

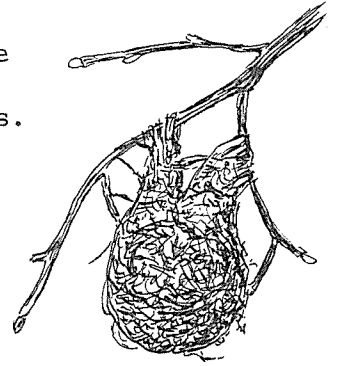
# THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER

Fall 1972

## WHAT TO SEE ... BUT NOT TAKE! NESTS

To those of us who are not well versed in ornithology, a list simply naming the birds seen on our walks will not tell much about the nature of the Path. But a study of their nesting habits is enlightening. The following notes refer to the birds that have been seen on our walks and that could conceivably nest here (not the spring or fall migrants).

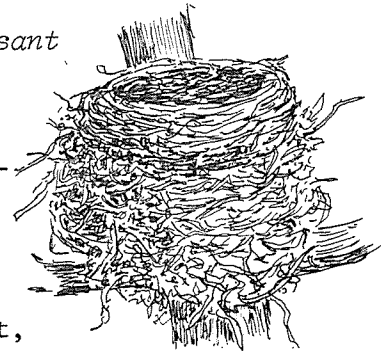
Of them, more than 20 kinds nest in trees. The *crow*, for example, builds its strong nest of sticks, bark, grapevines, etc., high above the ground; at least six others nest well up in tall trees. Four more nest in orchard-size trees; the *kingbird* and *robin* are examples. Eleven others lay their eggs in holes in trees or posts (or bird houses we have placed along the Path; some *woodpeckers*, *chickadees* and *bluebirds* choose these holes. The *woodcock* and *ovenbird* nest on the forest floor. All of these may be considered as birds of the forest. Yes, we do have woods along the Prairie Path!!



*Baltimore oriole*

The favorite nesting sites, chosen by 14 of our listed species, are in the trees that mark the edge of the forest and now the edge of the Path for many miles; the low, spreading, often thorny trees and shrubs. The *goldfinch*, *yellow warbler* and *chipping sparrow* are some that may choose these trees. They probably had a "hand" in planting them, too.

There are four birds -- *killdeer*, *meadow lark*, *nighthawk*, and *pheasant* -- that nest on the ground in fields and open spaces. You would expect to find them along a prairie path.



*Robin*

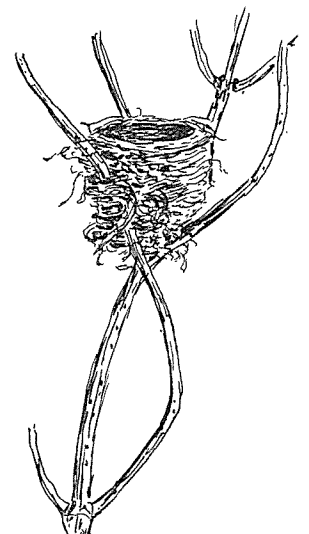
Seven build at the edge of a marsh -- the *redwing blackbird*, *short-billed marsh wren*, *blue-wing teal* and others.

The nests differ in many ways. The *mourning dove's* carelessly laid platform is so loosely built that one wonders why the eggs don't fall through. The *goldfinch*, in contrast, makes a beautifully fashioned "cup" lined with thistle-down. The *kingfisher* lays her eggs at the end of a burrow.



*Redwing blackbird*

One of the delights of a walk along the Prairie Path lies in its great variety of scenery. It crosses rolling glacial country; country that was, in part, covered with oak-hickory forests, in part prairie, and in part marshland. It offers a territory for a wide variety of bird life. Come see for yourself.



*Yellow warbler*

The Annual Meeting of the Illinois Prairie Path will be held in the Thornhill Building of The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, on Sunday, November 12 at 2:00 P.M. Mark your calendar. The Thornhill Building is on the west side of Highway 53. Homemade apple juice from home grown apples, and cookies will again be prepared and served by Mrs. Viola Kolze.

#### USE OF THE PATH

There was increased activity on the Path this summer, especially by bicyclists. There were many walkers too -- individuals and groups. The *Chicago Horticultural Society* had a walk on August 9, a beautiful day. There were walks for *The Sierra Club* and for *Chicago Girl Scouts*.

There will be 3 or 4 walks for Prairie Pathers this fall. (Notices were mailed to all members.) The Annual Walk, to which the general public is invited, will be on October 21. Meet at Prince Crossing Road at 9:00 A.M., or County Farm Road at 10:00 A.M., or Jewell Road at 10:00 A.M. All groups will end their walks at the members' room in Rathje Park in Wheaton. There is a tentative plan for a Bicycle Ramble in mid-November; it will be announced at the annual meeting and in newspapers. If you want to ask about any of these outings, call us at 665-5310.

#### PATH PROBLEMS

Will any of us forget the storms of August 25? There was phenomenal flooding and much damage to public and private property. The Path suffered too. A survey made to assess the damage found much of the Path not seriously hurt but some areas were badly washed out. The limestone siftings we use for our good bicycle and walking surface costs about \$20 for 100 feet (and we have several thousand feet to re-do). If any of you would like to pay for the siftings for a few feet, we will welcome your contributions (tax deductible) and will send you a personal certificate.

*There is other Path work needed. Volunteers -- have you checked your section this fall?*

#### WINTER CLASS

A class in nature activities for teachers and scout leaders will be given again if we have as many as 8 applicants. We can take 11.

Dates.....January 23 and 30, February 6, 13 and 20.

Time.....4:00 to 5:00 P.M.

Place.....616 Delles, Wheaton. This is in Rathje Park, about 1/4 mile west of West Street at Roosevelt Road.

Leaders....Betty Nemecek and Helen Turner.

Fee.....\$5.00 to cover expenses.

If you are interested, write to us at P.O. Box 1086, Wheaton, 60187, before January 1, 1973.

*It is with deep sorrow that we report the death on Sept. 23 of William Masters. Many will remember Bill as a frequent leader of our Members' Walks, and he was the one who spear-headed the extension of the Path into Kane County.*

#### PHOTO CONTEST

We need good black and white glossy prints of pictures taken on the Path for use in publications. So ... we are having a photo contest. Bring your 5 by 7 prints (we want the negatives too) to the Annual Meeting, November 12. Come early so we can all see them displayed. A vote by all attending the meeting will decide the winners and awards will be given. \$25 first prize, \$15 second, and \$10 third. This contest is open to all members.

The Second National Symposium on Trails, originally scheduled for October 13-16, 1972 in Colorado Springs, has been postponed until June of 1973.