



APRIL – MAY 2025

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS BIRD AND NATURE ALLIANCE



A chapter of the National Audubon Society

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica*

The crisply plumaged Chestnut-sided Warbler is not your average warbler of the deep forest. These slender, yellow-capped and chestnut-flanked songsters thrive in young, regrowing forests, thickets, and other disturbed areas. Look for them foraging among the fine branches of slender saplings, tail cocked, and listen for males singing an excitable pleased, pleased, pleased to meetch! In fall, this bird molts into lime-green and grayish white plumage with a distinctive white eyering, and heads to thickets, shade-coffee plantations, and second growth forest in Central America.

The Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance celebrates diversity in nature and among the people and communities with whom we work. We are dedicated to providing an inclusive, welcoming, and judgement-free atmosphere where people of all experience levels, abilities, identity groups, and cultural backgrounds are actively encouraged to participate.

Scan QR
to visit



nwilbirdnaturealliance.org

NIAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Most programs are held the first Tuesday of the month (Sept.-May) at St. John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd., Freeport and begin at 7 p.m., followed by refreshments. All programs and events are open to the public. The building is fully accessible.

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

PLEASE JOIN US!

Please note: schedule and location of programs are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Please see newsletter and website for up-to-date information.

INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER:

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8. World Migratory Bird Day
9. Thank You!

Feature Bird: Frode Jacobsen
Information from allaboutbirds.org

Banquet photo provided by the speaker



42nd ANNUAL BANQUET

YELLOWSTONE UNVEILED

Wednesday, April 9th

Highland Community College, Freeport
Student Conference Center, Building H

Silent Auction at 5:30 p.m. | Dinner at 6:00
Program Begins at 7:30 p.m.

Please join us for a fantastic evening as David and Adrienne Olson, photographers and naturalists, will share their insights and images of the greater Yellowstone National Park ecosystem. David has traveled to Yellowstone now for over 25 years learning its many secrets. Olson Photography of Rockford now conducts tours to the park, and as part of David's lifelong dedication, he also visits the park to produce new photographs whenever he can. David and Adrienne will share an amazing photo show, fascinating tales and interesting facts that make Yellowstone National Park still one of the most incredible destinations in the world.

David's award-winning studio, Olson Photography, and gallery are located on State Street in Rockford, Illinois. View his imagery at davidolsonphoto.com

The deadline for reserving your meal for this event was March 29th, however reservations are not necessary to attend the program (no meal) which starts at 7:30 p.m. Further details about the banquet can be found at nwilbirdnaturealliance.org or by calling Tim at 815-835-5109. The cost for the program only is \$5 for adults with no charge for children and students.



ARE HERBICIDES DRIFTING BY YOU?

Presenter: Kim Erndt-Pitcher

Tuesday, May 6th

Potluck at 6:00 p.m. | Program at 7:15 p.m.

We will start the evening with a delicious potluck meal. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. NIBNA will provide beverages. After the meal, there will be some brief announcements with the program to follow at approximately 7:15.

St. John United Church of Christ, Freeport, IL

Kim Erndt-Pitcher, Director of Ecological Health at Prairie Rivers Network (PRN), will present on the status of herbicide drift and the impact it is having in Illinois. Together Kim and retired Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources Biologist, Marty Kemper, coauthored a report on herbicide damage that was observed over a six-year period. In July 2024, PRN released the results of this six years monitoring in the report, "Hidden in Plain Sight." "The report found that more than 99 percent of sites they monitored exhibited signs of herbicide exposure, and more than 90 percent of trees tested had detectable levels of herbicide residue." Kim's presentation will focus on the herbicide issue, how to recognize it, and what we as environmental citizens can do to help.

Kim has worked for Prairie Rivers Network for over 14 years. Before coming to PRN she was a crew member and environmental educator at Living Lands and Waters based in Moline, Illinois, and she also worked as a technician with the USGS in Kansas City, Missouri. She has spent most of her career working to promote and advocate for the protection of biodiversity and the integrity of natural systems.

CALENDAR

F **April 1** – Field Trip: Blooming Pasque Flowers at the Freeport Prairie, 2:00-3:00 p.m. (see adjacent for details ▶)

F **April 3** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

F **April 5** – Field Trip: Birding at Nygren Wetland Preserve, with Lunch at Bushel & Peck's Cafe (see adjacent for details ▶)

O **April 9** – Annual Banquet at Highland Community College at 5:30 p.m.

F **April 11** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

O **April 12** – 2025 Midwest Crane Count (see page 5 for details)

F **April 17** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

O **April 19** – Final Youth Bird Club, 10:30 a.m., Freeport Public Library (see page 4 for details) – contact Juliet Moderow at moderowja@gmail.com or phone 201-233-0946 to register

E **April 22** – Earth Day Preserves Roadside Clean-up, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (see page 3 for details)

F **April 24** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

F **April 26** – Field Trip: Mississippi Palisades Wildflower Hike, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. (see page 3 for details)

F **May 1** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

O **May 4** – Annual Birdathon Fundraiser! Your pledge is MOST welcome! See page 4 for our list of birders and for details about making your pledge that will help birds on their wintering grounds, migration corridors and nesting habitats.

P **May 6** – Monthly Program, Are herbicides drifting by you?, presented by Kim Erndt-Pitcher, potluck starts at 6:00 p.m., followed by program at 7:15 p.m. (see cover for more details)

F **May 8** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

E **May 10** – World Migratory Bird Day Event at Oakdale Nature Preserve, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (see page 8 for details)

O **May 10** – Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance will again be participating in the annual Spring Bird Count (see page 7 for details)

M **May 13** – Board meeting at St. John United Church of Christ at 7:00 p.m.

F **May 15** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

F **May 17** – Field Trip: Exploring Abraham's Woods and Oliver Prairie, 7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (see page 3 for details)

F **May 19** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

F **May 23** – Field Trip: An Evening of Birding at Lost Mound, 5:30-9:30 p.m. (see page 3 for details)

E **May 27** – New Moon Campfire at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. We will take a leisurely stroll to observe blooming plants and resident birds at 7:00 p.m.; the campfire will start at 7:30. S'mores will be provided. Bring a lawn chair, flashlight and water (if desired).

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

F **May 29** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7 for details)

O **June 11** – Books, Berries, & Brews. Book discussion at Generations Brewing Company. 5:30 p.m. Reservations required! (see page 3 for details)

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

TICK AVOIDANCE

As ticks typically are active in April and May, we recommend that you use tick avoidance strategies for all spring outings.

An easy method is to wear socks long enough to tuck your pant legs into, followed by using insect repellent from the knees down. Both socks and pants should be light-colored for easier tick detection, and always do a tick check when you get home.

VIEW OUR CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS AT:

nwillbirdnaturealliance.org/news/calendar/

FIELD TRIPS

Blooming Pasque Flowers at the Freeport Prairie

Tuesday, April 1, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

Join us as we admire one of the prairie's harbingers of spring, the Pasque Flower. Unlike the crocus which it resembles, a Pasque Flower, *Pulsatilla 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.

The Freeport Prairie is an Illinois Nature Preserve located on Freeport's south side.

NOTE: Meet in the preserve's new parking area off of Meadows Dr., adjacent to the northwest corner of the prairie. Enter through the curb cut which will be flagged for better visibility. If the weather is questionable, call Mary.

Birding at Nygren Wetland Preserve, with Lunch at Bushel & Peck's Cafe

Saturday, April 5, 9:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Leader: Richard Benning

Join us for birding at the Nygren Wetland Preserve near Rockton. We will explore this premiere birding site from their wildlife lookout and the 2.5 mile nature trail around the wetland. Carpool from Harbor Freight in Freeport at 9:15 am or meet us at Nygren at 10 am. More information on Nygren is available at naturalland.org.

Afterward we will have lunch at nearby Bushel & Peck's Cafe in Beloit, WI. This neighborhood market & cafe serves organic, locally sourced sandwiches. See the menu and more information at bushelandpecks.com.

Expected return time to Freeport by 2 pm. Confirm your attendance with Chris Kruger at 815-238-9259 by March 31st.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Earth Day Preserves Roadsides Clean-up

Tuesday, April 22,
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

**Carpool from the Harbor Freight lot in
Freeport at 9:30 a.m.**

Join us as we commemorate Earth Day by picking up litter on the roadsides of both our Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserves. Both preserves have about half of their boundaries along roads, and the more heavily trafficked ones produce considerable roadside trash. We'll have orange vests for visibility, plenty of bags for trash and recyclables, and work gloves. Meet in the parking area at Elkhorn Creek at 10 a.m. Bring a sack lunch, insect repellent and water. After our clean-up along Freeport and West Grove roads, we'll head east to Silver Creek, stopping first at Mary Blackmore's home to eat our lunches and for a bathroom break. At Silver Creek we'll work along West Grove and Leaf River roads. Everyone is welcome to help for only morning, only afternoon, or both. As with most roadsides, the ground is uneven and sometimes steep.

If weather is questionable, call Mary.

Mississippi Palisades Wildflower Hike

Saturday, April 26th
8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Chris Kruger
815-238-9259

Join us as we hike the trails at the Mississippi Palisades State Park. The area is rich with native woodland wildflowers including Virginia Bluebells, Large-Flowered Trillium, and Amethyst Shooting Stars, to only name a few. Bring a sack lunch.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot at 8:30 am or meet us inside the park's south entrance at 9:30 am. Planned return time to Freeport around 2 p.m.

**Please confirm your attendance with
Chris at 815-238-9259.**

Exploring Abraham's Woods and Oliver Prairie

Saturday, May 17, 7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

**Carpool from the Harbor Freight lot in
Freeport at 7:30 a.m.**

Join us as we look for spring wildflowers and birds in both woodland and prairie at these two gems in Green County, Wisconsin. Located near Albany and only about a mile apart, both sites are considered high quality. Abraham's Woods is a remnant of a climax forest. Oliver Prairie, known as "Shooting Star Hill", is a dry, steep south-facing limestone remnant prairie.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight lot in Freeport at 7:30 a.m. We plan to stop for lunch in Monroe before our return to Freeport around 2 p.m. Bring binoculars, water and insect repellent. Snacks will be provided.

Note: Oliver Prairie is very steep. Some blooming plants can be seen from the roadside so that walking on the prairie can be optional. Also, while there are no restrooms at either site, we will stop in Monroe enroute to the sites for a restroom break.

**Please confirm your attendance with
Mary at 815-938-3204.**

An Evening of Birding at Lost Mound

Friday, May 23, 5:30-9:30 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

Carpool from the Forreton municipal lot on the south side of the village library along HWY 26 at 5:30 or meet the group in the parking area of the Fish and Wildlife office building (see directions below) at 6:30 p.m.

Join us as we travel along side sand prairies and sand savannas near the mighty Mississippi in search of birds in 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 vocalizations of both Eastern Whip-poor-wills and American Woodcocks. There will be enough time to observe many of the grassland species of songbirds as well.

Directions for meeting at Lost Mound: Turn left to enter the refuge off of HWY 84, about 9 miles north of Savanna. After crossing railroad tracks, drive up the hill to the intersection and turn right. Drive about .5 mile and turn left into the parking area. There is a restroom in the parking area.

We'll car-caravan from the parking lot traveling the paved roads and do little or no walking. The timing sequence will be songbirds, Common Nighthawk, American Woodcock and at the end, Whip-poor-wills. If you want to leave the caravan for an earlier departure you may do so.

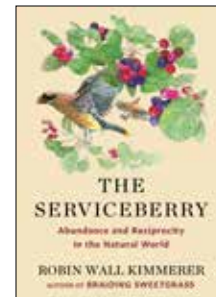
If the weather is questionable, call Mary.

SAVE THE DATE

Books, Berries, & Brews!

Wednesday, June 11 at 5:30 p.m.

**Generations Brewing Company
1400 S Adams Ave, Freeport**



Join the Conservation Committee for a book discussion of *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. This is a book offering ideas

on ways to redistribute wealth and a vision for how to orient our lives around gratitude, reciprocity, and community. Members of the committee will lead the discussion.

Generations Brewing offers a variety of alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages and guests will be responsible for their own orders. The committee will provide pizza at no cost to guests.

**There is limited space for our group
so please sign-up if you would like to
attend. Laura Dufford: 815-541-8958,
lauradufford@gmail.com**

Birdathon

Your money goes where the birds go



This year, our chapter marks its 46th 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 on the form to the right who will be participating in our chapter's annual BIRDATHON on May 4th. 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 their 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 Bird and Nature Alliance**
- National Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative**
- Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin**
- Belize Audubon Society**
- Stewards of the Upper Mississippi Sand Bluff Bird Observatory**

Please complete the pledge form (INSERT) ► and mail as indicated. THANK YOU so much for your support of birds and our BIRDATHON!

SPRING STEWARDSHIP AT OUR PRESERVES

We invite you to join us on one or more of our Spring Stewardship Sessions as we work together to reduce the numbers of Wild Parsnip, Garlic Mustard, Multiflora Rose and honeysuckle on our Silver Creek and Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserves. Early removal means not only cooler working temperatures for us, but also less biomass to handle.

Spring stewardship is especially rewarding. In addition to the enjoyable conversations with fellow volunteers and more comfortable temperatures, we get to experience a lot of "firsts": first amphibian call, first leaf-out or bloom of various plants, and the first sights and sounds of returning birds. The fresh air and exercise are added bonuses. The efforts of every volunteer is very much appreciated!

Considering both the unpredictability of plant emergence times and the increasing wild fluctuations in spring weather, we're going to use our contact list to notify volunteers of each work session in April and May. We'll do our best to provide as much advanced notice as we can. If you're available, please join us; if not, we hope you can join us another time. To get on the contact list email Elizabeth Boettner at elizabethjboettner@gmail.com.



The July 7th, 2023 stewardship crew, at Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve. (L to R) Sarah Barron, Mary Blackmore, Anne Straight and Kara Gallup. | Photo by Dan Barron

Each session will be 2 hours long and could be morning or afternoon, depending upon the temperature. Tools, guidance and snacks will be provided. Volunteers should bring gloves, water and insect repellent. Be sure to wear a hat, long sleeves, long pants (light-colored is best) and socks long enough to tuck your pant legs into (for tick avoidance). **If weather becomes questionable contact Elizabeth or Mary as noted.**

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.

BEGINNING BIRDER CLUB

Last session for April!

Freeport Public Library Meeting Room A/B

10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Registration required | Join Anytime!

This is a fun, educational program for youths to learn about different topics about birds. Lessons will be tailored for ages 6-10. An adult must be present with the youth during the entire program. All sessions are independent from each other, so you are welcome to attend any that you are able and/or interested.

Each program will be held at 10:30 am to approximately 12:00 pm on the third Saturday of the month (to remember, third rhymes with bird!). Sessions will be held at the Freeport Public Library in meeting room A/B, but we will try to end the session outside to look for birds. Please dress appropriately for the weather as well. Please register in advance as space is limited and to help determine amount of materials needed for each session.

TOPICS:

April 19 – Bird Conservation & Being a Birder: We will learn about how to protect birds and how to be a birder!

Contact Juliet Moderow at moderowja@gmail.com or phone 201-233-0946



to register or by this form: <https://forms.gle/W16pZ5Aiyt8Hh7At8>

PRESIDENTS TWEET

The Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance Board has always been very active and involved with the administrative functions of the organization as well as planning the activities throughout the year. The board is an amazing group of people who want to be part of making Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance (NIBNA) an organization that is respected in the community and one that provides a variety of programs and events that are open to all members of the community.

In our newsletters you read about the numerous events and programs that we offer but you may not always be aware of the administrative functions completed by the board. At the January board meeting the motion was made to contribute money to organizations that can help lobby for the environment and help to make the

Earth a better place for people and birds and every living thing. Organizations such as Earth Justice and the Center for Biological Diversity both work hard to lobby for laws that protect the environment and the Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance board members know how important it is to support these types of organizations during times when some of our elected officials may not be making decisions that are in the best interest of the environment.

Earth Justice and the Center for Biological Diversity each received \$500 from NIBNA because of action taken by the board. We are grateful to have the opportunity to support these two organizations in their endeavors to lobby for the Earth.

– Teresa Smith, President

HERBICIDE DRIFT IN ILLINOIS

Prairie Rivers Network is deeply concerned, as we all should be, about the health of trees and ecosystems across Illinois, as a result of years of damage from drifting herbicides.

Beginning in 2018, Prairie Rivers Network (PRN) created the Tree and Plant Health Monitoring Program to ensure that someone is monitoring the health of ecosystems under the pressures of habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change.

In July 2024, PRN released the results of six years of monitoring in the report, "Hidden in Plain Sight." (link on webpage, prairierivers.org/resources/)

The report found that more than 99 percent of sites they monitored exhibited signs of herbicide exposure, and more than 90 percent of trees tested had detectable levels of herbicide residue. The report shared the stories of people whose lives have been impacted by this herbicide drift.

PRN has been documenting this damage for years. They co-published a report with the National Wildlife Federation, and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation titled "Drifting Toward Disaster: How Dicamba Herbicides are Harming Cultivated and Wild Landscapes." This 2020 report reviews the state of the science on the potential far-reaching impacts of dicamba use. Herbicide drift is nothing new, but it has never been seen at

this level before.

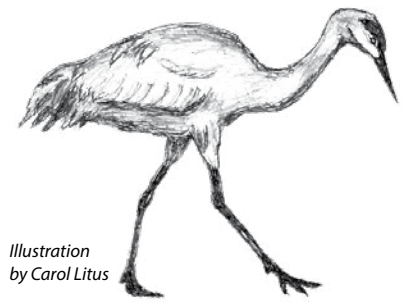
In recent years, Illinois has been dealing with large increases in reports of injuries to crops, trees, and plants. These injuries are symptomatic of exposure to plant growth regulator (PGR) herbicides such as 2,4-D and dicamba, which are commonly used in agriculture and lawn management. (Dicamba is a herbicide used to kill broadleaf weeds and woody plants. It is used in agriculture and non-agricultural settings.) Even moderate levels of repeated and/or chronic exposures can injure plants and have not only visible, but also unseen effects on our environment.

Paying attention to what is happening on your property and documenting and reporting symptoms if you see them is important. There is a video and other information on their webpage designed to help people recognize symptoms of PGR exposure in crops, trees, and other wild plants and provides information on how and where to document or report symptoms.

Prairie Rivers Network thanks you for your assistance in keeping an eye out for the biodiversity of Illinois and they welcome your feedback.

All above has been pulled from the Prairie Rivers Network webpage, prairierivers.org/ Please visit there to get more details and further information.

– Don Miller, Program Chair



BE PART OF CITIZEN SCIENCE CALLING ALL CRANE COUNTERS

**Saturday, April 12 is the Annual
Midwest Crane Count and
Stephenson County has over 12
sites that are monitored each
year as part of the Count.**

Saturday, April 12 is the Annual Midwest Crane Count and Stephenson County has over 12 sites that are monitored each year as part of the Crane Count. Participants are on site from 5:30-7:30 am to listen and watch for cranes. It is a great way to participate in a citizen science project and enjoy the early morning sights and sounds.

**Notify Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963
by April 3rd if you are interested in
participating in this event.**

Experienced and blossoming birders are encouraged to participate. No experience with crane counting is necessary! If you are new to the Crane Count you will be partnered with an experienced counter who can help you to learn more about cranes. Inexperienced counters can also learn more about cranes on the International Crane Count website savingcranes.org/.

After the Crane Count, we will enjoy breakfast together at a restaurant in Freeport and share stories from our early morning birding experience.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Joe and Nancy Serafini – Freeport
Alberto Gonzalez – Dixon
Mary Nelson – Freeport
Lindsey Brown – Milledgeville
Vikki Alex – Ridott
Tony Patters – Savanna
Lynnette Niemann – Sterling
Jeanie McKewan – Stockton

2025 BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM

Name

Phone

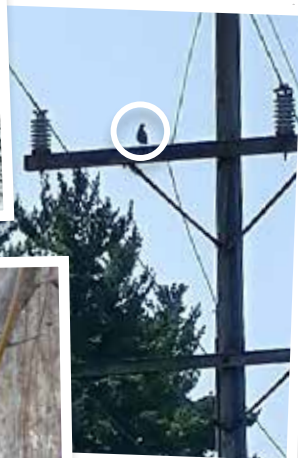
Address

Email

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Jesse Akins	<input type="checkbox"/> Anne Straight
<input type="checkbox"/> Richard Benning	<input type="checkbox"/> Gary Gordon
<input type="checkbox"/> Mary Blackmore	<input type="checkbox"/> Dylan Lewis
<input type="checkbox"/> Judy Corrie	<input type="checkbox"/> Kent Lewis
<input type="checkbox"/> Jeremy Dixon	<input type="checkbox"/> Laura Dufford
<input type="checkbox"/> Mason Dixon	<input type="checkbox"/> Juliet and Willow Moderow
<input type="checkbox"/> Wyatt Dixon	<input type="checkbox"/> Bernard Lischwe
<input type="checkbox"/> Teresa Smith	<input type="checkbox"/> Kara and Bob Gallup

CLIP AND MAIL to Mary Blackmore, 9024 W. West Grove Rd., Forreston IL 61030 or include your pledge form with your chapter ballot mailed to NIBNA, PO Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032. Questions? Call Mary at 815-938-3204



▲ (Top) Beaver eating wood along Elkhorn Creek.
▲ (Mid) Silhouette of Northern Bobwhite perched high on Silver Creek roadside.
◀ (Lower) An Osage orange cached in a bird nest by a squirrel.
Photos by Mary Blackmore

2025–2026 BALLOT FOR NIBNA CHAPTER OFFICERS

The individuals listed below have been nominated to serve on next year's NIBNA 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.

Elected Officers

VICE PRESIDENT

Chris Kruger Write-in _____

SECRETARY

Carol Beatty Write-in _____

TREASURER

Tim Smith Write-in _____

MEMBERS AT LARGE (vote for six)

Kee Henze Jeremy Dixon
 Anita Nienhuis Bernard Lischwe
 Kara Gallup Write-in _____

Standing Committee Chairs (appointed)

Conservation | Laura Dufford **Programs** | Don Miller
Education | Juliet Moderow **Publicity** | Sarah Barron
Membership | Gay Brooks
Field Trips | Richard Benning

Send your ballot to NIBNA, 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.

JOIN US THIS SPRING!

Through Alliance-sponsored events we have dozens of opportunities to get out into nature this spring. Field trips, bird walks, special events, bird counts and preserves stewardship all offer us a chance to be in the now, improve our mental health, learn new things and even participate in some citizen-science endeavors. From returning migrating birds to colorful plant blooms and their pollinators, it's all out there!

Now more than ever we need to embrace the community of nature. We're a part of it, not apart from it. See you soon!

ENJOY THE SPRING MIGRATION



From the first Killdeer singing on a crisp February day to the last Bobolink checking out nesting sites on a sunny May morning, 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 and the habitats they pass through or stay to nest in. These walks are suited for beginning or experienced birders and everyone in between. All are welcome!

Among the many highlights of last year's walks were singing Wood Thrushes, displaying Bobolinks and Eastern Kingbirds, a soaring Broad-winged Hawk, and great views of a perched Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpeckers and Sandhill Cranes.

Expected trail conditions are described in each outing below. Restrooms are not available unless noted. We've resumed carpooling from the Harbor Freight east parking area on Freeport's south side adjacent to the McDonald's along HWY 26. For walks where there is a carpool option, the departure time is indicated.

All of the walks will begin at 8 a.m. And conclude at 11 a.m. Feel free to join or depart the group anytime during those three hours. Those who wish to will gather for lunch afterwards at a nearby restaurant. If the weather is questionable or you need further directions to the site, please call the listed leader. We hope you can join us!

April 3 – Wetland Areas of Eastern Stephenson County. This outing has little walking as we drive to each wetland area and often view the birds from our vehicles. Carpool at 7:45 a.m.

Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204)

April 11 – Duck's Misery and the southern Jane Addams Trail. During most of this outing we are walking on the level, hard surface of the Jane Addams Trail. Some observations will be made from the shoulder of Winneshiek Rd. Carpool at 7:40 a.m.

Leader: Laura Dufford (815-541-8958)

April 12 – Annual Midwest Crane Count (details on page 4)

April 17 – Northern Jane Addams Trail and the Orangeville Wetlands. Walking will be on the hard, level surface of the Jane Addams Trail. Restrooms are available at the trailhead in Orangeville where we begin. Carpool at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Somer Elgin (815-275-0719)

April 24 – Newell Tract, Oakdale Nature Preserve, Freeport. Some parts of the trail are steep and the ground can be uneven. Meet in the parking area of the Newell Tract, the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Rd. Restrooms are available in the parking area.

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 perhaps singing frogs! Trails have some steep portions and the surface can be uneven. Restrooms are available in the parking area. Carpool at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279)

May 8 – NIAS Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, rural Forreton. We'll walk the mowed trails through grasslands, woodland and wetlands. The trails have some steep sections and the ground is often uneven. Carpool at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204)

May 15 – Harry and Dorothy Espenscheid Forest Preserve northeast of Freeport. A variety of habitats will be explored including forest, savanna and the riparian areas of Rock Run Creek. There are a few steep portions of the mowed trail and the surface can be uneven. Carpool at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279)

May 19 – Krape Park, Freeport. We'll meet in the parking lot by the dam and walk the paved path along Yellow Creek and then on some of the road shoulder downstream from the paved path. Restrooms are in the park.

Leader: Juliet Moderow (201-233-0946)

May 29 – NIBNA Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve and the Bald Hill Prairie, rural Leaf River. We'll walk the mowed trails (uneven ground in some places) of Silver Creek's woodlands and grasslands. For the last hour we will visit the nearby Bald Hill Prairie where we should be treated to displaying Bobolinks. Carpool at 7:15 a.m.

Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204)

STEPHENSON COUNTY SPRING BIRD COUNT 2025

On Saturday, May 10, 2025, Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance will again be participating in the annual Spring Bird Count.

We are responsible for Stephenson County. The count is conducted just like the Christmas Bird Count except that instead of a circle, the count area is the entire county. All 102 counties in Illinois are counted annually on the same day. The Illinois Natural History Survey coordinates the counts, and has been doing so for well over 50 years.

We are looking for volunteers who will be available on May 10 to participate in this important Citizen Science endeavor. If you live in the county, and would like to count birds at your feeder, we will welcome that data, or if you are available to be assigned a prime territory within Stephenson County, either way, please contact Carol Beatty, the Stephenson County Compiler, at cjbeatty17@gmail.com. It is a fun day, and it is great to see the wonderful birds in their breeding plumage!

ANNUAL WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY EVENT

CO-HOSTED WITH FREEPORT PARK DISTRICT AND ILLINOIS EXTENSION

Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-friendly Cities and Communities

Saturday, May 10 at Oakdale Nature Preserve, 4433 S. Cranes Grove Rd.

Mogle Building and Oakdale Pavilion plus the trails and Yellow Creek

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Free and open to the public.

Join us for a fun, family-friendly event at Oakdale Nature Preserve. This location provides wonderful opportunities for finding birds! We will have activities for all ages and abilities. In an open-house style event in and around the Oakdale Pavilion, we will have many hands-on activities including arts and crafts with Jaime Elliott, games, birdwatching, and an obstacle course that fits this year's theme. We will have giveaways while supplies last. Northern Illinois Raptor Rehab and Education will also be here for two hours with a Meet and Greet of their live Birds of Prey plus many educational materials!

On each hour at 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m., there will be three outings to take the trails to bird watch. Please meet at the Pavilion to join one of these outings led by NIBNA members and Park District members. We will ensure that the accessible trail be used for each of these outings before taking other trails. Oakdale Nature Preserve also provides accessible parking and restrooms. There are benches along many of the trails. Please wear appropriate footwear for the trails. Bring binoculars if you have any and we will have some available to borrow. This is a rain or shine event and hope to have plenty of shelter in case of rain.

World Migratory Bird Day 2025 focuses on the many ways that we can help birds where we live.

The Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a non-profit organization that

has been coordinating International/World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) since 2007, focuses their effort on the flyways in the Americas and strives to educate the public about migratory birds and ways to conserve them. Although their efforts are ongoing throughout the year, WMBD is a special celebration celebrated in May and October in each of the hemispheres. Every

community—whether they are nesting, overwintering, or stopping to rest and refuel along their incredible journeys.

This year, World Migratory Bird Day highlights seven simple actions you can take to create bird-friendly spaces where we live.

- 1. Plant native:** The plants native to your community provide the food and shelter birds need. Remove invasive plants that can take over.
- 2. Dim the lights at night:** The glow from our communities and homes may disrupt their cycle of rest, alter their migration, and impact breeding.
- 3. Make windows visible:** Birds don't recognize plane glass and may collide with windows.
- 4. Protect insects:** 95% of birds depend on insects at some time during their life cycle. Avoid using pesticides and other chemicals that contribute to the declining numbers of butterflies, dragonflies, and other insects.
- 5. Restrain your pets:** We love our pets, but free roaming cats and dogs can disturb and even kill birds. Provide a catio, leash your pets, and provide them with entertainment indoors.
- 6. Be the solution to plastic pollution:** Say "no" to plastics by reusing shopping bags, avoiding single-use plastic bottles and utensils, and purchasing non-plastic toys and decorations.
- 7. Purchase sustainable foods:** Shade-grown coffee and chocolate protect tropical agroforests that include native tree diversity, tree canopy, and reduced pollution that supports migratory birds where they winter. You may consider other actions that are particular to the protection of birds in your community.



year, a new global theme is determined and this year the focus is about sharing spaces with birds. All over the world, people celebrate migratory birds and are united by the same theme, to create a central message and promote the urgency for conserving and protecting migratory birds.

More than half of the world's population currently lives in cities, a figure projected to double in the next 25 years. As communities expand, migratory birds face growing challenges. Native habitats shrink, noise and light pollution escalate, and domestic pets disturb and prey on a variety of species. We can all take steps to protect migratory birds that visit our

**Information provided by:
migratorybirdday.org/**

Would you like to become a NEW Member or give a GIFT membership? Two types of membership are available:

1. Northwest Illinois Bird and Nature Alliance 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 Bird and Nature Alliance 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 Bird and Nature Alliance** and mail to:
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rev 1/25

THANK YOU!

- Kriss Mulder for her recent donation.
- Winter overseeding volunteers at both preserves: Bernard Lischwe, Judy Corrie, Paul Brown, Nancy and Randy Ocken, and Mary Blackmore.
- Mary Blackmore, Chris Kruger, Juliet Moderow, Gary Gordon, Fran Shriver and Jeff Shriver for leading recent field trips and events.
- Jeremy Dixon for rebuilding and installing one of the bluebird houses at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve.
- The following expert bakers donated favorite desserts to our program attendees for the fall of 2024 through spring of 2025: Mary Blackmore, Anne Straight, Patty Weik, Allison Gush, Deborah Lischwe, Pam Richards, Deb Barron, Laura Dufford, Elizabeth Boettner, Gay Brooks.

**Eagle Days Trip
Savanna and Clinton, IL**

Photos by Gary Gordon



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Illustrations by Carol Litus

**NORTHWEST ILLINOIS
BIRD AND NATURE ALLIANCE**

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