



Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

www.nwilaudubon.org

NIAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Join us the first Tuesday of every month, September through May. All of our programs are open to the public.

Most programs are held at the St John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd., in Freeport.

Most programs begin at 7 PM with announcements, followed by the program at 7:30 and then refreshments.

Check the current newsletter or our website (nwilaudubon.org) for specific monthly details, special events or any changes to the usual time and place.

Please join us!

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Thank You!

Top text: allaboutbirds.org/
Top photo: Gary Gordon, Freeport, IL
Lower: (photos provided by speakers)

APRIL - MAY 2019



American Woodcock *Scolopax minor*

spend most of their time hidden in fields and on the forest floor, where they probe for earthworms. They often rock back and forth while walking along the ground. On spring nights, males perform very conspicuous displays, giving a buzzy peent call, then launching into the air. Their erratic display flight includes a distinctive, twittering flight sound and ends with a steep dive back to the ground.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY 38TH ANNUAL BANQUET

A Nature Photographer's Journey: David C. Olson
Wednesday, April 10th

Highland Community College in Freeport

Silent Auction Begins at 5:30 PM | Dinner at 6:00 PM | Program Begins at 7:00 PM



The 2019 banquet will feature professional photographer David C. Olson who will take us on a visual journey through the natural world. An incredible custom soundtrack along with 3D effects will bring David's still photographs of the natural world to life. David holds a Bachelor's degree in photography, graphic design, and environmental studies and this background allows David and his staff to create award-winning imagery of people and nature. In 2018, his amazing photos were featured in National Geographic, Alaska Magazine, and Northwest Quarterly. David's award-winning studio and gallery are located on State Street in Rockford, Illinois

*Reservations for the banquet must be received by March 30th. Reservation forms can be found at www.nwilaudubon.org, by calling Tim at 815-835-5109, or by requesting a form through e-mail at nwilaudubon@gmail.com. Reservations are not required for attendance at the program (no meal) which starts at 7:00 PM. **The cost for the program only is \$3 for adults and free for students.***



MAY PROGRAMMING

Birds and 'Bergs: 28 Years of Avian Research in Greenland
Tuesday, May 7th | 6:00 PM

St. John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd. Freeport

Start the evening with a delicious potluck meal. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. NIAS will provide beverages. After the meal, there will be a short business meeting with announcements. The program will follow at approximately 7:15 pm.

Our program will feature Dr. Kurt Burnham from the High Arctic Institute who has conducted field research in Greenland every summer since 1991. Kurt will share the highlights of his 28 years of research with a focus on the future and what changes climate change may have on the avian community in north Greenland. The

High Arctic Institute initially studied Peregrine Falcons and Gyrfalcons but over the past 15 years has branched out to include studies on seabirds, sea ducks, passerines, etc. Current studies include long-term monitoring of falcon populations, migration studies on seabirds, and research on pollutants.

Program made possible through money from the Keith Blackmore memorial fund.

CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

April 3 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

April 6 – Field Trip: Listening to Amphibians at Elkhorn Creek, 6:30 p.m. *See page 3 for more information.*

April 8 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

April 10 – Banquet at Highland Community College. *See page 1 for details. Reservations for the meal required prior to March 30. No reservation required for the program only.*

April 13 – Annual Midwest Crane Count, 5:30-7:30 a.m. Each year our chapter volunteers to census cranes in Stephenson County. *Coordinator: Teresa Smith timtreetsmith@gmail.com or 815-238-3963. See page 9 for details.*

April 14–23 – NIAS Field Trip to Big Bend National Park, Texas (*trip is full*).

April 11 – Field Trip: Blooming Pasque Flowers at the Freeport Prairie, 3-4 p.m. *See page 3 for more information.*

April 18 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

April 25 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

April 26 – Field Trip: Listening to Amphibians at Elkhorn Creek, 6:30 p.m. *See page 3 for more information.*

April 27 – Earth Day celebration to the calendar, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Krape Park, Freeport, IL. *See page 5 for details.*

April 28 – “Talking About the Issues” monthly discussion session, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the home of Harlan and Judy Corrie in rural Cedarville, 815-563-4932. (*issues discussion continued*)

The first hour topic will consider air as important bird habitat, in addition to the more familiar terrestrial habitats, and what can be done to protect critical airspace for birds. The article, “The Habitat Up There,” can be obtained by calling Judy and Harlan. The second hour will be a discussion of whatever issues are brought forth by participants.

All are welcome. Carpool from the Harbor Freight east lot in Freeport at 1 p.m. or call Corries for directions.

May 1 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

May 3 – Field trip, Wildflowers & Birds of the Palisades, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. *See page 3 for more information.*

May 5 – Annual Birdathon Fundraiser! Your pledge is MOST welcome! *See page 4 for how you can make a contribution that will help birds on their wintering grounds, migration corridors and nesting habitats.*

May 7 – Membership Meeting and Potluck at 6:00 PM. **See page 1 for details.**

May 8 – Spring Stewardship, 10 a.m.-noon. *See page 9 for more information.*

May 9 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

May 11 – Annual Bird Festival at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 8-11 a.m. *See page 3 for complete information.*

May 13 – Spring Stewardship, 10 a.m.-noon. *See page 11 for more information.*

May 16 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

May 17 – Spring Stewardship, 9-11 a.m. *See page 9 for more information.*

May 18 – “Talking About the Issues” monthly discussion session, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the home of Fred and Carol Redmore, 1809 Parkview Circle, Freeport, 815-721-3375. **PLEASE NOTE: This is a Saturday!** The first hour topic will be determined. For a copy of the article, call Carol or obtain one at the May 7 potluck/program. The second hour will be a discussion of whatever issues are brought forth by participants. *All are welcome.*

May 21 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

May 23 – Spring Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 9 for more information.*

May 24 – Field trip, Evening of Birding at Lost Mound, 5:30 – 10:30 p.m. *See page 3 for more information.*

May 28 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

May 29 – First Campfire of the year at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. At 7 p.m. we'll take a leisurely stroll to observe blooming plants and nesting birds. The campfire will start at 8 p.m. S'mores and water will be provided. Bring a lawn chair and flashlight.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight east lot in Freeport at 6:15. The preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River (S. Main St. in Leaf River becomes Leaf River Rd.) with parking just off of Leaf River Rd. If weather is questionable call Mary at 815-938-3204.

May 31 – Spring Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 9 for more information.*

June 1 – Birding 101. Birding for Novice Birders. Sponsored by Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation. Co-sponsored by NIAS. Located at Valley of Eden, 9:00 a.m. – noon. *See page 6 for details.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Karen Hagen *Elizabeth*
Judith Sager *Freeport*
Thomas Bowen *Freeport*
Janet Bausman *Freeport*
Dalen Wichmann *Freeport*
Ronald Baumann *Freeport*
Dalen Wichmann *Freeport*
Nancy Byington *Lanark*
Lydia Root *Savanna*
Scott Schaeffer *Savanna*



FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

APRIL – MAY

Blooming Pasque Flowers at the Freeport Prairie

Thursday, April 11, 3-4:00 p.m.

Leader: *Mary Blackmore, 815-938-3204*

Join us as we admire one of the prairie's harbingers of spring, the Pasque Flower. Unlike the crocus it resembles, a Pasque Flower, *Anemone patens*, is a member of the buttercup family. In early spring the plant sends up a flower stalk in advance of leaves so what you see are delicate pale violet blooms nestled in the muted tan tangle of last year's prairie grasses. Come and see how Pasque Flower blooms actually move to track the sun. Please contact Mary if you plan to attend. This trip will only happen if the flowers are blooming.

We'll meet in the prairie's parking lot just off of Walnut Rd, at 3:00 p.m.

Listening to Amphibians at Elkhorn Creek

Saturday, April 6, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, April 26, 6:30 p.m.

Leader: *Mary Blackmore, 815-938-3204*

Join us at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve to listen to the spring advertisement calls of frogs and toads. While 6 species of amphibians have been identified over the years, our best chances are for hearing the rapid metallic clicks of the Western Chorus Frog and the long musical trill of the American Toad. We'll walk near both wetland areas at the preserve that provide amphibian habitat. As an added bonus we still may hear courting American Woodcocks!

Meet in the parking lot, in the NE corner of the preserve, off of West Grove Rd. at 6:30 p.m. Carpool from the Harbor Freight east parking lot in Freeport at 6:00. The preserve is located 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the SE corner of Freeport and West Grove Rds. If weather is questionable, call Mary.

Wildflowers and Birds of the Palisades

Friday, May 3, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Leader: *Laura Dufford (815) 947-2720,
email: lauradufford@gmail.com*

Each spring, the Mississippi Palisades State Park just north of Savanna, is a destination for birders and botanists alike. Due to its unique topography, unusual birds such as the Yellow-throated Warbler and Northern Parula warbler, and uncommon plants like Large-Flowered Trillium and Amethyst Shooting Star are found.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport at 8 a.m. or meet our group at the first parking lot inside the south entrance to the Palisades. We'll eat lunch in Savanna and return to Freeport around 2 pm.

Please confirm your attendance with Laura by email or phone.

An Evening of Birding at Lost Mound

Friday, May 24, 5:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Leader: *Mary Blackmore, 815-938-3204*

Join us as we travel alongside sand prairies, sand savannas and the mighty Mississippi in search of birds at the Lost Mound Unit of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge just north of Savanna. Of primary interest will be the awesome courtship display of the Common Nighthawk, as well as vocalization of both Eastern Whip-poor-wills and American Woodcocks. There will be enough time to observe many of the grassland species of Lost Mound as well.

Meet at the Fish and Wildlife office building at Lost Mound at 6:30 or carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport at 5:30 p.m. Return to Freeport around 10:30 p.m. Call Mary to confirm your attendance.



Silver Creek Bird Festival

Saturday, May 11th

Join us on May 11 for an informative, fun, family-friendly morning as we explore the Silver Creek Biodiversity preserve for the many migrating and resident birds found there. One hundred five species of birds have been documented in the grasslands, woodlands and stream corridors of Silver Creek. If the weather cooperates, we should observe lots of migrating and resident songbirds.

Tours will begin at 8:00, 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. **The 10:00 tour will be specifically oriented to kids and families, including information on how to use binoculars.** No binocs? No worries! Audubon binoculars will be available to use during each tour.

Free "Illinois Birds" pocket guides will be distributed while supplies last. We'll have a shady rest area with chairs, as well as a restroom, beverages and snacks. There are no fees. Like all Audubon activities, non-members are welcome. Bring your family and friends!

The preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River (S. Main St. in Leaf River becomes Leaf River Rd.), with parking just off of Leaf River Rd. If weather is questionable, call Mary at 815-938-3204. We hope to see you there!

Questions About Your Membership? Contact Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963 or timtreetsmith@gmail.com

Birdathon

40
YEARS

Your money goes where the birds go

This year our chapter marks its 40th year of sponsoring a **BIRDATHON** fundraising event! In that time thousands of dollars have been raised for bird conservation. Please join us in making this year's effort our best yet!

We invite you to make a pledge to any of the birders listed below who will be participating in our chapter's annual **BIRDATHON** on May 5. Your pledge, for instance 15¢, will be per SPECIES of bird that your selected birder(s) identifies on that day. Your birder will contact you after the count with his or her species total and collect your contribution.

Your money indeed goes where the birds go! All **BIRDATHON** proceeds are shared by organizations that do a tremendous job of:

- protecting and improving bird habitat on wintering grounds, migration corridors and nesting sites,
- connecting people with nature,
- providing education opportunities for the public, and
- collecting scientific data through bird counts and birdbanding.

Those organizations are:

Northwest Illinois Audubon Society
National Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin
Stewards of the Upper Mississippi
Sand Bluff Bird Observatory
Belize Audubon Society

Please complete the pledge form below and mail as indicated.

*THANK YOU so much for your support
of birds and our BIRDATHON!*

2019 BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

I am pledging _____¢ per species by that (those) birder (s) marked below:

Jesse Akins

Richard Benning

Mary Blackmore

Harlan and Judy Corrie

Jeremy Dixon

Mason Dixon

Laura Dufford

Anne Straight

Gary Gordon

Mark Keister

Dylan Lewis

Kent Lewis

Katelyn McWethy

Juliet Moderow

Teresa Smith

Kara and Bob Gallup

Clip and mail to Mary Blackmore, 9024 W. West Grove Rd., Forreton IL 61030 or include your pledge form with your chapter ballot (to the right) mailed to NIAS, PO Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032. Questions? Call Mary at 815-938-3204

BALLOT FOR NIAS CHAPTER OFFICERS

2019 – 2020

The individuals listed below have been nominated to serve on next year's NIAS Chapter Board of Directors in the positions indicated. Please vote in the spaces provided if you support the nominated candidates, or insert and vote for write-in candidates if that is your wish. All Board terms, except for President, are for one year.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

VICE PRESIDENT (PRESIDENT ELECT)

_____, Fred Redmore

_____, _____ (Write-in)

SECRETARY

_____, Pam Richards

_____, _____ (Write-in)

TREASURER

_____, Mary Blackmore

_____, _____ (Write-in)

MEMBERS AT LARGE (vote for six)

1. _____, Linda Black

2. _____, Paul Brown

3. _____, Jim Richards

4. _____, Gary Gordon

5. _____, Don Miller

6. _____, Abby Strominger

Send your ballot to NIAS, PO Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032 before April 15. Results will be announced in the next newsletter and the new Board will assume its duties in mid-May.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS (appointed)

Conservation | Laura Dufford

Programs | Teresa Smith

Education | Richard Benning

Publicity | Deb Lischwe

Membership | Tim Smith

Field Trips | Chris Kruger

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

EARTH DAY 2019

Get ready for Earth Day 2019! The Earth Day celebration this year will be on Saturday, April 27, at Krape Park in Freeport, from 9-3. Come enjoy a day in the park and participate in the events.

Bird walk at 9:30 a.m. for kids and families led by Richard Benning.

Live bird presentation at 11 a.m. by Hoo Haven (community building)

Walking meditation with Pat Leitzen-Fye at 2 p.m.

Art project with the Freeport Art Museum (Gunkel shelter)

Informational displays on sustainability/ environment (Gunkel shelter)

Pollinator activity with University of Illinois Extension (a great activity for kids!) 9-noon

ILLINOIS' CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Exciting news from the clean energy front! The Clean Jobs Coalition (which helped pass the Future Energy Jobs Act) has put together a massive clean energy jobs act with the goal of putting Illinois on the path to 100% renewable energy. Specifically, the act will:

- *Set a goal of 100% Clean Energy by 2050 and decarbonize the electric grid by 2030*
- *Address gas and diesel pollution by putting us on the path to electrify the transportation sector.*
- *Prioritize jobs and economic opportunities, especially for economically disadvantaged communities and minority communities.*

Action Alert: Please call your State representatives and Senators and ask them to co-sponsor this bill!

1. *Find your State Rep and State Senator. (Go to www.elections.il.gov/districtlocator/addressfinder.aspx).*

2. *Call their office and ask them to co-sponsor the Clean Energy Jobs Act HB 3624/SB 2132. (Don't be shy – remember the staff person answering the phone is there to serve constituents!)*

- *State your name and let them know you live in the district.*
- *Say you'd like your Rep/Senator to co-sponsor HB3624/SB2132, the Clean Energy Jobs Act.*
- *If the staffer tells you that they're already a co-sponsor, tell them thank you for co-sponsoring.*
- *If you're comfortable, share why you personally care about the Clean Energy Jobs Act (such as health, the planet's future, economic opportunity, etc. The more personal the better!)*

TIME TO RETHINK RECYCLING?

As difficult as it is, perhaps it's time to face the painful truth about recycling plastics (among other things) – it simply isn't working.

According to an article on Treehugger (www.treehugger.com) by Katherine Martinko, "Recycling is virtually non-existent; it's wishful thinking... and needs to be relegated to the past. What we need to be focusing on instead is circularity, closed loop manufacturing, reusability, and true biodegradability." In 2014 only 9.4 percent of all discarded plastics were recycled in the U.S.

Ms. Martinko goes on to state: "I wish that governments would dare to think more aggressively and creatively about how to



fight plastic – say, outlawing all single-use plastics that are deemed non-necessary; requiring stores to eliminate all plastic packaging and offer bulk options with refillable containers; subsidizing doorstep deliveries of milk in glass bottles and more; mandating reusable food containers in cafeterias; and requiring washing machine retrofits to catch synthetic microfibers."

Part of the Answer?

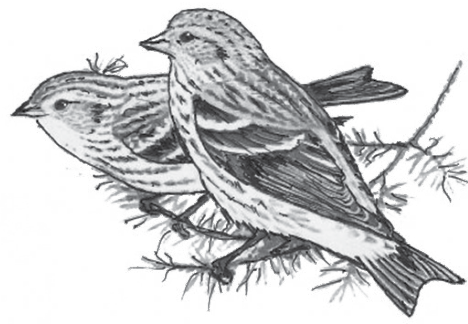
It appears companies are listening. A number of major manufacturers have come together to create "Loop." You sign up, order your products (household goods, non-perishable groceries, personal hygiene products, etc.) which are delivered in a reusable tote bag. When the products are used up, you return the container in the tote (with free pickup) and the containers are cleaned, refilled and shipped back to you. The service will debut this spring in the United States and France – for more information go to www.loop.com.

*Candace Colby
Conservation Chair*

“Conservation is a cause that has no end. There is no point at which we say, ‘Our work is finished.’”

Rachel Carson

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS



The Northwest Illinois Audubon Society participated for the 43rd time in the annual Christmas Bird Count which is conducted by the National Audubon Society. Ours is one of the many counts held across the Western Hemisphere. There are over sixty counts in the state of Illinois alone. The bank of data obtained from the CBC is immense and is utilized by scientists for avian research. This database can be accessed online at www.christmasbirdcount.org. Our count was held December 15, 2018, with weather conditions relatively mild and no snow cover. Twelve field observers and seven feeder observers helped on this day. We always cover a defined territory which is a fifteen mile diameter circle centered in Freeport. Observations outside this territory, or not on count day, are not entered into the database.

There were several highlights during our count. Great Blue Herons, Eurasian Collared-Doves, Northern Flickers and Eastern Bluebirds were observed in record numbers for our circle. Bald Eagles were seen for the fifteenth year in a row. It was a good day for woodpeckers with six different species being observed (Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker and Pileated Woodpecker). The sighting of the Pileated Woodpecker marked only the third time for this species in the history of our count circle. One species, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, was tallied for the first time ever during our CBC. This species seems to be expanding its range so check it out in your field guide and see if it is present in your neighborhood. Our totals for count day were 4846 birds representing 48 different species.

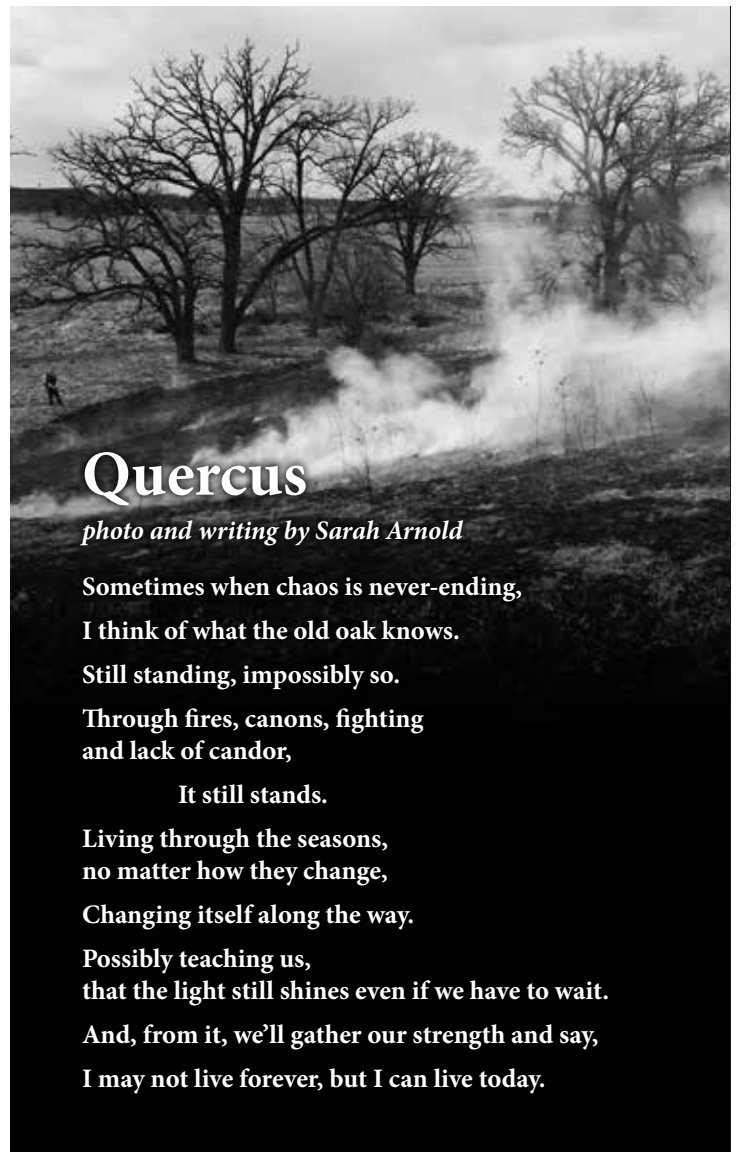
There were also a few notable absences and low numbers during the count. For the second year in a row we did not see a Rough-legged Hawk. This is a species that nests much farther north and is usually only present in our area during the winter. The fewest number of American Crows was recorded since the year 1990. We observed the second lowest number of American Goldfinches in the history of our count circle. One must always keep in mind when interpreting CBC results that only the birds actually observed are included in the results.

This year's top ten list is as follows; Canada Goose (1799), European Starling (802), House Sparrow (518), Rock Pigeon (359), Dark-eyed Junco (221), Mourning Dove (125), Mallard (109), Blue Jay (100), American Crow (91) and Northern Cardinal (84). While year to year fluctuations are common, and interesting to note, in Christmas Bird Count results, it is the longevity of this endeavor that makes the data so valuable from a scientific standpoint.

Thank you to the following individuals for helping with the December 15th CBC. Field observers were Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Harlan Corrie, Judy Corrie, Jeremy Dixon,

Laura Dufford, Kara Gallup, Mark Keister, Anita Nienhuis, John Nienhuis, Teresa Smith and Tim Smith. Feeder observers were Somer Bozovsky, Chris Fye, Dick Luthin, Deb Schroeder, Mike Sheppard, Rebecca Shriver and Lurane Slaght. Special thanks to Tim Smith for storing our CBC data in digital format, and also to the Freeport/Stephenson County Convention & Visitors Bureau for allowing us to use a meeting room for our mid-day break.

*Richard Benning
Christmas Bird Count Compiler*



Quercus

photo and writing by Sarah Arnold

Sometimes when chaos is never-ending,

I think of what the old oak knows.

Still standing, impossibly so.

**Through fires, canons, fighting
and lack of candor,**

It still stands.

**Living through the seasons,
no matter how they change,**

Changing itself along the way.

**Possibly teaching us,
that the light still shines even if we have to wait.**

And, from it, we'll gather our strength and say,

I may not live forever, but I can live today.

ENJOY THE SPRING MIGRATION!

From the first Red-winged Blackbird in February to the last Bobolink in May, the spring migration is a phenomenon of wonder. Truly, as many have said, this never gets old! Every year our chapter schedules spring bird walks to leisurely observe, enjoy and learn about these migratory species. Last year's walks included several nesting Sandhill Cranes (and even a crane with its colt!), as well as good looks at Rusty Blackbird, Pileated Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warbler, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Wilson's Snipe, both Marsh and Sedge Wrens and many more.

All of the walks will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 11 a.m. Feel free to join or depart the group at any time during those three hours. Join the carpool at the Harbor Freight east lot in Freeport at the time listed for each walk.

Following the walks, those who would like to will gather at a local restaurant for an early lunch. Contact the respective walk leader if the weather is questionable or if you need further directions to the site. And don't forget our Annual Bird Festival at Silver Creek on May 11. Happy Birding!

April 3 – Wetland areas of eastern Stephenson county. Carpool at 8 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204).

April 8 – Duck's Misery and the southern Jane Addams Trail. Carpool at 7:40 a.m. Leader: Laura Dufford (815-947-2720).

April 18 – Northern Jane Addams Trail and the Orangeville Wetlands. Meet at the trailhead in Orangeville, just east of the BP gas station. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Somer Bozovsky (815-275-0719).

April 25 – Newell Tract, Oakdale Nature Preserve, rural Freeport. Meet in the parking area of the Newell Tract (the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Rd.) Leader: Anne Straight (815-938-3263).

May 1 – Pecatonica River Forest Preserve (main entrance by the campground). A special bonus of this walk will be stunning wildflowers and possible singing frogs! Carpool at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279).

May 9 – Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. The parking area is off of West Grove Rd. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. We also hope to observe blooming spring prairie flowers. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204).

May 16 – Krape Park, Freeport. Meet in the parking lot by the dam. Leader: Juliet Morderow (201-233-0946)

May 21 – Harry and Dorothy Espenscheid Forest Preserve, northeast of Freeport. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. or follow these directions: from the junction of HWY 20 Bypass and HWY 75, take HWY 75 about 5 miles to Cedarville Rd., turn right (east) on Cedarville Rd. and drive 4.2 miles to Eggert Rd., turn left (north) on Eggert and go 1.8 miles to Farm School Rd. turn right (east) and go 0.3 miles to the preserve (on north side of the road). Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279).

May 28 – Valley of Eden Bird Sanctuary, 5559 E. Rush Creek Rd., Stockton, features both grassland and woodland habitat. Carpool at 7 a.m. or meet in the Stockton village park at 7:30. Leader: Laura Dufford (815-947-2720)



Illustration by Carol Litus

Finding a Path For Your Voice

We are the only members of our biotic community who can work for sound environmental policy on crucial issues such as climate change, who have a seat at the political table. It is up to us to not only speak for ourselves, but to represent those who have no voice, those living beings with whom we share the earth and deeply rely upon for our own existence.

First, become informed. You don't need to become an expert on the various issues, but you should avoid relying on a single source for your information.

Second, practice civility. Save your rants and sarcasm for a sympathetic close friend.

Third, choose your path. It can be

- contacting your elected officials,
- writing letters to the editor,
- having conversations with family and friends,
- joining one or more of the varied efforts of local and/or national groups,
- and many more that I haven't thought of.

Finally, remember to take time to get out of your house and into the environment we all care about deeply. That is the best antidote that I know of for counteracting the feelings of depletion that our present reality often brings.

So take a walk. Join a field trip. But most of all, find a path for your voice.

– Mary Blackmore

Got Nuthatch?

In this irruptive year for the Red-breasted Nuthatch, we're interested in finding out more from our members. Have you had this species at your feeders this fall/winter or have you seen Red-breasted Nuthatches while out for a walk?

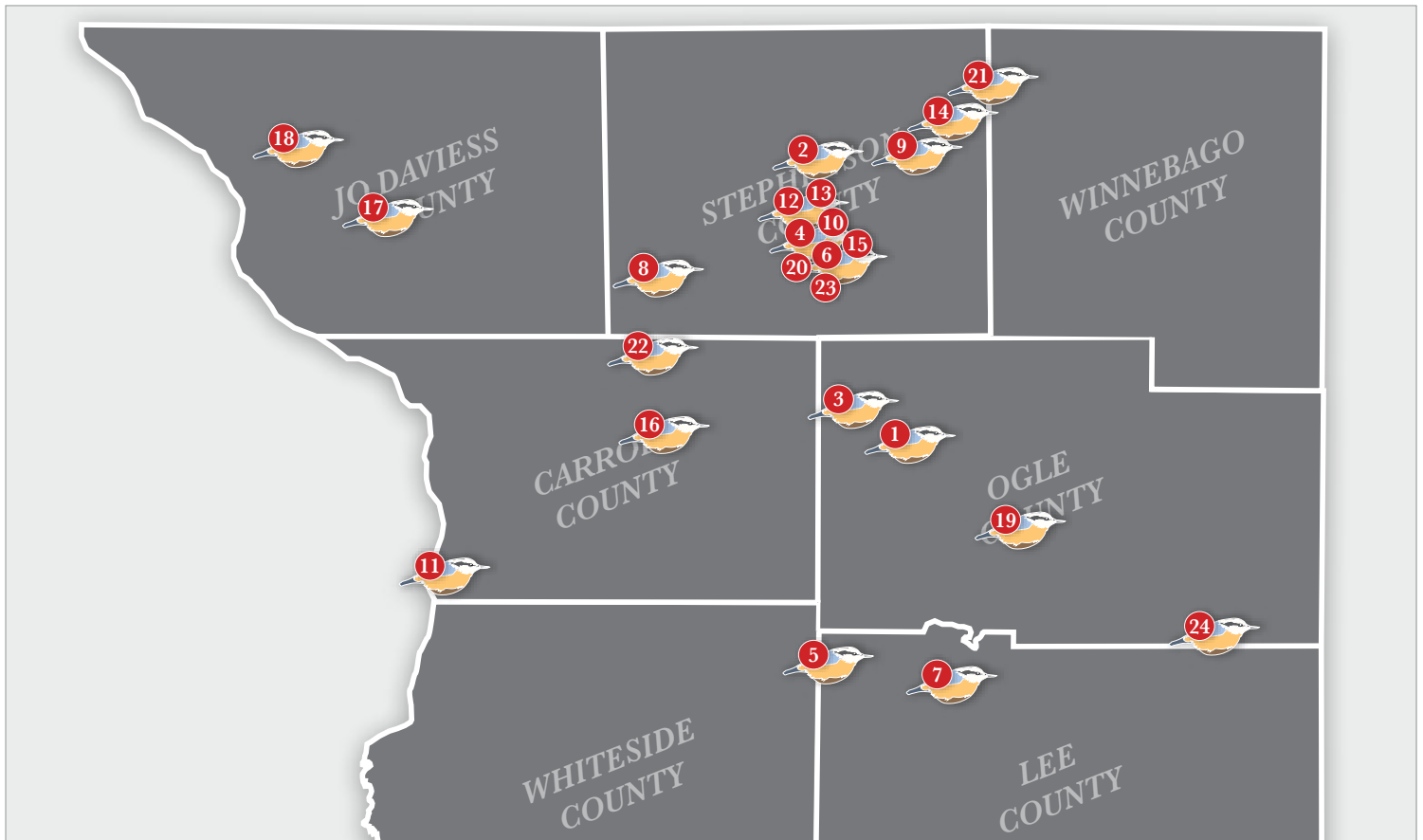
If you've had an encounter, let us know. Send your name and sighting location to our newsletter editor, Dan Barron at dan@beewise.us or 815-541-3261.



Red-breasted Nuthatch, photo by Patty Weik

At the time of printing, the following locations have reported sightings:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Mary Blackmore – 9024 W. West Grove Rd. Forreston | 10. Dick Luthin – 1712 Parkview Drive, Freeport | 17. Joan and Dick Harmet – Rural Elizabeth |
| 2. Harlan & Judy Corrie – rural Cedarville | 11. Anne Straight – Thomson Causeway (along Mississippi River) | 18. Vicky Wegner – 1144 North Clark Lane, Galena Territory |
| 3. Anne Straight – Forreston | 12. Candace Colby – Highland Drive, Freeport | 19. Kayse Rushford – 1008 E. Pleasant Grove Rd. Oregon, IL |
| 4. Gary Gordon – Freeport | 13. Jeff and Fran Shriver – 3000 Wheatland Terrace, Freeport | 20. Lurane Slaght – 1220 West Palmer Street, Freeport |
| 5. Tim and Teresa Smith, 1975 Mound Hill Rd., Dixon | 14. Diane Phillips – 5210 E Rock Grove Rd, Rock City | 21. Ron Friedell – Lake Summerset |
| 6. Juliet Moderow, Freeport | 15. Rebecca Shriver – 842 W Lincoln, Freeport | 22. Pam Richards – Lake Carroll |
| 7. Carla Jaffe – 1103 Park Lane, Dixon | 16. Rick and Kathy Weber – Lanark | 23. Patty Weik - 2221 Hillside Ct., Freeport |
| 8. Steve Simpson – 13476 W Loran Rd, Pearl City | | 24. Esther Schippers – Rochelle |
| 9. Paul Brown – 3982 E Cedarville Rd, Dakota | | |



NIAS PRESIDENT'S TWEET - WINTER

So, to quote a statement I said in my last tweet "Winter, where are you?" – it appears it came! Wow, what a winter we have had! But alas, it is time for spring! I know I'm certainly ready to say good-bye to the cold, snow, and ice! Spring is usually a birder's favorite time of year! It's birding season in full swing – with bird walks, nature walks, prairie walks, and our Birdathon approaching.

April will always be my favorite month – my little Willow was born at this time and I can't wait to take her on her second annual Birdathon (Can she top her record of 8 birds!?!). I look forward to giving her the opportunities to explore the outside world and discover what is out there. Even when I see a bird or plant I know, it is still exciting to see it again, but imagine seeing it for the first time like Willow. I think now with Willow under my wing, I will get a second chance to see things in a new perspective. Perhaps you can too – enjoy the new season that will soon be unveiled under the inches of snow. Look forward to new plants emerging and new baby birds hatching. Enjoy your spring!

I hope to see you at our Annual Banquet in April!

Juliet Moderow
nwilaudubon@gmail.com

Spring Stewardship

We invite you to join us on one or more of our Spring Stewardship days as we work together to reduce the numbers of Wild Parsnip, Garlic Mustard and honeysuckle on both of our preserves and the Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve (see calendar). Early removal means not only cooler temperatures for us, but less biomass. We just slice and fling with our trusty parsnip predator tools and don't have to carry out seedheads.

April stewardship days are not scheduled as plant emergence times are too unpredictable. We'll contact volunteers in April, a day or two in advance of planned stewardship. To get on the contact list email Nancy at rnocken@gmail.com or call Mary at 815-938-3204.

THE MAY DATES ARE:

May 8 – Freeport Prairie, 10 a.m.-noon

May 13 – Elkhorn Creek, 10 a.m.-noon, carpool at 9:30

May 17 – Silver Creek, 9-11 a.m., carpool at 8:15

May 23 – Silver Creek, 8-10 a.m., carpool at 7:15

May 31 – Elkhorn Creek, 8-10 a.m., carpool at 7:30



Be sure to wear a hat, long sleeves, long pants (light colored is best) and socks long enough to tuck your pant legs into (in case of ticks). Tools, gloves, water and snacks will be provided. If weather is questionable contact Mary or Nancy as above.

Our Elkhorn Creek preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. The parking lot is off of West Grove Rd. Our Silver Creek preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River (S. Main St. in Leaf River becomes Leaf River Rd.), with parking just off of Leaf River Rd. The Freeport Prairie is located off of Walnut Rd. on Freeport's south side. Carpool at the times listed above from the Harbor Freight east lot in Freeport.

BIRDING 101

Learn some birding techniques from local experts!

Saturday, June 1, 9:00 a.m. – noon.
Valley of Eden Bird Sanctuary, Stockton, IL

Birding 101 is geared toward novice birders that would like to become familiar with some common nesting birds in our area. Participants will learn how to use binoculars and field guides. Compare different field guides by hearing reviews by seasoned birders. A team of local expert birders will guide instructional tours at the preserve. With these tools at hand, you will learn the language of the birds. They are telling a story you might want to hear. By the time you are done, you may never look out the window in the same way! This event is organized by the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation. Northwest IL Audubon is a co-sponsor of the event.

The event is open to the public to anyone older than 10 years of age. The event is free to JD CF members and a fee of \$10 for non-members is requested. Please bring your own binoculars if you have them. There will be some available to borrow. We suggest that participants bring water, dress in layers appropriate for the weather and wear hiking shoes for walking on uneven ground. Valley of Eden is owned by Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation and is located southwest of Stockton. For more information please contact the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation at 815-858-9100 or visit the website at www.jdcf.org.





Oakdale Nature Center Murals Restored

Before the Oakdale Nature Center was demolished, the murals from the center were saved by NIAS in Rex's Blue Room. Recently, we gave these panels to the Children's Hands-on Museum of Northwest Illinois. Many of the panels were damaged, but a group of artists restored these panels. See them in person when the museum opens up March 22 in the Lincoln Mall!

Photograph provided by Gwynne French; Restoration artists: Larry McCoy, Faye Hughes, Nanette Mosher, Roger Goodspeed, Jane Goodspeed, Ellen Bartels, Kathleen Wilkins, and Sherry Maves

Juliet Moderow

SANCTUARY

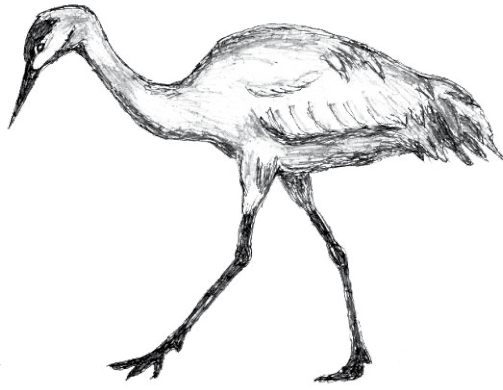
*a FREE public concert featuring
Carrie Newcomer
with pianist Gary Walters*

*Sponsored by
the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society
In celebration of the 20th anniversary
of Audubon's Elkhorn Creek
Biodiversity Preserve*

Saturday, August 24, 7 p.m.
Doors open at 6 p.m. – no reserved seating

*Highland Community College
Student Conference Center H-201*





Illustrations by
Carol Litus

BE PART OF CITIZEN SCIENCE JOIN US FOR THE MIDWEST CRANE COUNT

Mark your calendar now for Saturday, April 13 when we'll once again be counting Sandhill Cranes in Stephenson County. Our count is part of the larger Midwest Crane Count organized by the International Crane Foundation. Following the count we'll gather at a local restaurant for breakfast and to turn in count forms. No experience is necessary! If you are new to the Crane Count you will have a veteran counting partner. Last year 26 counters at 14 sites observed a total of 80 cranes, including one flock of 34 cranes.

Volunteers make this count happen so we hope you can join us! To participate call Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963 before April 7. The count is early, brief and rewarding. Counters are on site from 5:30-7:30 a.m. on count day to listen and watch for cranes.

Special Thank You to Kara Gallup and Carol Redmore

When the website for NIAS was first developed with help of the organization M45, committee members at the time decided to add a tab called Kids and Families. Content coincided with the Audubon newsletter schedule and has new content every two months.

Kara Gallup and Carol Redmore have been writing content for our Kids and Families page since the first issue in December 2013/January 2014. Carol had worked on the section "Nature's Book Nook" and provided her favorite books she often read with her kids and grandchildren, as well as the "Family Activity" section. Kara wrote the section called "Beginning Birder" that contained a brief summary of a bird species that best fit the current time of year and included a list of "Cool Facts" about the bird. She also summarized any family events that we were hosting that fit well on this page.



Tom Arnold of Tom's Turkeys

Each year the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension Stephenson County produces a Local Foods Brochure. It is a resource to connect local food buyers with local food growers.

The 2018 brochure lists over 40 growers in Northwest Illinois that offer local produce, maple syrup, cheese, honey, eggs, poultry and meat. Buying food locally has many advantages; limiting the amount of fuel used to transport food across the country, an opportunity to get to know the farmer that produced the food that you consume, and keeping dollars locally to promote a healthy community.

If you are interested in a free copy of the 2019 Local Foods Brochure you can pick one up at the University of Illinois Extension Stephenson/Winnebago/Jo Daviess County, University of Illinois Extension Ogle County, University of Illinois Extension Lee/Whiteside County, or the Farm Bureau of Stephenson County.

The brochure is also available at www.nwilaudubon.org or by calling 815-835-5109. The 2019 brochure will also be available at the banquet on April 10th.

Carol and Kara have decided to pass on the torch, and we thank them immensely for all of their years of creative and fun work!

**Our new team, who started their first installment
for February/March 2019, are:**

**Jessica Miller – Beginning Birder
Adam Moderow – Nature's Book Nook
Abby Strominger – Family Activity**

Thank you again to Kara and Carol and our new team members Jessica, Adam, and Abby! All 32 of the bimonthly pages that Kara and Carol prepared over the years are archived on the website, so there's always a wide selection of kids and families ideas available to you. Take a look!

ELKHORN CREEK BIODIVERSITY PRESERVE

20TH ANNIVERSARY

Memories

November 2, 1999 – The first species list is compiled for a total of 253. Twenty years later that number has almost doubled and the bird list has more than tripled.

June 18, 2000 – Mary Blackmore’s herd of brush-munching goats begin browsing in selected areas.

July 15, 2000 – The first of several ice cream social fundraisers is held at the nearby farm of Jim and Alice Akins.

October 19, 2000 – Annual rye is planted, courtesy of Jim Akins, on former cropfields to prevent erosion and to suppress weeds.

April 21, 2001 – We sponsor an Earth Day Café fundraiser for visitors to Oakdale’s Earth Day festivities.

May 1, 2001 – We enroll 3.6 acres along Elkhorn Creek into a 15-year CRP contract.

June, 2001 – HCC Ecology students conduct stream sampling. *(see photo – right)*

February 5, 2002 – We finish paying off our loan thanks to the scores of individuals who made donations, as well as chapter volunteers who organized and worked at our various fundraisers.



At loan completion announcement (L to R) Richard Benning, NIAS President; Henrietta Wurtzel, last donor; Shannon Neuendorf, first donor.



HCC Ecology students conduct stream sampling

Being There

Perhaps the best way to celebrate this 20th anniversary is to spend time at the preserve. Visitors are welcome anytime from dawn to dusk, or you may join us for scheduled outings. Upcoming trips include two opportunities, on April 6 and April 26, to hear amphibians *(see page 3 for details)*, and a May 9 bird walk *(see page 7 for details)*. Enjoy the wonder!



*All these things
that we call
familiar,
Are just miracles
clothed in the
commonplace.*

“Geodes”

*by Carries
Newcomer*

*All photos by
Keith Blackmore*

Would you like to join Audubon as a NEW Member or give a GIFT membership?

Two types of membership are available:

1. Northwest Illinois Audubon Society and National Membership

includes this local newsletter, local mailings and the national "Audubon" magazine.

_____ National Membership \$20

All renewals for national memberships need to use the national membership form.

2. Northwest Illinois Audubon Society Local only Membership

includes this newsletter and other mailings from our local chapter. _____ Local Only \$15

Name of new member or gift recipient _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

If this is a gift membership, please indicate the name of the person providing the gift membership:

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*Make check payable to **NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY** and mail to:
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2115 15th Pl. So. - La Crosse WI 54601

815-541-3261 - dan@beewise.us

nwilaudubon@gmail.com

THANK YOU!



Recent field trip leaders/coordinators:
Mary Blackmore, Anne Straight and
Richard Benning.

Teresa Smith and Mary Blackmore for
updating our Local Foods brochure.

Shey Lowman for updating the species
lists for our preserves.

Teresa Smith and Mary Blackmore for
serving on the nominating committee and
to the many willing members who said,
"Yes!"

Mary Blackmore for finishing our seed
processing and creating seed mixes for
late winter planting.

Colleen Kaney for her donation in honor of
Mary Blackmore's birthday

Debbie and Jack Barron of Freeport Press,
for donating printing of the banquet
mailer, as well as the full-color upgrade of
this newsletter.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to
this newsletter and our organization.

**Northwest Illinois
Audubon Society**

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<https://kinzingerforms.house.gov/email-adam/>

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STATE

45th District Sen. Brian Stewart

50 W. Douglas Street, Suite 1001, Freeport, IL 61032
815-232-0774 | brian@senatorstewart.com

36th District Sen. Neil Anderson

1523 47th Ave, Suite 3, Moline, IL 61265
senatorneilanderson.com/Contact

89th District Rep. Andrew Chesney

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chesneyforillinois.com

90th District Rep. Tom Demmer

1221 Currency Street, Suite B, Rochelle, IL 61068
rep@tomdemmer.com