

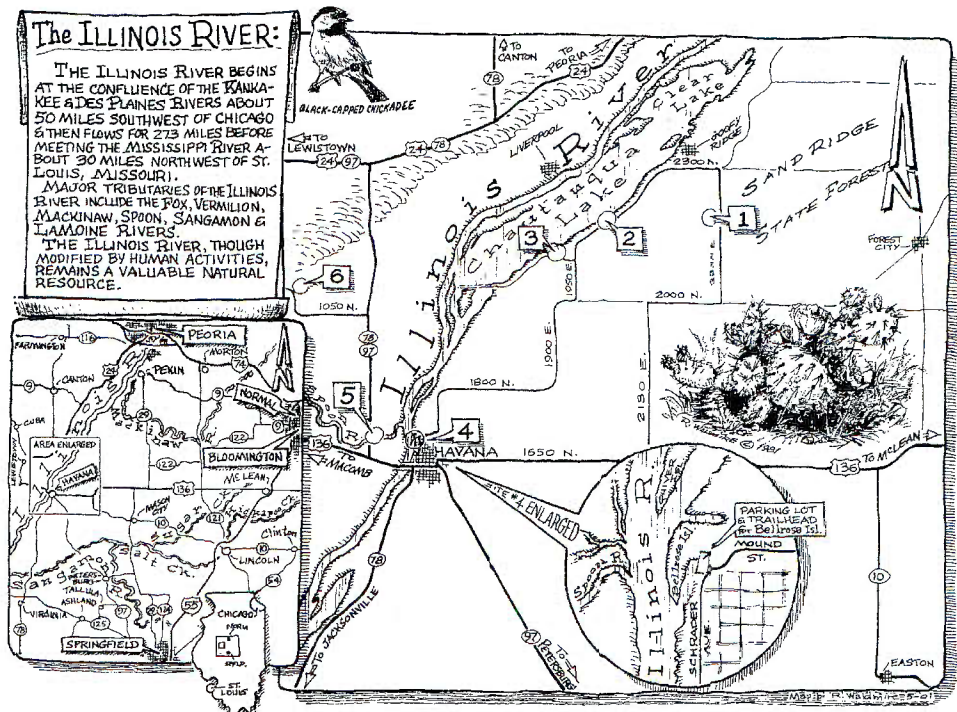
ing raptors. During the warmer months you may see Lark Sparrows and Blue Grosbeaks, which like the sandy soil for nesting, as well as a variety of grassland birds. Amphibians seen here include ornate box turtle, six-lined racerunner, and bull snake. Also, note the small mounds of bare sand throughout the prairie; these were excavated by plains pocket gophers.

**STOP #2.
CHAUTAUQUA NWR
EAGLE BLUFF
PUBLIC ACCESS AREA**

Directions: From H. A. Gleason Nature Preserve continue north on CR 2300E for 1.0 mile to CR 2300N. Turn left (west) on CR 2300N. Continue on this road past Goofy Ridge and along the river valley bluff (Buzzville Road) 3.4 miles to the refuge public access area. The upper parking area has a rest room, viewing platform, and display boards. Then follow the gravel road on the right to the refuge levee access and boat ramp.

The 4,488-acre Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for biodiversity with wildlife as the No. 1 priority. Consequently, certain areas of the refuge may be closed to the public at certain times of the year for bird migration. Signs are normally posted to indicate closed areas. When the main levee is open to the public, you are free to walk at will beyond the gate. Occasionally, the main refuge levee — which leads from the cross levee parking area around the south pool to the refuge headquarters — is open to private vehicles. On these special days, usually during National Wildlife Refuge Week in October and International Migratory Bird Day in May, the public is invited to “Ride the Refuge.” A special interpretive “Ride the Refuge” brochure is available from refuge staff or through the Emiquon Audubon Society.

Chautauqua NWR illustrates the ecological concept that species diversity is directly related to habitat diversity. Spend some time here paying careful attention to the different bird species attracted to the exposed mud flats, shallow-water wetlands, deep open water in the north pool, willow thickets, bluff woodlands, floodplain forests, and other wildlife habitats. During the waterfowl migration, diving and dabbling ducks segregate themselves very nicely according to



water levels: deep water and divers in the north pool, shallow water and dabblers in the south pool. American White Pelicans have recently started using the Illinois River Valley in large numbers during both spring and fall migrations. July through September is usually the best time to see shorebirds on mud flats in the south pool. The wildlife refuge is recognized as a regionally significant site that provides critical habitat for shorebird species of international concern. Tens of thousands of shorebirds can be seen here at one time if conditions are right. The refuge has attracted at least 37 species of shorebirds including American Avocet, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, all three phalarope species, and Piping Plover. Rarities include Ruff, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and Black-necked Stilt. During spring migration, the river is usually in flood, and mud flats are scarce. At least 31 species of waterfowl have also been seen here, and the open water in fall can attract hundreds of thousands of ducks and geese to various areas to rest and feed.

For the last several years (as of 2001), an active Bald Eagle nest has been visible at the “snag forest” (a large area of standing dead timber) just to the right of the cross levee in the north pool. The resident eagles are usually perched near their nest or foraging over the water for fish. During the winter, Bald Eagles are highly visible standing on the bare ice and perching in trees all around the refuge. Be sure to read the refuge display boards at the upper parking area before departing for the next stop on this tour.

STOP #3. CHAUTAUQUA NATURE TRAIL

Directions: From Eagle Bluff Public Access, turn