



Champaign County Audubon Society  
Records, 1940-2018

Collection 31

## Champaign County Historical Archives

**Compiled by:** Kimberly Scherer, 2009; Matthew Mayton, 2019

**Creator/Corporate name:** Champaign County Audubon Society

**Inclusive Dates:** 1940-2018

**Physical Description:** 2 boxes (2 linear ft.)

**Language:** English

### **Provenance:**

The Champaign County Audubon Society records were donated by John Dunkelberger in October 2008. Additional donations were received in 2010, 2017, and 2019.

### **Access:**

These records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

### **Historical Note:**

The Champaign County Audubon Society (CCAS) was formed on May 9, 1940, at the home of Mrs. R. R. Snapp and was initially known as the Urbana-Champaign Bird Club. Seven charter members were present at this meeting: Mrs. Edith L. Snapp, Mrs. V. Vaniman, Mrs. Ethel M. Henwood, Mr. and Mrs. J. Murray Speirs, Mr. Harold R. Wanless and Mrs. Anna C. Ames. Dr. S. Charles Kendeigh was named an honorary member. J. Murray Speirs and Harold R. Wanless wrote the constitution, and the purpose of this group was to “enjoy, study, and protect birds.” Executive officers included a President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Librarian, and Recorder. Groups of five or more who wished to develop special projects such as population surveys, banding, or trips were asked to elect a chairperson. Most early meetings were held in members’ homes or at a place of interest where birds could be observed, such as a vivarium or a park.

In 1945 the Urbana-Champaign Bird Club voted to become a chapter of the National Audubon Society and changed its name to the Champaign County Audubon Society. The National Audubon Society is “one of America’s oldest and most influential conservation organizations.” Over the years, the CCAS extended its scope to include local environmental issues, conservation, environmental education, and restoration.

Through field trips, newsletters, film series, classroom, and community programs, the CCAS fostered a love of nature in Champaign County. The CCAS contributes to ornithological research through seasonal bird counts and bird sightings. They have conducted census hikes for all types of flora and fauna along the CSX rail line in Champaign County. Members enjoy field trips, and bird walks at Busey Woods on Sunday mornings in the spring and fall. The CCAS also created birding checklists for many Champaign County parks. Restorations projects conducted by the society include prairie restoration at Meadowbrook Park and Weaver Park.



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Educating the community about the environment is part of the mission of the CCAS. The education committee offers mini-grants to educators that can be used to purchase environmental education materials such as books, puppets, water testing supplies, or bird feeders. Audiovisual materials about environmental education are also available for use. The Audubon Adventures program offers activities and classroom materials that have been developed by the National Audubon Society. Currently (2019), they share their message online through their website and with the *Meadowlark Messenger*, their newsletter.

Insight into the Champaign County Audubon Society can also be obtained by studying other parts of the Champaign County Historical Archives at The Urbana Free Library. The Champaign County Audubon Society's newsletter, *The Meadowlark Messenger*, is on file under "Local Organizations" in the Champaign County Historical Archives. These newsletters cover 1959-present. Also included are a few copies of the newsletter *Nature Notes for Teachers*, which highlights environmental education activities, resources, and programs for educators of children in Kindergarten through sixth grade.

**Scope and Content:**

The Champaign County Audubon Society records consist of administrative documents from the organization's inception in 1940 through 2018. The meeting minutes, treasury, and membership information from the first several years are recorded in a ledger entitled "Bird Club 1940-1948." This ledger also includes the constitution, organizational structure, as well as the charter members of the Urbana-Champaign Bird Club. Board meeting minutes document planning for club activities, including programs, projects, field trips, and guest speakers; various committee reports; financial standings; and local happenings related to birds and conservation efforts. The minutes also include annual board retreats where the purpose and functions of the organization are reevaluated, and new goals set.

The financial ledger shows transactions from 1946-1982. Some operations include membership dues, printing costs, postage, and film expense. The loose financial reports include the treasurer's reports, income and expenditures, and proposed budgets for the fiscal year. The budgetary reports also include some transaction statements from the nature store.

Other administrative documents include board member lists from 1940 through 2018, correspondences to state and federal representatives concerning environmental issues, communications and publications from the National Audubon Society, 1988 projects and memorandums, 1989 and part of the 1994-chapter charter renewal, annual reports, local conservation publications. Administrative files contain many of the same documents which were held in several binders. It also includes the Champaign County High School Audubon Society files, which include membership lists, the constitution, correspondences, programs, and field trips.

The records also include publications by the organization. The Audubon Screen Tours includes publications, programs, and correspondences pertaining to guest speakers hosted by the organization at the University of Illinois from 1951 through 1953. The membership brochures include information about the organizational structure of the CCAS and its mission. The program brochures have descriptions for field trips, programs, and bird walks offered from 1983-1986. The film series brochures describe the films that CCAS showed as a public program to create interest and awareness for the environment.



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The Human Resource File for Environmental Education created in the early 1980s was created as a resource for local educators. Teachers, scout leaders, and others seeking an educational program for children or adults could consult this resource to find local experts on various nature-related topics. The first section of this resource is an index of topics including birds, botany, nature photography, and stars. The second section is listing for each expert that includes contact information and details on the programs they could offer. Presenters include local naturalists and University of Illinois professors.

**Arrangement:**

The Champaign County Audubon Society records are arranged chronologically by subject and divided into two series:

**Series 1: Administrative Functions:**

This series includes board meeting minutes, financial records, and other documents of the Audubon Society. It also includes administrative files that contain various records from the organization (meeting minutes, financial records, membership lists, programs, bird data), which were held in binders and kept together. These records are organized alphabetically by record type.

**Series 2: Publications:**

This series includes brochures publications created by the CCAS, including membership brochures, program brochures, film series brochures, and an environmental education contact information packet. It also contains publications, programming, and correspondences pertaining to the Audubon Screen Tours. These records are organized alphabetically.

**Subject Terms:**

Champaign County Audubon Society  
Birds – Illinois – Champaign County  
Birds – Illinois – Piatt County  
Birds – Illinois – Vermilion County  
Bird watching - Illinois  
Conservation – United States  
Bird watching – Societies, clubs, etc.

**Name Terms:**

Champaign County Audubon Club  
Champaign County Audubon Society  
Urbana-Champaign Bird Club

**Container List**

**Box 1**

**Series 1: Administrative Functions**

Folder 1: Administrative Files, 1940-1949  
Folder 2: Administrative Files, 1940-1949, cont.  
Folder 3: Administrative Files, 1949-1957



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- Folder 4: Administrative Files, 1949-1957, cont.
- Folder 5: Administrative Files, 1949-1957, cont.
- Folder 6: Administrative Files, 1957-1958
- Folder 7: Administrative Files, 1957-1958, cont.
- Folder 8: Administrative Files, 1959-1960
- Folder 9: Administrative Files, 1960-1962
- Folder 10: Administrative Files, 1982-1987 [number of records from 1984 to 1986 are in Folders 13-15]
- Folder 11: Administrative Files, 1982-1987, cont. [number of records from 1984 to 1986 are in Folders 13-15]
- Folder 12: Administrative Files, 1982-1987, cont. [number of records from 1984 to 1986 are in Folders 13-15]
- Folder 13: Administrative Files, 1984-1986
- Folder 14: Administrative Files, 1984-1986, cont.
- Folder 15: Administrative Files, 1984-1986, cont.
- Folder 16: Administrative Files, 1986-1988
- Folder 17: Administrative Files, 1986-1988, cont.
- Folder 18: Administrative Files, 1986-1988, cont.
- Folder 19: Administrative Files, 1988-1994
- Folder 20: Administrative Files, 1988-1994, cont.
- Folder 21: Administrative Files, 1994-1997
- Folder 22: Annual Cycle, undated
- Folder 23: Annual Reports, 1989, 2016-2018
- Folder 24: Board Membership Lists, 1940-2000, 2014-2018 [Includes lists developed for the National Audubon Society]
- Folder 25: Board Meeting Minutes and Reports, 1940-1948

**Box 2**

**Series 1: Administrative Functions, cont.**

- Folder 26: Board Meeting Minutes, 1957-1960, undated
- Folder 27: Board Meeting Minutes, 1961-1971
- Folder 28: Board Meeting Minutes, 1971
- Folder 29: Board Meeting Minutes and Agendas, 1972-1974, 1976-1979, undated
- Folder 30: Board Meeting Minutes, Agendas, and Reports, 1985-1988
- Folder 31: Board Meeting Minutes, Agendas, and Reports, 1989-1990
- Folder 32: Board Meeting Minutes and Agendas, 1992-1994, 1996-1999
- Folder 33: Board Meeting Minutes (Includes Retreats), 2000-2004
- Folder 34: Board Meeting Minutes, 2011-2014 (Includes Retreats)
- Folder 35: Board Meeting Minutes, 2015-2018
- Folder 36: Champaign County High School Audubon Society Files, 1973-1974
- Folder 37: Champaign County High School Audubon Society Files, 1973-1974, cont.
- Folder 38: Champaign County High School Audubon Society Files, 1973-1974, cont.
- Folder 39: Chapter Renewal Report, 1989, 1994
- Folder 40: Constitution and Bylaws (Not Current), 1949, 1983
- Folder 41: Constitution/By-laws, Rev. 2014



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- Folder 42: Environmental Correspondence, 1974-1978, 1989, 1999, 2004, 2017-2018, undated
- Folder 43: Financial Ledger, 1946-1982
- Folder 44: Financial Reports and Funding, 1979-1981, 1986-1990, 1992-1993, 1996-1999
- Folder 45: Financial Reports and Funding, 2000-2006, 2010-2014
- Folder 46: Financial Reports and Funding, 2015-2018
- Folder 47: General Correspondence, 1949-1953, 1977, 1989, 2018, undated
- Folder 48: Local Conservation Publications, 1970, 1973, 1987-1989, undated
- Folder 49: Mini-Grants Program (Pre K-12th Grade), 1998-1999, 2015, 2017-2018
- Folder 50: National Audubon Society General Correspondence, 1950-1952, 1973-1974, 1978, 1990, undated
- Folder 51: National Audubon Society Publication, 1951-1953, 1972, undated
- Folder 52: Newspaper Clippings, 1951-1952, 1974-1975 [Primarily clippings from the Audubon Screen Tours and the Oakley-Springer dam project]
- Folder 53: Programing and Activities, 1950-1952, 1977, 1983, 1988, 2005, 2016, undated
- Series 2: Publications**
- Folder 54: Audubon Screen Tours Program and Correspondence, 1950-1953, undated
- Folder 55: Audubon Screen Tours Program and Correspondence, 1950-1953, undated, cont.
- Folder 56: Film Series Brochures (2), 1945-1946 and 1951-1952
- Folder 57: Human Resource File for Environmental Education, 1983
- Folder 58: Membership Brochures (4), 2016, undated
- Folder 59: Program Brochures/Flyers (8), 1983-1986, 2015