)



MCAS

c/o Allen Yow, Newsletter Editor
22 Sunset Drive
Jacksonville, IL 62650
aryow@irtc.net

UPCOMING EVENTS

Morgan County Audubon Society Schedule of Events

Next Meeting: January 9th



Eastern Hemlock (Photographs by Allen Yow)