



JUNE – JULY 2021

# NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias*

Great Blue Herons live in both freshwater and saltwater habitats, and also forage in grasslands and agricultural fields, where they stalk frogs and mammals. Most breeding colonies are located within 2 to 4 miles of feeding areas, often in isolated swamps or on islands, and near lakes and ponds bordered by forests. Great Blue Herons eat nearly anything within striking distance, including fish, amphibians, reptiles, small mammals, insects, and other birds. They grab smaller prey in their strong mandibles or use their dagger-like bills to impale larger fish, often shaking them to break or relax the sharp spines before gulping them down.



[www.nwilaudubon.org](http://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.

**Please note: schedule and location of programs are subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions; please see newsletter and website for up-to-date information.**

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](http://nwilaudubon.org) for specific monthly details, special events or any changes to the usual time and place.

*Please join us!*

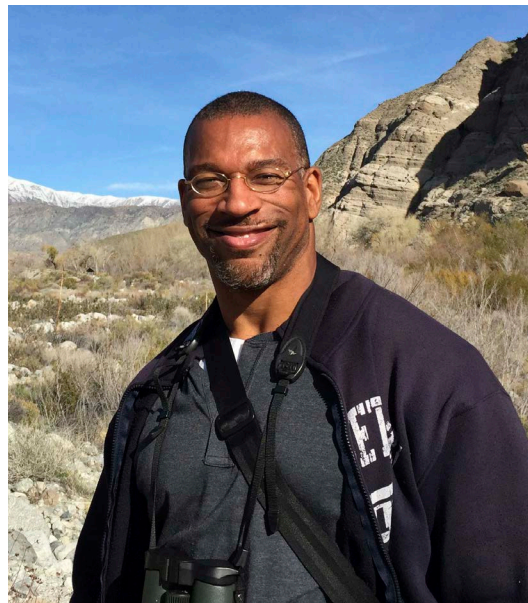
## INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER:

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About Bird Information:  
[birds.cornell.edu](http://birds.cornell.edu)

Bird Photo: Dan Barron  
Program Photo:

Provided by the presenter



## CHRISTIAN COOPER IN CONVERSATION

***Celebrating the Diversity of Birds and People***

Wednesday, June 16, 6:30 PM via Zoom

To receive the Zoom link to this program, visit our NIAS website or the Freeport Art Museum Website <https://www.freeportartmuseum.com/new-events>

## A BIRD WALK WITH CHRISTIAN COOPER AT TAYLOR PARK

Thursday, June 17 at 10:30 AM

**Please note, this is a Freeport Art Museum event.** Registration will be required for this event as the group size will be limited.

Please contact the Freeport Art Museum at [education@freeportartmuseum.org](mailto:education@freeportartmuseum.org) or call 815.235.9755

Christian Cooper was birdwatching on May 25, 2020, in Central Park, New York when he asked a woman to leash her dog, as is required by park rules. When the woman refused, Christian Cooper began filming. The recording shows Amy Cooper (no relation) telling the police that "there is an African American man threatening my life." All of this happened on the very same day George Floyd died.

Christian Cooper has graciously accepted an invitation to visit Freeport and share his enthusiasm for birding with the young people at the Boys and Girls Club and the community. During his visit and prior to this evening program, our chapter will be donating multiple binoculars to the Boys and Girls Club. Christian will speak to the children and teens at the center and teach them about the joys and methods of being a birdwatcher. NIAS has plans to develop a recurring program with the center to continue to educate the children and teens about birdwatching.

Besides his lifelong excitement for birding, Christian has been a dedicated advocate for equality and inclusivity. At this special evening event, you will hear him speak from his experience in promoting social justice and anti-racism as part of that critical conversation concerning racism in the United States.

We would like to give special thanks to Barry Treu from the Freeport Art Museum. Barry not only worked countless hours on the multiple bird exhibits as part of his role at the museum, but worked with our chapter for months on creating the first World Migratory Bird Day event in Freeport on May 8. He truly helped make Freeport for the birds and helped start a new tradition for our community as he brought many other organizations together, including the Freeport Public Library, Winneshiek Playhouse, and Freeport Camera Club. In addition, he has donated a portion of all of his sales from his exhibit "Endangered and Threatened" that featured twenty-nine bird portraits of birds on the 2020 Illinois Endangered and Threatened list to our chapter.

# CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the uncertainty of future cancellations associated with COVID-19, please check our website calendar before any scheduled event or call any leader on the event. If you would like to be notified by email, please send a message to [nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com) to be placed on an email contact list.

**COVID Precautions: There will be no carpooling. Be sure to take your mask to each event for times when social distancing is not possible.**

- S** **June 2** – Freeport Prairie Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*
- S** **June 4** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*
- E** **June 5** – EARTH FEST! Earth Day is Every day! Freeport Public Library, Debate Square & Arts Plaza (Douglas Street, Freeport).
- S** **June 7** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*
- F** **June 9** – Wilson Prairie Walk, 9-11 a.m. *See Field Trips on page 3 for details.*
- S** **June 10** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*
- S** **June 12** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*
- S** **June 14** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*
- E** **June 16** – Christian Cooper in Conversation - Celebrating the Diversity of Birds and People 6:30 p.m. *See cover for details.*

**S** **June 17** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**E** **June 17** – A Bird Walk with Christian Cooper at Taylor Park, 10:30 a.m. *See cover for details.*

**S** **June 19** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **June 21** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **June 23** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **June 25** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**F** **June 26** – Native Prairie Walk, Oakdale 9:00-10:00 a.m. *See Field Trips on page 3 for details.*

**E** **June 26** – Firefly Campfire at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve at 8 p.m. First we'll take a stroll to observe nesting birds and blooming plants. The campfire begins at 8:30 p.m., with s'mores provided. We hope to see an impressive display of fireflies. Bring a lawn chair, flashlight, insect repellent and, if desired, water.

*Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve is about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Roads, with parking off of West Grove Road. If weather is questionable call Mary at 815-938-3204.*

**S** **June 28** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **June 30** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**F** **July 1** – Walking tour of Wapello Land and Water Reserve, Hanover, IL., 8:30 a.m. *See Field Trips on page 3 for details.*

**S** **July 7** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **July 9** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **July 12** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **July 14** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**F** **July 17** – Navigating in the Wild, 9:00-10:00 a.m. *See Field Trips on page 3 for details.*

**S** **July 19** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **July 22** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**E** **July 24** – Screech Owl Full Moon Campfire at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve at 7:30 p.m. After a stroll to observe birds and blooms, the campfire will start at 8:00, with s'mores provided. This is typically a good time of the summer to hear our resident Screech Owls. Bring a lawn chair, flashlight, insect repellent and, if desired, water.

*Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve is about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Roads, with parking off of West Grove Road. If weather is questionable call Mary at 815-938-3204.*

**S** **July 27** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

**S** **July 29** – Elkhorn Creek Stewardship, 7-9 a.m. *See page 7 for details.*

- M** Meeting
- F** Field Trip
- S** Stewardship
- P** Program
- E** Event
- O** Other

## **Bird art and photography exhibits continue until August 7 at the Freeport Art Museum and community**

*In Partnership with: Freeport Public Library, Freeport Art Museum, University of Illinois Extension, Your Core Being, and Environmental Study Group.*

- Alice Hargrave Installation: The Suffragette Conference of the Birds after Farid Attar
- For The Birds: Invitational featuring 26 Illinois artists
- Endangered and Threatened: 29 Bird Portraits of birds from the Illinois list of endangered and threatened species; By Barry Treu

- Freeport High School National Art Honor Society exhibition of bird art and bird carvings by self-taught carver Russell Buttell (1821 - 2005)
- Freeport Area Camera Club: Exhibiting Avian Photography at 9 East Coffee, Higher Grounds Coffee, and the Freeport Public Library

# EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

**COVID-19 Precautions: Be sure to bring your face covering for when you are unable to social distance. Additionally, optical equipment, including spotting scopes, cannot be shared.**

## EARTH FEST!

### Earth Day is Every day!

*This event is sponsored by our NIAS chapter.*

Saturday, June 5, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Freeport Public Library, Debate Square & Arts Plaza (Douglas Street, Freeport)

**10:00** – Exhibits and Activities for families; put on by Freeport Art Museum, Freeport Public Library, & University of Illinois Extension

**10:15** – Earth based Yoga with Pat Leitzen Fye from Your Core Being (bring a mat if you prefer)

**11:00** – Northern IL Raptor Rehab & Education– A program with Live Raptors!

**1:00** – Hoo Haven – A program with Live Birds of Prey!!

**2:00** – Music by Kendra Swanson:

Kendra will perform on banjo, guitar, and fiddle, delivering an enthusiastic set of music that celebrates both flora and fauna, and includes original compositions for this Earth Fest event.

Activities will be at the various locations listed. Wander around to see the activities and exhibits. If weather is not suitable, activities and exhibits will be indoors at the Public Library. The afternoon concert will be canceled if it's raining.

Bring your lawn chairs or blankets to enjoy the presentations and concert. CDC Covid protocols will be followed. Please be prepared to mask and social distance. Check the NW IL Audubon Facebook page for updates or changes.

## Wilson Prairie Walk

Wednesday, June 9, 9:00-11:00 a.m.  
Wilson Prairie Nature Preserve  
(near Pecatonica, IL)

Don Miller will lead a tour of this privately-owned 20-acre dry prairie which provides habitat for at least nine species of grasses and over 75 species of native flowers. Located on a ridge with a great vista and an even more spectacular view on the ground. There is a 1/3 of a mile walk to get to the prairie from parking lot, but the walk will be easy.

*Please email or call Don to reserve one of the limited spots and to get directions. [rivermiller@hotmail.com](mailto:rivermiller@hotmail.com) or 815-218-8024.*

## Native Prairie Walk

Saturday, June 26, 9:00-10:00 a.m.  
Newell Tract, Oakdale Nature Preserve

Learn the abundant and diverse plant species that have called this area home since before the first settlers. We will explore the prairie preserve at Oakdale highlighting some of the more common native plants, what their place in the ecosystem is, how prairies are maintained, and how backyard prairies are becoming popular. We anticipate not needing masks but please have one with you should guidelines change. Meet in the shelter/parking area of the Newell Tract (the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Rd.)

*Contact Adam Moderow at [adamoderow@gmail.com](mailto:adamoderow@gmail.com) or at 815-541-5842 to register in case it becomes necessary to limit the number of participants.*

## Wildflowers and Wildlife at Wapello Land and Water Reserve

Thursday, July 1, 8:30 -11:00 a.m.  
Wapello Land and Water Reserve,  
Hanover, IL

Wapello Reserve is a 178 acre tract of restored prairie, wetland, woodland, and river corridor owned by the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation. The site is also home to several Native American mounds. We'll be walking a mostly level, mowed grass trail which takes us through a 13 year old prairie restoration. We should see a good display of wildflowers, pollinators working the flowers, and hopefully catch a glimpse of some interesting bird species. It is easy walking, but there is no shade. Meet at the parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Bring water and insect repellent. From Freeport, take Route 20 west. Just past Elizabeth, turn south on Highway 84. The site is located just south of Hanover on the west side of Highway 84.

*Trip leader: Laura Dufford, phone: 815-541-8958, email: [lauradufford@gmail.com](mailto:lauradufford@gmail.com)*

## Navigating in the Wild

Saturday, July 17, 9:00-10:00 a.m.  
Newell Tract, Oakdale Nature Preserve

Want to know how to turn your watch into a compass? Do you know how to find East using a stick in the ground? Do you think moss only grows on the North side of a tree? We will talk about these strategies for navigation and more at Oakdale Nature Preserve. Meet in the shelter/parking area of the Newell Tract (the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Rd.) We anticipate not needing masks but please have one with you should guidelines change.

*Contact Adam Moderow at [adamoderow@gmail.com](mailto:adamoderow@gmail.com) or at 815-541-5842 to register in case it becomes necessary to limit the number of participants.*



March burn at Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve  
photos by Pam Richards

## THE PRESIDENT'S TWEET

Greetings friends. It is hard to believe it's almost summer. It's exciting because we have so many great opportunities and events in June. Earth Fest will occur on June 5th, which will be followed by Christian Cooper arriving in Freeport to spend three days here.

We're excited to hear him share about celebrating the diversity of birds and the diversity of people who watch them. We are really hoping this event, will be a stepping stone to creating a more diverse and welcoming organization for our local community.

It is our desire to be an organization within the Freeport and surrounding community which opens up the wonder of birding and importance of conservation to every segment of the population here. The City of Freeport passed an Honorary Resolution recognizing World Migratory Bird Day on May 3rd and a celebration of Migratory Bird Day was held on May 8th at Taylor Park.

Christian Cooper will be birding with the kids of the community and speaking to teens and adults about his experiences on June 16th and 17th. This will give us an opportunity to build some relationships with a variety of groups locally. NIAS has been partnering with the Freeport Art Museum, The Freeport Public Library, The Boys and Girls Club, Winneshiek Players and Citizens United for Rights, Respect and Equity (CURRE).

We are looking to build relationships with these organizations in order to benefit one another as we advance opportunities for NIAS to share our vision to a larger audience. The relationships will also benefit NIAS as we become stronger when we are more diverse.

I am hoping you are taking the opportunities offered and look forward to many new friendships and partnerships developing out of these events. Take care. (g3)

– Gary G Gordon  
NWIL Audubon President

May 8th, world migratory bird event. photos by Gary Gordon

42  
YEARS

## Birdathon

*Your money goes where the birds go*

**For the first time in the history of our birdathon the result is a tie. "Team Keith" and "Harlems Harem" both spotted 96 species.**

*Thank you to all of the birders who participated and to those who pledged donations. Look for a full summary of our 42nd "Birdathon" in the next newsletter.*

## FREEPORT TO RECOGNIZE WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

On May 3, 2021, at the Freeport City Council meeting, our chapter member Juliet Moderow introduced a Resolution for the city of Freeport to recognize World Migratory Bird Day. The Resolution was voted on by Mayor Jodi Miller and City Council members with a vote of 8-0 in support of this day and ongoing support for bird conservation efforts.

*To see the resolution in entirety, please visit <https://cityoffreeport.org/> to review meeting minutes.*



– Juliet  
Moderow



## 2021 STEPHENSON COUNTY CRANE COUNT



Illustration by  
Carol Litus

The 2021 Crane Count was held on Saturday, April 17th with Mother Nature providing us with weather that was ideal for watching birds. With nearly no wind and temperatures in the low thirties it was a delightful morning to listen to the calling of the cranes and numerous other birds. Counters commented on how pleasant it was to hear the cranes, turkeys, barred owls, and numerous song birds. 13 of the 14 sites in Stephenson County were able to count a least 1 crane. A total of 62 cranes were observed this year.

Twenty-four NIAS volunteers participated as part of the multi-state Annual Midwest Crane Count sponsored by the International Crane Foundation. Without the help of our many volunteer counters, the Crane Count would not be possible. Big thanks go out to all the volunteers that got out early on a cold damp spring day to count cranes. Volunteers include: Jeff Shriver, Rebecca Shriver, Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Jesse Akins, Curt Richards, Jen Richards, Isaiah Akins, Bethany Akins, Jeremy Dixon, Richard Benning, Glenn Hagemann, Chris Fye, Gary Gordon, Bernard Lischwe, Judy and Harlan Corrie, Teresa and Tim Smith, Rex Sides, Anne Straight, Juliet Moderow, Sherrie Shoemaker and Colleen Wilson. Additional thanks go to Teresa Smith for coordinating our count.



# 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, originally named Stephenson County Audubon Society, was formed on June 10, 1971 and chartered in 1972 as a Chapter of the National Audubon Society.

We wanted to celebrate our amazing 50 years as a chapter by showcasing past accomplishments, stories, and photos from the beginning in the upcoming newsletters for this year and honoring the many people that were significant in the establishment of this chapter. Many of the stories you will see will come from a treasured scrapbook containing newspaper articles from 1971-1981 and from current Audubon members.

In 1973, the local Audubon society continued to develop their presence in the community. There was a lot of newspaper coverage about the group, highlighting their role in making the community aware of environmental issues.

Programs in 1973 included "Challenge of Inner Space," in which the presenter Lawrence Madden spoke about water pollution; a program on "The Proposed Nuclear Power Plant," now located near Byron, where Bruce Ellis raised concerns at the time and encouraged opposition; Earth Week programs by professor Douglas Wade of Lorado Taft campus, who emphasized the need to reduce water, air, noise, and soil pollution; the "Geological effect on Environment" presented by Mr. Vernon Bestes, a science teacher at Carl Sandberg School; an outdoor event called "For the Beauty of the Earth: Hunting Our Nature Treasures," where Evelyn Dameier led teams to "search and learn" the area on Flagstaff Hill of Krape Park; a slideshow presentation on wildflowers in Elizabeth by Miss Elda Goodmiller, the "Future of State Parks" presented by John Jachino, a park ranger at Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park of Lena; and a program by Keith Blackmore about the current (and still current) need for a change of attitude toward preserving natural resources and restoring what can be restored.

Programs in 1974 included a program about "Borrow Pits," which presenter Roy Merrill described as areas along interstate

highways that are created when soil is removed from farms and then filled with water, thus creating a refuge and feeding ground for waterfowl, land, and shorebirds; a program about Peregrine Falcons by Dr. Eric Awender; a program on "Outdoor Education in England" presented by David Lathrop; and a program focused on "Conservation, Wildlife and Environment" by Wilson Fisher.



Photo of the small "Hansen-Blackmore" prairie plot today near the biology building on the HCC college campus.

**"...Only one one-hundredth of one percent remains of the original 21.6 million acres of Illinois prairie."**

Field trips in 1974 included visiting the Federal Wildlife Refuge at Spring Lake (which is still a favorite today) and a tour of the biology lab and greenhouse at Highland Community College led by Leland Hanson. Hanson also discussed plans for establishing a prairie plot on the Highland campus, that still exists today. The prairie, now called the Hansen-Blackmore prairie, is a diverse planting using seed that was collected only from a 50-mile radius of the site in an effort to preserve local ecotypes.

## How Did It All Begin?

Carol Redmore

I must admit that the story of my connection to Audubon began ingloriously—I don't remember when I joined (sometime in the '80's) and I don't remember the meetings at all! What really started my whole journey wasn't even specifically related to Audubon; it was the large painting of the caterpillar at the end of the long hall (as it used to be) in the Science Building at Highland, as I always parked in the science parking lot and walked through the building to get to the IMC, where I taught English. My science background was pathetic, and I thought the caterpillar was hideous. I so informed Keith Blackmore, whom I often saw as I plodded down that hall. He told me it was a magnificent painting and I would have to adjust my perspective. Keith often had brown bag lunch in the IMC library lunchroom with the Humanities people, and it was there he began to urge me to go on bird walks. It was clear to me he had taken leave of his senses. Get up at 5:30 in the morning to go look at birds? As a quote says, "I take my mornings slowly." "Never!" I told him repeatedly.

It is true that as a child I loved to be out in the woods or on trails--most of my childhood had been spent in a nearby small woods and pasture. It was my place to be, and in those long-ago days my friend and I could roam and explore all day. Our days were long and golden; my friend and I watched the wildlife and even established an animal cemetery. However, it never occurred to me to pay any attention to birds or even think of naming the animals and plants or studying them. No adult I knew had any such interest, and in school science was just some dull thing with charts. And birds--well, I had had a most unfortunate encounter with a bird that lay bloodied and clearly dead; I had run barefoot across the street to the little grocery store to get an ice cream bar and on the way back stepped right on the victim. I ran home screaming. And there was more--one day I reached up to grab my trapeze (a rod hanging by ropes from a tree limb) and to my horror I squashed a caterpillar. (Continued on page 6)



*Spring waterfowl field trip to Spring Lake in 2015*

He oozed green slimy stuff all over my fingers. I ran into the house screaming.

And now, all those years later, I had to look at a huge caterpillar as I walked down the hall every morning with this biology instructor telling me it was beautiful and that I should get up at dawn and go look at birds? Ha!- Dream on!" I told him.

Then one summer I went to a writers' conference at the Wolf Ridge Environmental Center near Ely, Minnesota.

Our leader, essayist and naturalist Paul Gruchow, gathered us to explore ways of thinking, learning and writing about nature. We could look down on Lake Superior and wander forest trails. One night he announced that any of us who wanted to observe bird banding in the morning could be on hand at 5:00 a.m. to meet a van that would take us to the bird banding station. For some reason, this time I didn't say "Ha!" Instead, I met that van. We saw the nets, and there were those tiny birds—not bloodied and dead but pulsing with life and beauty, then released and lifted off into freedom. Someone asked if I would like to hold a bird and let it fly. Oh yes! It was a life-changing moment!

Back home I went on my first Audubon bird walk at Le-Aqua-Na. I couldn't even

recognize a goldfinch! How humiliating! But it was a wonderful morning. With that I was on the road to Audubon. That led to ornithology and flora & fauna classes, which, mercifully, I could take as pass-fail, and a trip-of-a-lifetime to Big Bend with the ornithology class.

Most of this seems to be more centered in Highland than in Audubon, but the experiences of both became intertwined. I never made my peace with the caterpillar, never became a very good bird watcher, but the bird walk experiences were like those long, golden days of childhood in the woods. One thing built on another, and there were the Audubon campfires, the prairie work days, the Issues meetings to discuss environmental concerns, the bird festivals and butterfly festivals. And while I still don't remember exactly when I joined, and really don't remember the first meetings, I certainly have enjoyed so many monthly meetings since and learned so much. Zoom has saved us this year, but I know we all look forward to in-person meetings, talking to people, sharing coffee and cookies, going on field trips, and a continuing evolution of good Audubon visiting and friendships, festivals and field trips and bird walks---and I can recognize a goldfinch now!

## ***Don Miller***

For three decades I would occasionally make the trip to Freeport to catch a Northwest Illinois Audubon program. They have offered enticing programs for a long time. Several times as the Director at Severson Dells Nature Center I was asked to present a program to the group. For so many years Mary and Keith Blackmore were great supporters of Severson Dells offering extended field trips, an extensive Master Naturalist class, (before there was an official one), monetary support and just being good people to get to know. Knowing the Blackmore's, as well as working with Rich Benning for 16 years, I admired their commitment to the mission of NIAS, and I enjoyed doing things with them. So, once I retired and had more time to give, it seemed like a logical place to give back to and focus on their important mission statement. Getting involved with the Board and doing restoration projects I have been reacquainted with Nancy Ocken (one of my favorite visiting teachers while at Severson Dells) and so many awesome friendly people who through good and generous work and a friendly smile, make NIAS a great place to be associated with.

## **"Call Keith"**

**Kara Gallup**

In 2003, my husband and I bought the 'family' farm and decided to plant 3 acres in prairie. We quickly choose the Pheasant Forever seed mix, which was great for pheasants but not so much for a prairie. I began to ask around to see if someone could educate me about how to move this plot closer to prairie and the common answer was 'Call Keith Blackmore'.

I knew nothing about Keith or about NWIL Audubon but I called Keith and he met with my sister and I that very afternoon. (This was a common response from Keith when someone asked for help) After looking at our 3 acres, he took us on a tour of several remnant properties, showing and teaching us about prairies. He finished by telling me how to begin to slowly change our small plot into something more 'prairie-like'. As he began to leave, I thanked him and told him if there was any way I could repay him, just let me know. He immediately said, "What are you doing tomorrow?" I loved that. Unfortunately, we were leaving on a trip the next day but I promised I would uphold my offer.

In a few months, I attended one of the NWIL monthly meetings and Keith and Mary greeted me warmly... actually, everyone did! I quickly became a member

and progressed to board member, field trip coordinator, short term as President, eager attendee at Food For Thought events, committee work, field trips and stewardship involvement.

My love is the prairie work but despite my common protests of "I'm not a birder", I believe I have become a tentative birder. All of this through 18 years of increasing involvement and love for this group of people... and all because of a man and his wife who dedicated their time to moving people toward nature when they least expected they needed it. Keith's authenticity and natural teaching abilities combined with Mary's eagerness, natural gifts and birding talents (have you heard her owl impressions?) drew me in and continue to teach me new things every year. I look forward to celebrating the work of this group of people and the richness that has resulted in their efforts.

### **Questions About Your Membership?**

Contact Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963  
or [timtreetsmith@gmail.com](mailto:timtreetsmith@gmail.com)

***The following list recognizes the 27 individuals who have served as president of NIAS for the past 50 years.***

**WE THANK THEM ALL FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP.**

1971-73: Tom Kubitz  
1973-75: John Clark  
1975-76: Chuck King  
1976-77: Velma Martin  
1977-79: Keith Blackmore  
1979-81: Mary Stevens Spencer  
1981-83: Evelyn Dameier  
1983-85: Judy Kurr  
1985-87: Debbie Carley/Perry DeGraw  
1987-89: Sandy Tune  
1989-91: Sherry Roskam  
1992-94: Terri Clark  
1994-96: Darla VanBuskirk/John Walt  
1996-98: John Walt  
1998-00: Keith Blackmore  
2000-02: Richard Benning  
2002-04: Chris Kruger  
2004-06: Steve Simpson  
2006-08: Dick Luthin  
2008-10: Kara Gallup/Richard Benning  
2010-12: Lucas Bradley/Teresa Smith  
2012-14: Teresa Smith  
2014-16: Lynn Feaver  
2016-18: Rex Sides  
2018-20: Juliet Moderow  
2020-22: Gary Gordon



Mary Blackmore (hidden by hat) leads a field trip in 2016 through the Hansen-Blackmore Prairie at Highland Community College.

# THANK YOU BOARD MEMBERS!

A grateful thank you to the following retiring Board Members who have served NW IL Audubon Society for the past year: Linda Black (Vice-President), Laura Dufford (Conservation Chair), Richard Benning (Education Chair), Deb Lischwe (Publicity), Paul Brown (Membership), Chris Kruger (Field Trips), and Pam Richards as Secretary though she will continue as the new Vice-President. A special thank you to Juliet Moderow who had been serving as President Emeritus. Thank for all you have done and continue to do.

New Board and Committee members include Teresa Smith, Adam Moderow, Leah Dixon, Mary Blackmore, Elizabeth Boettner, Fred Redmore and Steve Simpson. Thank you to these new Board members willing to share your time, talents and gifts with NW IL Audubon.

## THE 2021-2022 BOARD MEMBERS INCLUDE

Gary Gordon – President  
Pam Richards – Vice President  
Fran Shriver – Secretary  
Tim Smith – Treasurer

## BOARD MEMBERS AT-LARGE:

Elizabeth Boettner, Jeremy Dixon, Carol Redmore, Fred Redmore, Jeff Shriver and Steve Simpson.

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Teresa Smith – Conservation Chairperson  
Don Miller – Program Chairperson  
Adam Moderow – Education Chairperson  
Leah Dixon – Publicity Chairperson  
Molly Doolittle – Membership Chairperson  
Mary Blackmore – Field Trip Chairperson  
Dan Barron – Newsletter Editor

It is because of the strong group of selfless individuals who make this team so very effective. Thank you to those of you who have served on the Board and thank you to those who have “re-upped” or are joining the Board for the first time. You are all very special and much appreciated for all you have done and continue to do. I look back at 2020 with good memories despite the circumstances and look forward to 2021-2022 with even more hope.

– Gary G. Gordon aka g3



# SUMMER STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES

Please join us for one or more of the following stewardship sessions scheduled below. All sessions except June 2 (Freeport Prairie) are at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve. Work at our Silver Creek preserve will take place later in the year. Depending upon the site or week, we will be doing a variety of tasks such as removing sweet clover, burdock and wild parsnip, cutting brush, girdling saplings or otherwise reducing the competition to our native prairie, woodland and wetland species. Times vary so be sure to check the schedule.

**COVID Precautions:** *Please bring your mask for when social distancing is not possible. No carpooling will be arranged. Bring your own water and, if desired, snack.*

**You Supply:** *Wear long pants, long sleeves, socks long enough to tuck your pant legs into (for tick avoidance), a hat and footwear that can get wet (earlier is dewier!). Take along insect repellent, sunscreen and work gloves.*

**We Supply:** *Tools and directions about our work always will be provided.*

## SITE DIRECTIONS:

**Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve** is about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds., with parking off of West Grove Rd.

**The Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve** is just south of the intersection of Meadows Dr. and Walnut Rd. on the south side of Freeport. Parking is off of Walnut Rd.

**Questions?** *If the weather is questionable or you need more information, contact the listed leader. We do not anticipate any group size limit, so there is no need for you to RSVP to the listed leader.*

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**June 2** – Freeport Prairie, 8-10 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore, (815) 938-3204

**June 4** – Elkhorn Creek, Old Joe Seep, 7-9 a.m. Leaders: Nancy and Randy Ocken, (815) 440-5768

**June 7** – Elkhorn Creek, Swamp Sparrow Wetland, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Juliet Moderow, (201) 233-0946

**June 10** – Elkhorn Creek, Blazing Star Saddles, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Bernard Lischwe, (815) 275-9200

**June 12** – Elkhorn Creek, Corner Planting, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore, (815) 938-3204

**June 14** – Elkhorn Creek, Swamp Sparrow Wetland, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Juliet Moderow (201) 233-0946

**June 17** – Elkhorn Creek, Elkhorn Riparian Strip, 8-10 a.m. Leader: Jeremy Dixon (815) 821-3921

**June 19** – Elkhorn Creek, Spiderwort Vista, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Anne Straight (815) 938-3263

**June 21** – Elkhorn Creek, Bluestem View, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Kara Gallup (815) 871-8014

**June 23** – Elkhorn Creek, Fruit Bowl, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Kara Gallup (815) 871-8014

**June 25** – Elkhorn Creek, Old Joe Seep, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Nancy and Randy Ocken, (815) 440-5768

**June 28** – Elkhorn Creek, Fruit Bowl and New Planting, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815) 938-3204

**June 30** – Elkhorn Creek, Elkhorn Riparian Strip, 8-10 a.m. Leader: Jeremy Dixon (815) 821-3921

**July 7** – Elkhorn Creek, Black Oak Savanna, 8-10 a.m. Leaders: Pam and Jim Richards (815) 338-4049

**July 9** – Elkhorn Creek, Sandy Slope, 7-9 a.m. Leaders: Anita and John Nienhuis (815) 443-2401

**July 12** – Elkhorn Creek, Black Oak Savanna, 8-10 a.m. Leaders: Pam and Jim Richards (815) 338-4049

**July 14** – Elkhorn Creek, Black Oak Savanna and Upper Planting, 8-10 a.m. Leaders: Pam and Jim Richards (815) 338-4049

**July 19** – Elkhorn Creek, Goats 'N Roses, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815) 938-3204

**July 22** – Elkhorn Creek, Jim's Hill, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Teresa Smith (815) 835-5109

**July 27** – Elkhorn Creek, Lower West Planting, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815) 938-3204

**July 29** – Elkhorn Creek, Blazing Star Saddles, 7-9 a.m. Leader: Bernard Lischwe (815) 275-9200



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

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

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## BOARD MEMBERS

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### Board members At-Large:

Elizabeth Boettner, Jeremy Dixon,  
Carol Redmore, Fred Redmore,  
Jeff Shriver, Steve Simpson

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**Conservation** | Teresa Smith  
**Programs** | Don Miller

**Education** | Adam Moderow

**Publicity** | Leah Dixon

**Membership** | Molly Doolittle

**Field Trips** | Mary Blackmore

### Sustainable Agriculture

Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore,  
Laura Dufford and Heidi Thorp

**Newsletter Layout** | Dan Barron  
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815-541-3261 | dan@beewise.us

[nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mary Stewart – Davis

Sandra Bell – Freeport

Claudia Smith – Freeport

Marilyn Weaver – Freeport

Doris Hillan – Ridott

Sandy Theden – Leaf River

Shannon Stokr – Mount Carroll

Susan Carroll – Polo

Ron and Julia Hammer – Polo

# THANK YOU!



Pam and Jim Richards, Mary Blackmore, Richard Benning, Jeremy, Mason and Wyatt Dixon, Laura Dufford, Paul Brown, Adam Moderow, Lynn and Sandy Feaver, Shelly, Sydney and Maisey Shaw, Nancy and Randy Ocken, and Bernard Lischwe for participating in one or both of our burns and overseeding at Elkhorn Creek. Our suitable burn weather window was very narrow this spring so thank you, volunteers, for being available!

Mary Blackmore, Judy Corrie, Paul Brown, Pam Richards, Anita Nienhuis, Nancy Ocken, Merry Blake, Anne Straight, Don Miller, Keri Rainsberger and Kara Gallup for April stewardship work at our preserves.

Teresa Smith for volunteering to be the new steward of Jim's Hill at Elkhorn Creek, and Lynn Feaver for his many years of stewardship at this site.

Recent field trip and bird walk leaders: Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Laura Dufford, Somer Elgin, Juliet Moderow and Anne Straight.

Bob and Carol Curtis and Jack and Debbie Barron for their recent monetary donation.

The family of Alice Akins for their very generous donation in memory of Alice.

Barry Treu, Gary Gordon, Molly Doolittle, Jeff Shriver, and Deborah Lischwe for volunteering their time for the World Migratory Bird Day Event at Taylor Park.

Juliet Moderow for her excellent proofreading skills.

**Northwest Illinois  
Audubon Society**

P.O. Box 771  
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