



NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*

Northern Flickers are large, brown woodpeckers with a gentle expression and handsome black-scalloped plumage. On walks, don't be surprised if you scare one up from the ground. It's not where you'd expect to find a woodpecker, but flickers eat mainly ants and beetles, digging for them with their unusual, slightly curved bill. When they fly you'll see a flash of color in the wings – yellow if you're in the East, red if you're in the West – and a bright white flash on the rump.



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 for specific monthly details, special events or any changes to the usual time and place.

Please join us!

Questions About Your Membership?

Contact Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963 or timtreesmith@gmail.com

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Top text: allaboutbirds.org
Top photo: Northern Flicker, by "Naturelady"
Illustrations by Carol Litus



NIAS Sponored campfire held at Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve photo by Juliet Moderow

UPCOMING CAMPFIRES

Our preserves campfire tradition will continue in August and September, but with the changes we made in June due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because social distancing continues to be crucial to slowing the spread of the virus, our group size will be limited. Call Mary at 815-938-3204 to RSVP. We will provide packets of s'mores and individual roasting sticks. Please bring your own water, if desired, plus a lawn chair and flashlight. Prior to each campfire we'll take a short socially-distanced stroll to observe blooming plants, birds and insects.

Wednesday, August 12 – Perseids Campfire at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve.

We hope to catch the peak of this annual meteor shower. Walk at 7:30 p.m.; campfire at 8 p.m. The 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.

Thursday, September 17 – New Moon Campfire at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve.

With luck we'll be treated to a stunning show of stars. Walk at 6:30 p.m.; campfire at 7 p.m. The preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River in the southwest corner of the intersection of Leaf River Rd. and West Grove Rd. (S. Main St. crosses HWY 72 in Leaf River and becomes Leaf River Rd.). The parking lot is off of Leaf River Rd.

LATE SUMMER AT HARLEM HILLS PRAIRIE

(A virtual tour – replacing our September program)

Tuesday, September 1 at 7:00pm

Enjoy a YouTube presentation hosted by the staff of Severson Dells Nature Center at Harlem Hills Prairie in all its glory of late summer. This gravel prairie contains a large number of plant species, including several that are threatened or endangered in Illinois. Harlem Hills is Illinois' largest and finest remaining example of a gravel hill prairie. August is one of those months that the northern Illinois prairies are at their finest. Learn how the prairies have adapted to the sun's bright light and the minimum rainfall to survive quite well in harsh growing conditions. We will take this virtual tour and see it in its best yellows and purples with goldenrods and blazingstars and so much more. The SDNC staff hosted numerous virtual wildflower walks that were informative as well as visual exciting. This presentation will be found on Northwest Illinois Audubon's and Severson Dells Facebook as well as their webpages, starting September 2nd, stay tuned!



Liatris cylindracea (Cylindric Blazing Star) "taken at Harlem Hills in August's past." | Photo by Rick Barton

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 TO BE PLACED ON AN EMAIL CONTACT LIST.

LAKE CARROLL PRAIRIES FIELD TRIP

Friday, August 14 at 10:00 a.m

Contact Pam or Jim Richards 815-338-4049 for questions and to reserve your spot by August 7.

A Prairie Club was formed after Pam and Jim Richards and Becky Janopoulos discovered two main prairies in 2018 at Lake Carroll where they live. (This is a private community between Pearl City and Lanark). One is along the 'main drag' Lake Carroll Boulevard which circles the lake hence the moniker LCB Prairie. This was planted in a joint effort by Stephenson County Pheasants Forever, the Illinois DNR, and the Lake association in 1989 but not managed. Soon after we found out another prairie was planted also behind it past a woodland. It is just north of the earthen dam. Then a remnant prairie was found off of the association ATV trail. Jim found a rare species there, *Asclepias viridiflora*, or green milkweed.



Photo by Pam Richards

We would welcome Audubon members for a visit Friday, August 14 at 10:00 a.m. for tours of these two prairies. To see the remnant prairie, we will take small groups by truck or ATV about ten minutes to that location. Due to the COVID-19 procedures; we are limiting the attendance to 20 and please bring your masks. The Lake Carroll clubhouse restaurant is currently open for outside eating if you care to partake or enjoy your sack lunch at the picnic tables located near the prairie. Directions are given here and we will inform security about the tour.

Contact Pam or Jim Richards 815-338-4049 for questions and to reserve your spot by August 7. Please meet at the clubhouse restaurant parking lot at 10:00 a.m. 29-11 Ironwood Blvd., Lake Carroll, IL 61046

From Freeport, take Pearl City Blacktop to Pearl City. Turn left at the stop sign onto Hwy. 73 from Pearl City. When you see the blue Lake Carroll signs, turn RIGHT onto Payne Road and stay on that road down about two miles to the clubhouse. Once you arrive at the clubhouse, we will meet you, where you can follow us and park across the street from the prairie. It is about a half-hour from Freeport. When you call to sign up, we can provide a map by email if needed.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER PRESERVES STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship for these months will be scheduled on shorter notice by using our volunteer contact list. To get on the list e-mail Nancy at rnocken@gmail.com or call Mary at 815-938-3204. We will try to provide as much notice as possible.

Our focus will be on our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. Tasks will vary, depending upon needs and weather, and will include seed collecting, removing late parsnip and burdock, and lopping or removing honeysuckle and Multi-flora Rose. We'll work for 2-hour blocks of time, usually in the morning.



Stewardship volunteers pose for a socially-distant group photo. photo by Nancy Ocken

As with scheduled summer stewardship, volunteers should wear long pants, long sleeves and a hat. Bring water, a snack, if desired, insect repellent, sunscreen, gloves and a face covering. We wear face coverings when we're all together in the parking lot, but remove them after we spread out at the work site. Equipment and guidance will be provided.

FALL PRAIRIE SEED COLLECTING

Every September and October we collect the seeds of prairie grasses and forbs at our preserves and then in late fall or winter we scatter those seeds in less diverse areas of those same sites.

Due to the variability of seed ripening, plus the uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be using our contact list only to inform volunteers of our seed collecting outings. To get on the list, e-mail Nancy at rnocken@gmail.com or call Mary at 815-938-3204. When contacted you may join us if you are available. We hope to have many opportunities and to provide as much notice as possible.

Seed collecting is an easy, leisurely task. Novices are always welcome. There will be a leader to point out which plants to pick seed from. We typically gather seeds for a 2-hour block of time in late morning or afternoon. Be sure to wear long pants, long sleeves and a hat, and bring water, a snack, if desired, insect repellent, sunscreen and a face covering. We wear face coverings when we're all together in the parking lot, but remove them after we spread out at the collecting area. All equipment will be provided.

This is a wonderful opportunity for you to volunteer to help our restoration efforts, and a fun way to spend a couple of hours on nice fall days. We hope you can join us!

PRESIDENT'S TWEET

Greetings! As I sit to write this, we've been advised Illinois is moving to Phase IV in reopening the State. Illinois is cautiously moving forward in a systematic fashion. This is not to say that all is well as the pandemic is continuing to dramatically affect each of us. On a local level we have seen our share of COVID-19 cases resulting in serious illness and even death, perhaps even someone close to us. However as a State we are moving forward and hoping for an eventual vaccine

Despite the movement towards opening the State further, at our recent June Board meeting we determined we would continue to proceed very cautiously with our scheduled events, trips and meetings. Fortunately we have been able to conduct our stewardship days as social distancing outside is easily achieved. Unfortunately we are not quite sure at this time whether we will be in a position to hold our normal events and programs.

We will be putting future programs on our calendar, but we must keep in mind that every event is subject to change or even cancellation if the conditions warrant. We will be keeping the calendar as current as possible and we will also provide a phone number by the scheduled event for contact if you want to confirm whether a schedule program will occur. The website will be your best source for information.

Meanwhile, as our country focuses on COVID-19 and also the current events in regards to racial issues, the current administration has decided this would be a good time to erode probably the single most important bird conservation law in the Country, possibly because they believe we are not paying attention or believe our focus is elsewhere. The Dept of Interior is attempting to fast-track efforts to strip some critical protections contained in the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Audubon at the National level has

publicized this action and is requesting your assistance in contacting your US Representative and asking for support for the Migratory Bird Protection Act. Please visit Audubon.org and click on the TAKE ACTION link which will direct you a page allowing you to register your support for this important legislation.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 815-541-1228 on this or any other issue you would like to discuss.

Again, it is our desire to continue to press forward and hopefully in the future (near or far) be again able to gather together as friends when we can safely do so. Take care all.

Gary G Gordon (aka g3)
gary.gordon@comcast.net

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY REGARDING COVID-19 AND OUR EVENTS

At the time of this printing, Illinois has entered Phase 4 of COVID-19 Precautions, which allows gatherings of 50 people or fewer. We would like to survey our NIAS members to help us with planning for our monthly programs and other events. While we are preparing for our regular programming with in-person speakers, there may be a time where the restrictions might be tightened again or you might not feel comfortable attending programs in person at this time. We value your input and would like to hear your thoughts.

Questions:

1. Are you comfortable to attend monthly programs again? (You can answer this regardless of whether we are in phase 4 or if it changed to a different phase).
2. If you are not comfortable to attending programs in person, are you comfortable with using remote technology for programs, such as Zoom or other platforms?

3. Do you have the capability to use online technology to participate in remote presentations? (Some programs allow a phone feature to listen, but you cannot view a screen).
4. Would you like instructions on how to participate in a remote presentation?
5. Do you prefer having the option of both a face-to-face program and an online program?

You can send your response in one of the following ways:

- By visiting this link and answering online: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FJML2HJ>
- By sending your responses via email to nwilaudubon@gmail.com
- By mail – please mail your responses to P.O. Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032-0771
- Or by phone: 815-599-3578 (Juliet Moderow's work phone!)

Please return your responses to Juliet by August 31.

Thank you.

WHAT IS zoom?

Yes, zoom is a feature on your binoculars to see a bird more clearly, but lately, Zoom is also an online platform that allows online meetings and audio/video conferencing.

Although most people use a computer to use Zoom to watch and participate in programs, you are also able to use a phone to listen to the program and still participate.

It is possible that NIAS will use Zoom for special events or programs, so if you need instructions on how to use Zoom, please contact Juliet Moderow at nwilaudubon@gmail.com or 815-599-3578.

KEEP YOUR CAT INDOORS, SCIENTISTS PLEAD

A new study from Australia found that pet cats kill 230 million native animals every year.

reprinted from www.treehugger.com

Pet cats should not roam outdoors because they kill millions of native animals every year. A new Australian study, the first of its kind to quantify the damage wreaked by pet cats, has estimated that cats in that country kill 230 million birds, reptiles, and mammals every year, as well as 150 million introduced species, mainly rodents.

The study, published in the journal *Wildlife Research* and funded by the National Environmental Science Program, analyzed data from more than 60 studies on cats. Rather than rely on the traditional method of conducting cat studies, which meant analyzing the stomachs of cats that had been killed, this one used GPS trackers, video collars, scat analysis, and owner surveys to create a more detailed picture.



White-throated Sparrow | photo by Anita Nienhuis

Not just Australia: Outdoor cats in the United States are a significant problem for native wildlife

"Several years ago, a team of Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service researchers combined data from dozens of previous studies to estimate, as rigorously as possible, how many birds are killed by cats each year in the contiguous United States. Their results were startling. After carefully quantifying cat populations and predation rates (and the uncertainty of both), the scientists calculated that domestic cats pounce on one billion to four billion birds a year in the lower 48 states, as well as 6.3 billion to 22.3 billion small mammals and hundreds of millions of reptiles and amphibians.

About two-thirds of the bird deaths were attributed to feral cats, living wild. As birds' total U.S. population at any given moment has been estimated at around 10 billion to 20 billion, that feral cat toll would probably exceed all mortality from window strikes, roadkill, pesticides, pollution, windmills, and all other unnatural causes combined, except habitat loss and possibly climate change—a staggering thought."

www.nationalgeographic.com

It found that feral cats in Australia kill an average of 576 native species per year, while pet cats kill an average of 111 – approximately 40 reptiles, 38 birds and 32 mammals. (There are no estimates for the number of frogs or insects killed.) The pet cats kill only 25 percent of what the feral cats do, but because pets live at much higher densities, their "predation rate per square kilometer in residential areas is 28–52 times larger than predation rates by feral cats in natural environments."

Dr. Sarah Legge, professor at the University of Queensland and study lead author, put it bluntly while speaking to the *Guardian*:

"If we want native wildlife in our towns and cities – rather than introduced rodents and birds – then there are choices to be made. All we need to do is keep pet cats contained... If we accept that feral cats in the bush are a problem, then we have to accept that pet cats in town are also a problem."

There is no evidence to suggest that pet cats help to control populations of rodents and sparrows, as pet owners sometimes like to claim. Up to one-third of cats escape outdoors at night without their owners even realizing they're gone, as one Adelaide study found. And based on scat analysis, it's estimated that cats bring home only 15 percent of their prey, which means they're killing far more than what the owners see.

BirdLife Australia says it's happy for the study, as it confirms the major threat that cats pose to birds. Spokesman Sean Dooley said there was evidence that "an entire colony of fairy terns – a nationally listed threatened species – had been wiped out by one feral cat and a domestic cat in Mandurah in Western Australia. He said the introduction of a cat curfew in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges had helped superb lyrebirds to recover there."

An indoor cat can be just as happy as an outdoor one, the scientists say. Cats do not need to roam to feel content, and in fact can be much healthier and safer – both to themselves and to wildlife – if contained.

Read More: https://www.treehugger.com/keep-your-cat-indoors-scientists-plead-4848061?utm_source=emailshare&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=shareurlbuttons

EASY BEAN SALAD

This bean salad is easy to make and keeps well. Beans are rich in protein and fiber, which can help digestion and lower cholesterol. Serve it with whole wheat tortilla, extra corn, brown rice or quinoa for more whole grains.

Makes 10 servings

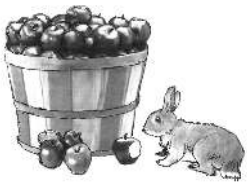
INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/2 cups cooked or canned kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1-1/2 cups cooked or canned pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1-1/2 cups cooked or canned black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
- 1 10-ounce package frozen lima beans, thawed, or 1-1/2 cups cooked or canned lima beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed, or cooked fresh corn, chilled
- 1 large red bell pepper, diced
- ½ medium red onion, diced
- ½ cup low-fat Italian salad dressing
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss gently. Serve cold or at room temperature. Store in a covered container in the refrigerator; leftover bean salad will keep for up to 3 days.

From "The Cancer Survivor's Guide" by Neal Barnard, MD, Jennifer Reilly, RD, and Susan Levin, MS, RD.



BUY LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD!

It has been shown that our food purchasing activity is one of the best ways we can personally affect our carbon footprint and do our part for minimizing climate change. Purchasing as much food locally can eliminate the long transport of food from other regions of the country and world. This effort is not only good for the climate, but it helps support our local economy. It keeps our local farmers and small producers in business and keeps them in our community. An added benefit is the food is fresh and has better flavor than store bought items!

Late summer and fall are great times to visit the local farmers markets. The markets are a wonderful source of local produce, meat and other goods for purchase.

If the farmers markets are inconvenient for your shopping needs, there are local online markets popping up in our area. Two years ago, a group of enterprising Jo Daviess producers created a local food hub for customers to shop via an online farmers' market.

The Jo Daviess Local Food (JDLF) online ordering system is easy and similar to other online shopping sites. At present, 17 producers participate. The website is active all year, so it's a great way to support local producers through all seasons! Tuesday and Saturday are delivery days to several sites in Jo Daviess County, one being Stockton. Items and producers change with the seasons; the variety of locally grown and produced products available throughout the year includes meat products, eggs, many types of produce, baked goods, jams/jellies, natural health, beauty and cleaning products, hummus, grains, and more.

For more information about Jo Daviess Local Food, visit <https://jd.luluslocalfood.com/> or look for them on Facebook. This is a unique way to buy local! There is a new online market in the Winnebago area just created this spring. It is set up similar to the Jo Daviess market. For

Bluebird Journal

by Juliet Moderow



more information on this, visit: <https://thepeoplesmarket.luluslocalfood.com/Pages/Index/About>. One of the pick up sites for this group is Pecatonica.

Another avenue to obtain information about local products is by using the Local Foods Directory put out by the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society and the University of Illinois Extension Service Stephenson County. This directory lists 31 producers in Stephenson and nearby counties and their products including garden produce, meat, fruit, baked items, flowers, grain, honey, maple syrup, and many others. Contact information for the producers is listed in the publication. These brochures may be picked up at Stephenson Farm Bureau, Stephenson County Visitors Center, Freeport Public Library, Illinois Extension Service and viewed online at: www.extension.illinois.edu/jsw and www.nwilaudubon.org.

There are many options to find locally produced items in our area. Find the best way that works for you and support our area producers!! Let's do our part to reduce our carbon footprint and keep our local foods economy alive!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

*Lorraine Williams
Freeport*

*Carol Behrendt
Polo*

*Ellen and Bruce Pittluck
German Valley*

Birdathon

Your money goes where the birds go

40
YEARS

2020 BIRDATHON

Due to our Stay-at-Home directive, this year's Birdathon was different, but it did happen! Although the team competition was suspended, Birdathon birders got out individually, or met up with others to socially-distance bird. Fortunately a few days before Birdathon many public sites, which are also prime birding spots, reopened. Even though public spaces were crowded, our birders were able to find impressive numbers of species.

Many thanks go to each Birdathon birder: Jesse Akins, Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Harlan and Judy Corrie, Jeremy and Mason Dixon, Laura Dufford, Kara and Bob Gallup, Gary Gordon, Mark Keister and Ada Coomer, Dylan and Kent Lewis, Bernard Lischwe, Katelyn McWethy, Juliet and Willow Moderow, Teresa Smith and Anne Straight. Thank you also to everyone who pledged to a birder, helping to raise hundreds of dollars for organizations supporting bird conservation!

It's not too late to make a Birdathon donation. Because our April events were

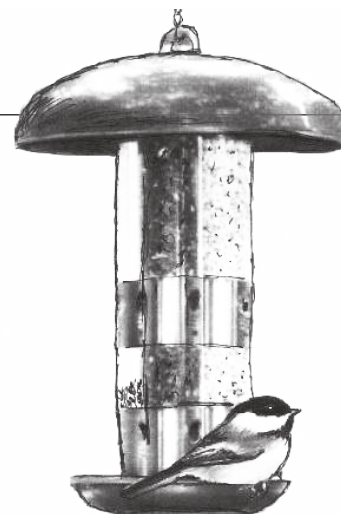
cancelled, we did not have our usual opportunities to promote this important fundraiser. If you did not get a chance to contribute, you may mail a check made out to NIAS to Tim Smith, NIAS Treasurer, 1975 Mound Hill Rd., Dixon IL 61021. All donations are tax-deductible. We very much appreciate your support!

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED INCLUDE:

- **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**



Hummingbird hawk-moth feeding on Common Milkweed
photo by Juliet Moderow



BIRD SEED SALE ALERT

This year's Bird Seed Sale will be held October 15–17. Sale fliers will be mailed in September.

If you can volunteer to help sort orders or deliver seed, please call 815-238-9259 or 815-938-3204.



Wild Turkey | photo by Anita Nienhuis

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:

Name _____

*Make check payable to **NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY** and mail to:
Treasurer, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, P.O. Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032*

BOARD MEMBERS

President | Gary Gordon
Vice-President | Linda Black
Secretary | Pam Richards
Treasurer | Tim Smith

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Molly Doolittle, Jeremy Dixon,
Carol Redmore, Fran Shriver,
Jeff Shriver, Rebecca Shriver

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Education | Richard Benning
Publicity | Deborah Lischwe
Membership | Paul Brown
Field Trips | Chris Kruger

Sustainable Agriculture
Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore,
Laura Dufford and Heidi Thorp

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815-541-3261 | dan@beewise.us

nwilaudubon@gmail.com

THANK YOU!



Lynn Feaver for mowing trails at our preserves.

Dan Barron for designing our beautiful new color preserve brochures.

Tim Smith and Teresa Smith for clearing downed trees from trails at our preserves.

Jeremy Dixon for repairing benches, bluebird houses and Jim's Bridge at our Elkhorn Creek preserve.

Charlotte Buss, Charlene Stahl, Steven and Anne Cox, Cindy Carter and Joyce Bagley for their recent donations in memory of Gwendolyn Carter.

Stewardship volunteers from May and June:

Judy and Harlan Corrie, Paul Brown, Kara Gallup, Mary Blackmore, Nancy and Randy Ocken, Bernard and Deb Lischwe, Laura Dufford, Pam Richards, Juliet Moderow, Bob and Carol Curtis, Keri Rainsberger, Dave Derwent, Merry Blake, Molly Doolittle, Carol Redmore, Anne Straight, Teresa Smith, Tim Smith and Carrie Govek.

**Northwest Illinois
Audubon Society**

P.O. Box 771
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ADDRESSES/EMAILS OF YOUR LEGISLATORS

Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121 • State House Switchboard (217) 782-2000

When using the state switchboard simply ask to be connected to the legislators office.

When using the capitol switchboard follow the series of prompts.

FEDERAL

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Kluczynski Building 38th Floor
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www.durbin.senate.gov/contact/

Senator Tammy Duckworth

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312-886-3506 | www.duckworth.senate.gov

16th District Rep. Adam Kinzinger

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www.kinzinger.house.gov

17th District Rep. Cheri Bustos

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