



# Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

www.nwilaudubon.org

## NIAS MONTHLY MEETINGS

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

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

Most meetings begin at 7PM 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:

- Calendar Considerations
- Field Trips
- Bird Seed Sales Thank You
- Birdathon Update
- Nest Box Season at ECBP
- Kids & Families
- Conservation Committee News
- Christmas Bird Count
- Thank You

Text: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)  
Top: Alan Vernon  
Middle: program photo provided  
Bottom: program photo provided

## December 2017 - January 2018

### Brown Creeper *Certhia americana*

Brown Creepers are tiny woodland birds with an affinity for the biggest trees they can find. Look for these little, long-tailed scraps of brown and white spiraling up stout trunks and main branches, sometimes passing downward-facing nuthatches along the way. They probe into crevices and pick at loose bark with their slender, downcurved bills, and build their hammock-shaped nests behind peeling flakes of bark. Their piercing calls can make it much easier to find this hard-to-see but common species.



### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

## COYOTE POPULATIONS IN ILLINOIS

7:00 PM Tuesday, December 5th

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

Coyotes have to be one of the most misunderstood species in Illinois and the U.S. They conjure up mixed feelings of fear, anger, and for some, wild beauty. There are many stories about coyotes and some circles believe them to be the jokester of the wild. Many of these feelings depend on who you are, where you live, and even what you do for a living. Coyotes get blamed for many things they do and don't do in our spaces. They nonetheless should get the award for best survivalist despite the human population. We have all but paved the road for the coyote's historical expansion.

Come and hear Peggy Doty, Educator with the University of Illinois Extension, talk about this incredible animal and what you can expect from them in your neighborhood.

### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

## RAPTOR RAPTURE AT HOG ISLAND

7:00 PM Tuesday, January 2, 2018

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

Hannah Badgett, a current student at Stevens Point Wisconsin in the College of Natural Resources, will present our January program. Hannah will share stories and pictures of her recent trip to Hog Island Audubon Camp.

Hog Island is home to many hawks, eagles, falcons, vulture and owls. It has a thriving osprey population and Hannah will share how the osprey and other raptures play a critical role in the environment.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Peggy and David Bucher – Freeport  
Jay Ganshert – Freeport  
Linden Thomas – Dakota

Questions about your membership?

Contact Teresa at 815-238-3963 or e-mail at [nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com)

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# CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

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Please note: There will be no "Talking About the Issues" scheduled for December.

**December 5** – Membership Meeting 7 p.m. at St. John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd. See page 1 for details.

**December 6** - Audubon in the Library, Wildlife Wednesday. See page 4 for details.

**December 16** – Christmas Bird Count. See page 6 for details.

**January 2** - Membership Meeting 7 p.m. at St. John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd. See page 1 for details

**January 6** – "Talking About the Issues" monthly discussion, 1:30-3:30 p.m., at the home of Fred and Carol Redmore, 1809 Parkview Circle, Freeport (815-721-3375).

*The first hour topic will be an exploration of what is needed to maintain viable populations of the Kirtland's Warbler as it transitions off of the endangered species list. This warbler is a prime example of a "conservation-reliant species," as it always will need, to some extent, human intervention to maintain its breeding habitat and to reduce cowbird parasitism. For a copy of the article, contact Redmores. The second hour will be a discussion of whatever issues are brought forth. Everyone is welcome.*

**January 8** - Board Meeting 7 p.m. at St. John's. Conservation Committee will meet beforehand at 6 p.m.

**January 13** – Field Trip, Open Land Birding, 9 a.m. – noon. See adjacent column for details.

**January 30** – Field Trip, second opportunity for Open Land Birding, 9 a.m. – noon. See adjacent column for details.

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## Birdseed Sale Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who purchased birdseed from our October annual fundraiser. We sold around 23,000 pounds of seed with a profit of over \$3300. Funds raised will be used for our many chapter programs, activities and publications.

The sale could not have happened without our team of volunteers: Tim and Teresa Smith, Mary Blackmore, Lynn Feaver, Chris Kruger, Rex Sides, Dave Derwent, Richard Benning, Henry Simpson, Gary Gordon, Merry Blake, John Jankowski, Rebecca Shriver, Randy Rice, Nancy Ocken, Laura and Doug Dufford, Dave and Virginia DeSwarte, Jim and Pam Richards, Anne Straight, Dan Barron and Fred Redmore. Thank you so much!!

Thanks also go to the folks at O'Mara Transport Company, especially Mike and Sean, for hosting our main pickup site in Freeport, and to those who hosted our regional pickup sites: John and Kay Day, Anne Straight, Chris Kruger and Jeremy Dixon. Thank you also to Joe and Brenda Akins for donating all of our ear corn.

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# FIELD TRIPS DECEMBER - JANUARY

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## Open Land Birding

Saturday, January 13, 9 a.m. – noon

Tuesday, January 30, 9 a.m. – noon

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

**Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 9 a.m.**

Once again we will travel local country roads in search of those open land species from the north that frequent our area primarily during the winter. This year you have two opportunities for fun – come to either or both!

Last year we saw very few of the typically more common species – Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs and Horned Larks – but were richly rewarded with very good views of a Snowy Owl. Other species we'll search for include Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike and Merlin. Of course we'll enjoy any bird we see, including our many year-round residents.

We will carpool and cruise country roads in local areas that were historically prairie. Viewing will be done predominantly from vehicles, using cars as blinds. Optional lunch after in Freeport. Confirm your attendance by calling Mary.

## FIELD ORNITHOLOGY (BIOL 119)

WILL BE OFFERED AT

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPRING 2018

Students will learn how to identify and classify birds of Illinois. They will also learn to recognize birds by sight and song as well as learn about their ecology and behavior. During course (2 credits), students will study bird specimens/skins in the classroom and listen to audio recordings of specific birds. They will also participate in local field trips where they will actively bird watch and practice their techniques to identify birds.

If you want to learn how to identify the birds at your feeders, learn what birds are making the sounds outside, or you want to get closer to nature, this class is for you!

*Lecture: Every Wednesday, 9:00 – 9:50 am, N122*

*Lab: Every Friday, 8:00 – 9:50 am, N122*

*Classes run from January 16 to May 16*

*Instructors: Juliet Moderow, Alan Nowicki*

To register, call Highland at 815-599-3414  
or e-mail [admissions@highland.edu](mailto:admissions@highland.edu)

# NIAS Birdathon Nets Funds For Conservation

# Birdathon

*Your money goes where the birds go*

38  
YEARS

This year's May Birdathon raised nearly \$3000 for conservation organizations, including our chapter, that work to protect birds and the habitat they rely on. The Belize Audubon Society, the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, National Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative, the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's Bird Protection Fund, and the Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge all received a percentage of 2017 Birdathon funds. Our chapter retained 30% of the funds raised to assist with our many programs and activities.

Many thanks go to the individuals who sponsored one or more birders. Their generosity provided much needed funds for

bird protection projects in both wintering and nesting areas, as well as migration routes.

None of this would have been possible without the time and efforts of our Birdathon birders: Jesse Akins, Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Kara and Bob Gallup, Anne Straight, Jeremy Dixon, Juliet Moderow, Laura Dufford, Gary Gordon, Mark Keister, Dylan and Kent Lewis, Teresa Smith and Katelyn McWethy. Thank you, birders!

And finally, the moment you've all been waiting for: the coveted Cardinal-on-a-Stick winning team trophy for the most species sighted went to. . . Harlan's Harrem! Team members Anne Straight, Juliet

Moderow, Laura Dufford and Mary Blackmore edged out "The Guys" in spite of the challenges of finding birds that day due to a delayed migration, and birding without their namesake and good luck charm, Harlan Corrie.

*We all look forward to the 2018 Birdathon!*

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## Nest Box Season at Elkhorn Creek

It was a discouraging nest box season at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve this year with no fledged young for either Eastern Bluebirds or Tree Swallows. While two bluebird nestings resulted in eggs laid, in one box the nestlings were found dead (possibly from blackflies) and in the other box the nestlings disappeared prior to the presumed fledging date. Nesting attempts by Tree Swallows were thwarted by House Wrens. The latter species had a presence in all boxes with either active or dummy nests. Recorded fledged young for House Wrens numbered 11-15.

On the positive side, Eurasian Tree Sparrow (ETS) competition was greatly diminished this year. We think the primary reason for this was closing the Purple Martin house nest chambers, the primary location of ETS reproduction. Nesting attempts by ETSs occurred in only 2 bluebird boxes early in the season.

In previous years ETSs were observed to be out-competing House Wrens in the bluebird nest boxes. Perhaps the decline of ETSs resulted in the increased House Wren presence in the bluebird nest boxes. We will continue to improve habitat around the nest boxes and possibly relocate some of the boxes to more favorable bluebird habitat.

Our chapter wishes to thank Terri Clark, who has monitored the boxes for the past 3 years, for all of her time and efforts. We really appreciate the work she has done! We also thank Pam and Jim Richards for their willingness to be nest box monitors for 2018.



The vacant interior of a Bluebird house.  
Photo by Dan Barron

# KIDS & FAMILIES

## Audubon in the Library

### Wildlife Wednesday

#### Appropriate audience

is two- to seven-year olds

10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Ms. Juliet hosts a monthly series called Wildlife Wednesdays at the Freeport Public Library. Each month has a different theme related to nature and wildlife. She will read various books related to the theme and then show the children specimens that they can touch. There are also activities that can be done at home to continue the learning!

#### December 6 - Wintering Birds

Visit our Kids and Families section on our webpage at:  
[nwilaudubon.org/kids-families.asp](http://nwilaudubon.org/kids-families.asp)

## WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE OVER WILDLIFE WEDNESDAY!

Do you like to read to children? Do you like to teach them about nature? Do you have 30 minutes only ONCE a month?! Then this is perfect for you!

Studies show the importance of introducing children to the natural world at an early age. This group of pre-school children look forward to seeing what we bring each month, so hopefully we can find someone who can take the time out to educate this important age group!

Contact us at [nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com) if you are interested!

## JOIN OUR E-MAIL LIST!

Would you like to receive notifications about NIAS events, cancellations, calendar changes, and other updates by e-mail?

*Note: This is NOT an online newsletter and will NOT replace your newsletter mailings. As a paying member, you will always continue to receive the newsletter in the mail.*

If you are interested, send an e-mail to [nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com) with the subject line "Add me to list" and you will be given further instructions.

*How often will you receive an e-mail?*

- Once a month at the beginning of the month to remind you of upcoming event.
- Any time there is a cancellation or change to an event.
- Two additional times for our big events during the year:

- In October to remind you about the bird seed order deadline.

- In April to remind you about the Annual Banquet RSVP deadline.

*You can unsubscribe anytime from these e-mails if you no longer wish to receive them.*



## Audubon bags are here!

They are made of recycled plastic bottles and great for carrying groceries. Help reduce the use of plastic bags while also helping to promote our organization.

Bags are available at the monthly membership meetings or by e-mailing [nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com)



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# CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

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## The Power of your Plate:

One of the most significant impacts we have on environmental problems, including climate change, is our choice of food. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that livestock accounts for 15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions annually (7.1 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year). Although most animals raised for food have some sort of negative environmental impact, cattle raised for beef and milk are the worst offenders, representing 65% of total livestock emissions. Minimize your consumption of conventionally raised feedlot beef and you'll save water and reduce methane gas and carbon emissions.

The Environmental Working Group tracked the resources required for both animal and plant-based protein sources. After analyzing 20 common foods, EWG researchers had two important findings: (1) plant-based foods had the smallest carbon footprint. (2) not all animal-based foods are created equal – the most resource-intensive foods studied by the EWG were lamb, beef, cheese, pork and farmed salmon – mainly because many farming operations employ chemical fertilizer, feed sourced from elsewhere, fuel, pesticides and copious amounts of water to raise such animals.

The conclusion – consider transitioning to a plant-based diet or if you choose not to fully eliminate meat, swapping in plant-based meals even a few days a week makes a big difference, as does choosing locally and sustainably raised meat.

## The EV's are coming!

A recent article in the Chicago Tribune had some interesting things to say about the future of electric cars – a number of countries, including Great Britain, France and China, will no longer allow internal combustion engines in a decade or so. In addition to setting aggressive production quotas for EV's, China plans to scrap internal combustion engines as soon as 2030. Thus, the world's largest auto market is forcing the rest of the international community to follow in its footsteps. Major automakers are announcing plans for an "all electric future." General Motors plans to create 20 new electric vehicles by 2023. Depending on how electricity is produced, plug-ins are from 30 percent to 80 percent lower in greenhouse gas emissions according to Gina Copland-Newfield, director of the Sierra Club's Electric Vehicles Initiative. While an all-electric future is still years away, it seems it's a matter of when, not if, we get there.

With the holidays approaching, if you're looking for gift ideas, don't forget our great Audubon shopping bags – get your friends and relatives to kick the plastic bag habit! Also consider a gift of bird-friendly coffee from Birds and Beans to raise awareness about the need to conserve habitat for migratory songbirds.

Candy Colby



*Photos from the September NIAS sponsored Carrie Newcomer concert "a gathering of spirits and a festival of friends" (by Juliet Moderow)*



## EARTH FRIENDLY RECIPE

### *Mexican Pumpkin Soup*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4-5 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cups pureed cooked pumpkin or 1 can canned pumpkin
- 1 16-oz can chili beans
- 5 medium red potatoes, diced into ½ inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- Pinch of cayenne or other red pepper
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 1/3 cup soy or almond milk (unsweetened)
- Salt to taste
- Cilantro or parsley for garnish
- 1 tablespoon seeded diced jalapeno (optional)

#### Directions:

*Heat a large pot. Saute the onions over medium heat until they soften, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook for about 1 minute. Add in the broth, pumpkin, chili beans, potato, and jalapeno (if using). Stir in the oregano, cayenne, and cumin. Bring to a boil and then turn down to a simmer.*

*Simmer for about 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove from heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Stir in the soy milk, add salt to taste, and serve immediately garnished with cilantro or parsley.*



# CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It's time once again for the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count. This will be the 42nd time that our chapter has taken part in this endeavor to take one-day snapshots of bird diversity and population in pre-determined areas.

You are invited to be a part of this year's count. It will take place on Saturday, December 16. We will meet at the Spring Grove Family Restaurant, 1521 S. West Ave. in Freeport at 6:30 a.m. for a "Dutch-treat" breakfast. After eating, we will assign territories and divide up.

If you are a beginning or novice birder, we will assign you with a more experienced person. The count generally lasts through late afternoon. If you can only help for the morning or afternoon, we will be meeting

at 12:00 noon at the Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau on US Rt. 20 East to eat lunch and discuss afternoon plans. Bring a sack lunch and binoculars and dress for the weather.

Anyone who would like to do some early or late owling should contact count compiler Richard Benning at the number indicated below about the location you will be covering.

You may also be a part of the count by being a feeder counter. See the bird list and instructions. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the December 5th NIAS monthly meeting for both field counters and feeder counters.

*If you cannot attend the meeting and wish to participate, or if you have any questions, contact Richard Benning 815-865-5279.*

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT FEEDER COUNT PORTION

Participating in a CBC Feeder Count is easy and fun! First, be sure that your feeders are in the official count circle, a 15-mile diameter circle with Read Park in Freeport as the center. If you aren't sure if you are in the circle, call Richard Benning at the number listed above. On the count day, Saturday, December 16, simply watch your bird feeder(s) for at least 4 hours and record the largest number of each species present at any one moment. For example, don't add together the 8 juncos seen at 10 a.m. and the 10 juncos seen at 11:30 a.m. The final number should be 10, that is, the most seen at any one time.

You don't have to be glued to the window either, watching every bird for every minute. Just check your feeder often during the hours you are counting. Then complete the form below and mail as indicated by December 23rd. Thanks!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/>	Mourning dove	<input type="checkbox"/>	American Tree Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-headed Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Song Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-bellied Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/>	White-throated Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/>	Downy Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/>	White-crowned Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hairy Woodpecker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dark-eyed Junco
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Flicker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Cardinal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Jay	<input type="checkbox"/>	Purple Finch
<input type="checkbox"/>	American Crow	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Finch
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black-capped Chickadee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pine Siskin
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tufted Titmouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	American Goldfinch
<input type="checkbox"/>	Red-breasted Nuthatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	House Sparrow
<input type="checkbox"/>	White-breasted Nuthatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	(other)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown Creeper	<input type="checkbox"/>	(other)
<input type="checkbox"/>	European Starling	<input type="checkbox"/>	(other)

Please mail form to:  
**RICHARD BENNING, P.O. BOX 11, DAVIS, IL 61019**  
 NO LATER THAN December 23rd. THANKS!

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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** | Rex Sides, 408.390.3970

**Vice President** | Richard Benning

**Secretary** | Nancy Ocken

**Treasurer** | Mary Blackmore

**At-large** | Mark Keister, Fred Redmore,  
Henry Simpson, Steve Simpson,  
Betty Mickel and Linda Black

### *COMMITTEE CHAIRS*

**Conservation** | Candy Colby

**Programs** | Teresa Smith

**Education** | Juliet Moderow

**Publicity** | Tim Smith

**Membership** | Gay Broocks

**Field Trips** | Laura Dufford

**Sustainable Agriculture**

Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore,  
Laura Dufford and Heidi Thorp

**Newsletter Editor** | Dan Barron  
2115 15th Pl. So. - La Crosse WI 54601  
815-541-3261 - dan@beewise.us

*nwilaudubon@gmail.com*

# THANK YOU



Peggy and David Bucher for their generous donation in memory of their friend Bradley Tait.

The NIAS Carrie Newcomer Concert Committee – Mary Blackmore, Laura Dufford, Kara Gallup, Don Miller, Juliet Moderow and Teresa Smith – for their work in organizing and promoting a terrific concert.

The two anonymous donors who covered all of the Carrie Newcomer Concert expenses.

Dan Barron for donating to NIAS several seed collecting pouches.

Fall prairie seed collectors at both Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserves: Judy and Harlan Corrie, John and Anita Neinhuis, Pam and Jim Richards, Fred and Carol Redmore, Mary Blackmore, Nancy Ocken, Anne Straight, Melody Farringer, Larry Seffrood, Kara Gallup, Tim and Teresa Smith, Paul Brown, Laura Dufford, Bob Remer and Deb Lischwe.

Nancy and Randy Ocken for hosting this year's preserves volunteer potluck.

John and Anita Nienhuis for hosting our prairie seed processing sessions.

Judy Corrie, Teresa Smith, Mary Blackmore, and Pam and Jim Richards for providing treats at seed collecting outings.

Lynn Feaver for mowing trails and firebreaks at our preserves.

Recent field trip leaders: Laura Dufford, Juliet Moderow and Anne Straight.

Fall stewardship session volunteers for October: Pam and Jim Richards, Mary Blackmore, Anne Straight, Deb Lischwe and Nancy Ocken.

**Northwest Illinois  
Audubon Society**

P.O. Box 771  
Freeport, IL 61032-0771

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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**

**Senator Richard Durbin**

Kluczynski Building 38th Floor  
230 S. Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60604  
[www.durbin.senate.gov/contact.cfm](http://www.durbin.senate.gov/contact.cfm)

**Senator Tammy Duckworth**

230 S Dearborn Suite 3900, Chicago, IL 60604  
Phone: 312-886-3506  
[www.duckworth.senate.gov](http://www.duckworth.senate.gov)

**16th District Rep. Adam Kinzinger**

628 Columbus Street, Suite 507, Ottawa, IL 61350  
<https://kinzingerforms.house.gov/email-adam/>

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100 19th Street, Suite 101, Rock Island, IL 61201  
<http://bustos.house.gov/contact>

**STATE**

**45th District Sen. Tim Bivins**

50 W. Douglas Street, Suite 1001, Freeport, IL 61032  
[senatorbivins@grics.net](mailto:senatorbivins@grics.net)

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1825 Ave of the Cities - Suite 1, Moline, IL 61265  
[senatorneilanderson.com/Contact](http://senatorneilanderson.com/Contact)

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50 W. Douglas Street, Suite 1001, Freeport, IL 61032  
[repstewart@gmail.com](mailto:repstewart@gmail.com)

**90th District Rep. Tom Demmer**

1221 Currency Street, Suite B, Rochelle, IL 61068  
[rep@tomdemmer.com](mailto:rep@tomdemmer.com)