FINAL REPORT

"LET'S LEARN ABOUT PRAIRIES" #5-011W

Project Objectives:

To develop a teaching materials kit which will promote better understanding of the prairie ecosystem and its importance in Illinois.

To highlight the unique animals and plants of the prairie.

To provide materials for more on-site educational programming at Prairie Ridge SNA.

To make such materials available on loan to educators in and around the Prairie Ridge SNA project area.

Methodology:

A tri-fold table-top display (see photos enclosed) on the Prairie Ridge SNA ecosystem was developed using photos taken at the site by Richard Day, Daybreak Imagery. Text for the display was based on the latest information on prairie birds and other wildlife determined from studies at Prairie Ridge SNA and nearby areas. The completed display will be housed at the Prairie Ridge SNA headquarters.

A teaching kit was assembled using materials from several sources. These include the attached list of items purchased from three agencies/companies, as well as materials which were available through the IDNR. This kit will be housed with the display mentioned above and available for teachers at no charge.

Budget:

Contributed time, materials and photos	$300.00
Invoices for purchased educational items as per attached list	865.17
Total	$1165.17
Grant money requested	$1,000.00

My signature guarantees that the above project has been completed and will be available at Prairie Ridge SNA in the immediate future.

31 August 2005

Marilyn F. Campbell, Exec. Director
Illinois Audubon Society

EASTERN MEADOWLARK

WHILE EASTERN MEADOWLARKS STILL APPEAR TO BE COMMON IN ILLINOIS, THEIR NUMBERS HAVE ACTUALLY DECREASED BY 58% IN THE LAST 30 YEARS. THIS IS PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE HABITAT THEY DEPEND ON HAS BEEN CHANGED TO ROWCROPS, OR HOUSING AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. THESE COLORFUL MEMBERS OF THE BLACKBIRD FAMILY ARE STILL COMMON IN GRASSLAND AREAS SUCH AS PRAIRIE RIDGE, WHERE THEY FEED ON INSECTS

Eastern Meadowlark
Sturnella magna

PRAIRIE RIDGE
STATE NATURAL AREA

PRAIRIE RIDGE STATE NATURAL AREA IS ONE OF THE BEST SITES IN ILLINOIS FOR OBSERVING RARE GRASSLAND BIRDS. IT IS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE STATE TO SEE ENDANGERED GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKENS AND HAS THE STATE'S LARGEST BREEDING POPULATION OF NORTHERN HARRIERS AND SHORT-EARED OWLS.
THE 3,780-ACRE SITE IS LOCATED IN PARTS OF JASPER AND MARION COUNTIES. IT PROVIDES GRASSLAND AND WETLAND HABITAT FOR MANY WILDLIFE SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN, INCLUDING THOSE THAT ARE STATE-THREATENED OR ENDANGERED OR HAVE BEEN DECLINING IN NUMBER BECAUSE OF LOSS OF HABITAT.

PRAIRIE RIDGE IS A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP WHICH PROTECTS HABITAT FOR SOME OF OUR RAREST WILDLIFE.
THE ENTIRE AREA IS MANAGED BY THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, BUT PARTS OF IT ARE OWNED BY THE ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY (3 SANCTUARIES, TOTALING CLOSE TO 200 ACRES) AND BY AmerenCIPS (200 ACRES). THEY WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE A DIVERSITY OF HABITAT TYPES - WETLANDS, NATIVE PRAIRIE, RESTORED PRAIRIE, AND COOL-SEASON GRASSLANDS. SOME FIELDS ONCE IN ROWCROPS ARE BEING RESTORED TO GRASSES. THE GOAL AT PRSNA IS TO DEVELOP A LARGE GRASSLAND ECOSYSTEM WHICH CAN PROVIDE HABITAT TO ENSURE THAT OUR PRAIRIE BIRDS AND OTHER WILD-LIFE WILL SURVIVE FAR INTO THE FUTURE.

LACK-NECKED STILT - THIS SHOREBIRD HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEGUN O NEST IN ILLINOIS, AS MOST ARE FOUND IN MARSHES AND WETLANDS F THE GREAT PLAINS AND WESTERN UNITED STATES.
HIS STILT WAS PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE KARL BARTEL SANCTUARY, PART OF PRSNA OWNED BY THE ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY, WHERE REE PAIRS OF BIRDS ATTEMPTED TO NEST IN THE SPRINGS OF 2004.

ARN OWLS WERE ONCE COMMON THROUGHOUT RURAL ILLINOIS AND EVEN SMALL TOWNS. TODAY THEY ARE OBSERVED ONLY A FEW TIMES EACH EAR, PRIMARILY IN GRASSLANDS SUCH AS THOSE AT PRAIRIE RIDGE. THEY AVE NESTED AT PRSNA ON OCCASION. BARN OWLS FEED PRIMARILY ON OLES, MICE AND RATS AND ARE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL PREDATORS. HEY ARE NOCTURNAL AND HAVE THE BEST HEARING OF ANY OWL, BEING ABLE TO FIND PREY IN ABSOLUTE DARKNESS.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Tympanuchus cupido

GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN THIS NATIVE GROUSE WAS ONCE FOUND OVER MOST OF OUR STATE. IN THE 1850'S, THERE WERE 10 TO 14 MILLION OF THEM ON 21 MILLION ACRES OF PRAIRIE. MOST OF THE PRAIRIE WAS GONE BY 1900, AND THE GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN HAD BEEN REDUCED TO JUST A FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND BIRDS. BY 1982, THEIR NUMBERS WERE DOWN TO 2000. WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS AND CONSERVATION GROUPS, SUCH AS THE ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY, BEGAN TO TAKE ACTION TO SAVE LAND IN WHAT IS NOW PRAIRIE RIDGE STATE NATURAL AREA. PRAIRIE-CHICKEN NUMBERS DIPPED EVEN LOWER, AND THE BIRD NEARED EXTINCTION. RECENT INCREASES IN NUMBERS ARE ENCOURAGING, BUT THE BATTLE TO SAVE OUR MOST ENDANGERED BIRD CONTINUES.

Crawfish Frog
Rana areolata

THE CRAWFISH FROG LIVES IN PRAIRIES, BRUSHY FIELDS AND WOODLAN IN THE SOUTHERN HALF OF ILLINOIS. RARELY-SEEN AMPHIBIANS, TH SPEND MOST OF THEIR LIVES UNDERGROUND, OFTEN IN ABANDONED CRAWFISH BURROWS. THEY GATHER AT PONDS AND WETLAND AREAS T BREED AND LAY EGGS EACH SPRING, WHEN THEIR LOUD SNORES CAN B HEARD FOR LONG DISTANCES.

THE ORNATE BOX TURTLE IS RARE OVER MOST OF ITS RANGE IN ILLINO THIS IS BECAUSE ITS OPEN PRAIRIE HABITAT HAS BEEN REDUCED TO MERE REMNANT. THESE TURTLES ARE MAINLY CARNIVORES, EATI INSECTS, SNAILS, EARTHWORMS, TADPOLES AND EVEN BIRD EGGS AN CARRION. LIKE OTHER TURTLES, THEY HIBERNATE DURING THE WINT MONTHS AND RE-EMERGE IN SPRING TO MATE AND LAY EGGS.

Common Barn-Owl
Tyto alba

Photographs used in this display were provided by Richard Day, Daybreak Imagery.

This display was partially funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources through the Wildlife Preservation Fund.

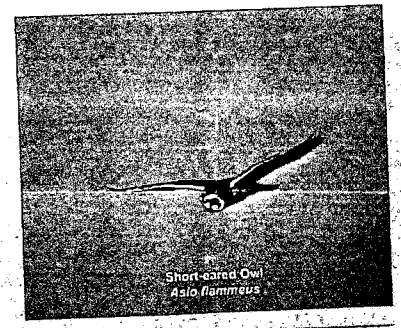
ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY
P. O. Box 2418
Danville, IL 61834
217-446-5065

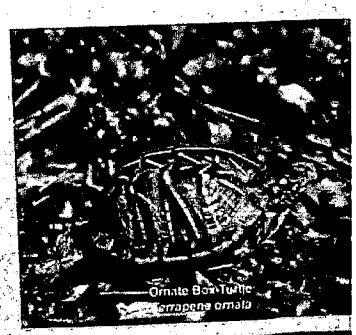
www.illinoisaudubon.org

Northern Harrier
Circus cyaneus

THE NORTHERN HARRIER CAN BE SEEN GLIDING OVER WETLANDS AND FIELDS IN SEARCH OF PREY, SHARING THE SAME HABITAT AS THE SHORT-EARED OWL. IT NESTS ON THE GROUND AND FEEDS ON MANY OF THE SAME PREY SPECIES AS THE NOCTURNAL OWL.
THE HARRIER'S FACE EVEN RESEMBLES THAT OF THE OWL, HAVING FACIAL DISKS THAT IMPROVE ITS HEARING.

SHORT-EARED OWLS HUNT OVER GRASS-LAND AND WETLAND AREAS AND NEST ON THE GROUND IN HEAVY GRASS COVER. MANY OF THESE "PRAIRIE OWLS" SPEND THE WINTER AT PRAIRIE RIDGE, WHERE THEY CAN BE SEEN HUNTING FOR SMALL RODENTS JUST BEFORE DARK, OR ON CLOUDY DAYS. THEIR FLIGHT IS BUOYANT AND MOTH-LIKE.


Short-eared Owl
Asio flammeus


Ornate Box Turtle
Terrapene ornata

Order Form for INHS Publications

Title	Price*	Quantity	Total
Field Guide to Reptiles + Amphibians	19.95	1	19.95
Butterflies of Illinois	19.95	1	19.95
Waterfowl of Illinois - abbrev. guide	14.95	1	14.95

Grand Total $54.85

* prices are available on the INHS Publications web site or by calling or emailing the Publications Office.

Make check payable to Illinois Natural History Survey. Shipping and handling are included in price.

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Illinois Natural History Survey
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The Illinois Audubon Society

Established 1897

Marilyn F. Campbell
Executive Director

24 August 2005
Nature Shop
MO. Dept. of Conservation
PO Box 180
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Re: Order of materials for prairie wildlife kit

We would like to order the following items from your catalog:

04-0100	Blooming Secrets video	$7.50
03-0248 DVD	Missour's Tallgrass Prairie	10.00
04-0201	Birding for Beginners video	7.25
04-0187	Key to Duck Identification video	7.25
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03-0165 CD	Toads and Frogs in Missouri	8.00
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	Total:	$76.00
	P&H	7.95
	Amt. Enclosed	$83.95

Please ship to: 425B N. Gilbert St.
Danville, IL 61832

Thank you,

Marilyn F. Campbell
Exec. Director

PAID
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