



Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

JUNE – JULY 2019

www.nwilaudubon.org

NIAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

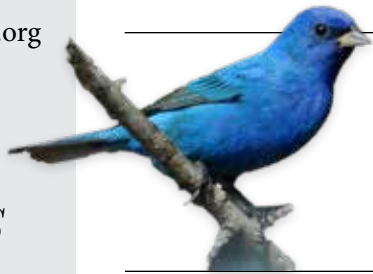
Join us the first Tuesday of every month, September through May. All of our programs are open to the public.

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

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

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

Please join us!



Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

The all-blue male Indigo Bunting sings with cheerful gusto and looks like a scrap of sky with wings. Sometimes nicknamed "blue canaries," these brilliantly colored yet common and widespread birds whistle their bouncy songs through the late spring and summer all over eastern North America. Look for Indigo Buntings in weedy fields and shrubby areas near trees, singing from dawn to dusk atop the tallest perch in sight or foraging for seeds and insects in low vegetation.



INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER:

2. Calendar Considerations
3. Field Trips
4. Summer Stewardship
5. NIAS Board Thank You
2019 Banquet Thank You
6. Red-breasted Nuthatch
Regional Sightings
7. 2019 Crane Count
Campfires at Elkhorn
8. ECBP 20th Anniversary
9. Thank You!

ELKHORN CREEK BUTTERFLY FESTIVAL

Saturday, July 27th, 1:00-5:00 p.m.



Join us for a fun, informative family friendly afternoon as we explore the Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve for the many butterflies that are found there. From 1-5 p.m. participants may join guided butterfly tours or look on their own for those winged beauties. Tours will begin at 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. "Illinois Butterflies and Moths" pocket guides will be distributed at no charge while supplies last. We'll have a shady rest area with chairs, as well as a restroom, cold beverages, snacks and information about pollinators.

If the weather is questionable, call Mary Blackmore at 815-938-3204 before 10 a.m. on July 27. To date 34 species of butterflies and skippers have been documented at the preserve including: Buckeye, Great Spangled Fritillary, Coral Hairstreak, Milbert's Tortoiseshell, Pecks Skipper and Red-spotted Purple. A new species, American Snout was observed at the 2018 Butterfly Festival. 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. This event is free and open to the public. We hope to see you there!

Top text: allaboutbirds.org/
Top photo: Dawn Scranton,
Wikimedia Commons
Lower: Richard Benning leads a tour
during a previous butterfly festival.
photos by Teresa Smith

CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

May 31 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 8-10 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 1 – Birding 101, Valley of Eden Bird Sanctuary, Stockton IL, 9 a.m. - noon *See page 3 for details.*

June 4 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 6 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 8-10 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 6 – “Talking About the Issues” discussion session; 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the home of Richard Benning; 704 N Davis St in Davis; 815-865-5279.

The first hour of discussion will focus on problems that the local food movement is facing and how these problems can be addressed. Call the phone number above for an article relating to this topic. During the second hour we will discuss topics brought forth by participants. All are welcome to attend this discussion.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight east parking lot in Freeport at 6:30 or call Richard for directions.

June 8 – Audubon Council of Illinois summer meeting, Rockford, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. *Contact Mary at 815-938-3204 for carpool and agenda information.*

June 10 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 12 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 8-10 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 13 – Campfire at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve at 7:30 p.m. We'll take a stroll to observe nesting birds and blooming plants. The campfire begins at 8:30 p.m. with s'mores and water provided. We hope to see impressive display of fireflies. Bring lawnchairs and a flashlight.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport at 7 p.m. The preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. The parking lot is off of West Grove Rd. If weather is questionable call Mary at 815-938-3204.

June 15 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 17 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 19 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 21 – Freeport Prairie Stewardship, 8-10 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 22 – Field Trip: An Afternoon of Dragonflies and Damselflies and other Flying Objects, Elkhorn Creek Preserve. 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. *See page 3 for details.*

June 24 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 26 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 28 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

June 29 – Tour of Chestnut Cliff Farm, 2-4 p.m. *See page 3 for details.*

July 1 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 2 – Field Trip: Local Prairie tour to Meinert Prairie. 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. *See page 3 for details.*

July 8 – Field Trip: Local Prairie tour to Freeport Prairie. 10:30 – noon. *See page 3 for details.*

July 10 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 11 – “Kids and Grandparents” morning; 9:30-11:30 a.m., Mogle Center at Oakdale Nature Preserve.

This is a program designed to help grandparents and grandchildren experience the natural world together. Several activities will be offered promoting interaction in an outdoor setting. Activities will be most appropriate for grandchildren ages 6-11.

Please call Richard Benning (815-865-5279) to sign-up for this event so it can be determined how many supplies are needed. Oakdale is three miles south of Freeport on Baileyville Road.

July 12 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 15 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 16 – Full Moon Campfire at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve at 7 p.m. We'll stroll the trails, observe birds, blooming plants and butterflies. The campfire begins at 8 p.m. with a good chance of hearing Screech Owls after dark. S'mores and water provided.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport at 6:30 p.m. The preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. The parking lot is off of West Grove Rd. If weather is questionable call Mary at 815-938-3204.

July 17 – “Talking About the Issues” monthly discussion session from 7-9 p.m. at the home of John and Anita Nienhuis, 3350 S. Mill Grove Rd. The first hour topic, from an opinion piece by writer/scientist Sandra Steingraber, explores why humans often do nothing with overwhelming amounts of information about an environmental problem, and how we can overcome our instincts to avoid getting at the source of issues like climate change.

For a copy of the article contact Mary Blackmore at 815-938-3204. The second hour will be the customary discussion of whatever issues are brought forth by participants. All are welcome to attend.

Carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport at 6:30 p.m. or call John and Anita Nienhuis for directions.

July 19 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 8-10 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 22 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 8-10 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 24 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 27 – Annual Northwest Illinois Audubon Society Butterfly Festival at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 1-5 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of fun and learning. *See cover page for details.*

July 29 – Preserve Stewardship, Elkhorn Creek, 7-9 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

July 31 – Preserve Stewardship, Silver Creek, 8-10 a.m. *See page 4 for details.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Chris Fye – Freeport
Laurie Swanson – Freeport
Michael Ritchie – Mount Carroll
Susan Johnson – Mount Morris
Gerald Eiden – Polo
Anne Haliotis – Savanna

Questions About Your Membership?

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



FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

JUNE – JULY

Birding 101 *(see page 9)*

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

An Afternoon of exploring Odonata *(dragonflies & damselflies)* and Other Flying Objects at Elkhorn Creek Preserve

Saturday, June 22, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Laura Dufford
815-947-2720, 815-541-8958
lauradufford@gmail.com

Meet at the Elkhorn Creek Preserve
parking lot at 1:00 p.m.

Cindy & John McKee, Odonata enthusiasts will share their knowledge of dragonflies & damselflies with us at our Elkhorn Creek Preserve. Cindy and John will walk the preserve with us capturing, identifying and observing these marvelous flying insects. The last time they led a tour at the preserve they caught a rare damselfly, the Spring Water Dancer. John & Cindy are also enthused about other flying objects, so butterflies and birds are also critters of interest for the afternoon. Come and enjoy the afternoon at Elkhorn Creek. Binoculars, sunscreen, insect repellent and water are suggested. This is a great family event.

Chestnut Cliff Farm

June 29, 2019, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Heidi Thorp 815-369-5141,
heidithorp@yahoo.com

Please call or email Heidi to confirm
your attendance.

Come on out and join us for a tour of Chestnut Cliff Farm located off of US Business 20 east, Freeport, Illinois. Pat Leininger and Phil Bardell began truck gardening over 30 years ago, having a progressive vision for their

land. Now their son Trale Bardell and his wife Margaret help to manage the land in a sustainable way. Chestnut Cliff Farm aims to raise the highest quality specialty produce, maple syrup, free-range eggs, grass-fed beef and pork, foraged foods, unique cut flowers, and more! Please dress appropriately as you will be walking around outside on a working farm.

We encourage you to start the day by visiting the Stephenson County Farmers Market in the morning, between 8-12, at 23 W. Exchange St. (by the city municipal parking lot) and shop at Chestnut Cliff Farm's booth with the purple table cloth. The tour will meet at their farm at 2 p.m.

Directions: Their address doesn't work on GPS devices so select "Intersections", City - Freeport, (1st Road) US 20 BR (2nd Road) S Smoky Hollow Rd (This is how the GPS spells Smokey). The farm is on the east side of US Business 20 E across from S Smokey Hollow Rd.

Summer Prairie Tours

Two prairie tours will be offered in July. Both sites are small remnants with marvelous displays of some of our rare early summer prairie blooms, such as Pale Purple Coneflower, New Jersey Tea, Lead Plant, Purple Prairie Clover, among others.

Meinert Prairie

Tuesday, July 2, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Coordinator: Laura Dufford
815-947-2720, 815-541-8958
lauradufford@gmail.com

Meet at Nick Faessler residence: W1156
Stateline Rd, Juda at 4:45 p.m. or carpool
from Harbor Freight parking lot

The Meinert Prairie was recently donated to The Prairie Enthusiasts (TPE) by Richard and Joanne Meinert. This is a 6.5 acre remnant that has been managed by Nick Faessler, a member of TPE. We will be joining the

Prairie Bluff chapter of TPE to tour this unique property. Those wishing, may join the TPE group in their annual potluck; at the Faessler residence after the tour. Others may wish to bring a snack for the ride home. Contact Laura to confirm attendance. Carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot at 4:15 p.m. Return around 7:15 p.m.

Freeport Prairie

Monday, July 8, 10:30 – noon

Coordinator: Laura Dufford
815-947-2720, 815-541-8958
lauradufford@gmail.com

We'll take a leisurely stroll through the Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve hoping to catch a glimpse of some of the summer blooms. The Freeport Prairie is an Illinois dedicated Nature Preserve owned by the Jane Addamsland Park Foundation. Call Laura if there is questionable weather.

The Freeport Prairie is located on the south edge of Freeport, on the west side of Walnut Rd. It is just south of the intersection of Meadows Dr. and Walnut Rd. We'll meet in the site's parking lot.

"Kids and Grandparents" Morning

Thursday, July 11, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Mogle Center at Oakdale Nature Preserve.

This is a program designed to help grandparents and grandchildren experience the natural world together. Several activities will be offered promoting interaction in an outdoor setting. Activities will be most appropriate for grandchildren ages 6-11.

Please call Richard Benning (815-865-5279) to sign-up for this event so it can be determined how many supplies are needed. Oakdale is three miles south of Freeport on Baileyville Road.



SUMMER STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE



Paul Brown, Judy and Harlan Corrie and Jim and Pam Richards remove garlic mustard from Elkhorn woods.
photo by Pam Richards

Please join us for one or more of the following stewardship sessions scheduled below for either the Elkhorn Creek or Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserves or the Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve. Depending upon the site or week, we will be doing a variety of tasks such as removing sweet clover, burdock and wild parsnip, cutting brush, girdling saplings or otherwise reducing the competition to our native prairie, woodland and wetland remnants. *Times vary so be sure to check the schedule.*

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

We Supply : Tools, gloves, water, snacks and directions about our work always will be provided.

Carpooling: The carpool site to Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek is the east portion of the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport along HWY 26 on the south edge of town. Departure times vary so check the schedule.

Questions? If the weather is questionable or you need more information, contact the listed leader(s).

Site Directions:

Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve is about 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. Parking is off of West Grove Rd.

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

Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve is about 2 miles south of Leaf River in the southwest corner of the intersection of Leaf River Rd. and West Grove Rd. Parking is off of Leaf River Rd. about ¼ mile south of the intersection (*S. Main St. crossing Hwy 72 in Leaf River becomes Leaf River Rd.*)

May 31 – Elkhorn Creek – any sections with Parsnip, 8-10 a.m., carpool 7:30 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204

June 4 – Elkhorn Creek, Old Joe Seep, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Randy and Nancy Ocken 815-440-5768

June 6 – Elkhorn Creek, Fruit Bowl, 8-10 a.m., carpool 7:30 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore and Kara Gallup 815-871-8014

June 10 – Elkhorn Creek, Swamp Sparrow Wetland, 7- 9 a.m. Carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Juliet Moderow 201-233-0946

June 12 – Elkhorn Creek, Bluestem View, 8-10 a.m. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Kara Gallup 815-871-8014

June 15 – Elkhorn Creek, Upper Planting, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204

June 17 – Elkhorn Creek, Corner Planting, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204

June 19 – Elkhorn Creek, Spiderwort Vista, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Anne Straight 815-938-3263

June 21 – Freeport Prairie, 8-10 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204

June 24 – Elkhorn Creek, Fruit Bowl and Corner Planting, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore and Kara Gallup 815-871-8014

June 26 – Elkhorn Creek, Old Joe Seep, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Randy and Nancy Ocken 815-440-5768

June 28 – Elkhorn Creek, Blazing Star Saddles, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leaders Chris Kruger and Bernard Lischwe 815-275-9200

July 1 – Elkhorn Creek, Lower West Planting, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204

July 10 – Elkhorn Creek, Sandy Slope, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leaders John and Anita Nienhuis 815-443-2401

July 12 – Elkhorn Creek, Elkhorn Riparian Strip, 7 -9 a.m., carpool at 6:30 a.m. Leader: Jeremy Dixon 815-821-3921

July 15 – Elkhorn Creek, Swamp Sparrow Wetland, 7- 9 a.m. Carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Juliet Moderow 201-233-0946

July 19 – Elkhorn Creek, Black Oak Savanna 8-10 a.m., carpool 7:30 a.m. Leaders Jim and Pam Richards, 815-338-4049

July 22 – Elkhorn Creek, Black Oak Savanna 8-10 a.m., carpool 7:30 a.m. Leaders Jim and Pam Richards, 815-338-4049

July 24 – Elkhorn Creek, Goats'n Roses and Trail Trimming for Butterfly Festival, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204

July 29 – Elkhorn Creek, Jim's Hill, 7-9 a.m., carpool 6:30 a.m. Leader: Lynn Feaver 815-235-9530

July 31 – Silver Creek, 8-10 a.m, carpool 7:15 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204.

If you would like e-mail reminders of the stewardship days, contact Nancy at rnocken@gmail.com

THANK YOU

TO THE 2019 NIAS BOARD MEMBERS

Thank you to the following retiring board members who have served on the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society Board for the past year: Lynn Feaver (*secretary*), Mark Keister (*at-large*), Candy Colby (*Conservation*), Gay Broocks (*membership*), Jessica Miller (*at-large*), Henry Simpson (*at-large*), and Shey Lowman (*at-large*).

New board and committee members include Paul Brown, Gary Gordon, Don Miller, Tim Smith, and Chris Kruger. Thank you to the new board members for being willing to step up and share their time and talents with Northwest Illinois Audubon. Welcome new board members!

Board members who will be continuing to serve in 2019-2020 include:

Juliet Moderow – President
Fred Redmore – Vice-President
Pam Richards – Secretary
Mary Blackmore – Treasurer

Board members At-Large:

Linda Black, Paul Brown, Jim Richards,
Gary Gordon, Don Miller, Abby Strominger

Committee Chairs:

Laura Dufford – Conservation Chairperson
Teresa Smith – Program Chairperson
Richard Benning – Education Chairperson
Deb Lischwe – Publicity Chairperson
Tim Smith – Membership Chairperson
Chris Kruger – Field Trip Chairperson

Northwest Illinois Audubon Society has a strong presence in northwest Illinois because of the dedication of the wonderful board members. Thank YOU!

Continued thank you to Shey Lowman who has been updating the calendar on our website and Dan Barron who works many hours on making our newsletter so organized and wonderful to read!

Juliet Moderow



August 4th NIAS Board Retreat, held at the home of Lynn and Sandy Feaver

photo by Sandy Feaver

2019 Banquet Thank You

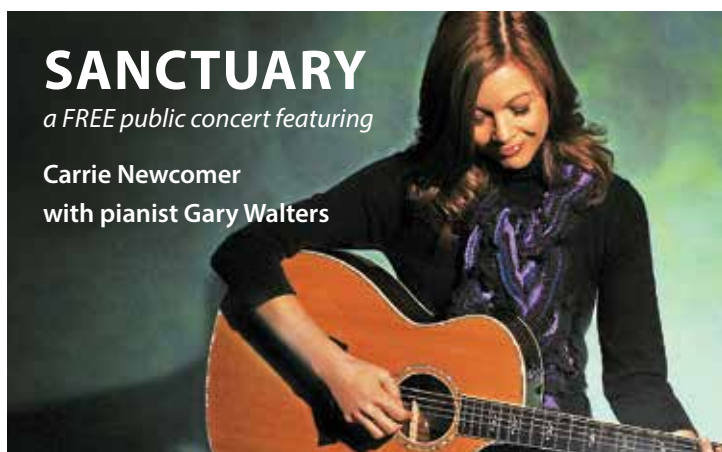
Thank you to all the people who volunteered at the banquet in April. The banquet is a delightful event due to help from numerous volunteers including: Pam and Jim Richards, Laura and Doug Dufford, Bernard and Deborah Lischwe, Dan Barron, Anita Nienhuis, Dick Luthin, Anne Straight, Judy Corrie, Mary Blackmore, Kara Gallup, Chris Kruger, Richard Benning, Tim and Teresa Smith, Juliet Moderow. Thank you for all your help with the preparation before the event, during the event and the clean up after the banquet.

Thank you to the following people for providing delicious desserts for the banquet meal: Pam Richards, Judy Corrie, Bob Curtis, Anne Straight, Linda Black, Anita Nienhuis, Diana Nye, Laura Dufford, Candy Colby, Teresa Smith, Paul Brown and Leah Dixon.

Thank you to the following folks who donated items to the silent auction: David C. Olson, Joan Harmet, Shey Lowman, Dave Derwent, Pat Willging, Kerry Kurtz, Sharon Shaw Estate, Mark Keister, Jim Bade, Betty Mickel, Linda & Karl Black, Mary Blackmore, Gary Gordon, Highland Earth Club, Kriss Mulder, Alice Akins, Anita Nienhuis, Richard Benning, The Benning Family, Allison & John Gush, Chris Kruger, Phil & Ann Swalve-Johnson, Juliet Moderow, Randy Rice, Bernard Lischwe, Virginia DeSwarte, Nancy Ocken, and Carol Severson. We raised \$1,412 at the silent auction this year.

Thank you to Freeport Press for donating the printing of the banquet flyer and to Eickman's Processing Company for donating the use of a locker for the storage of the turkeys and the corn.

Teresa Smith



SANCTUARY

a FREE public concert featuring

Carrie Newcomer

with pianist Gary Walters

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

Saturday, August 24, 7 p.m.

Doors open at 6 p.m. – no reserved seating

*Highland Community College
Student Conference Center H-201*

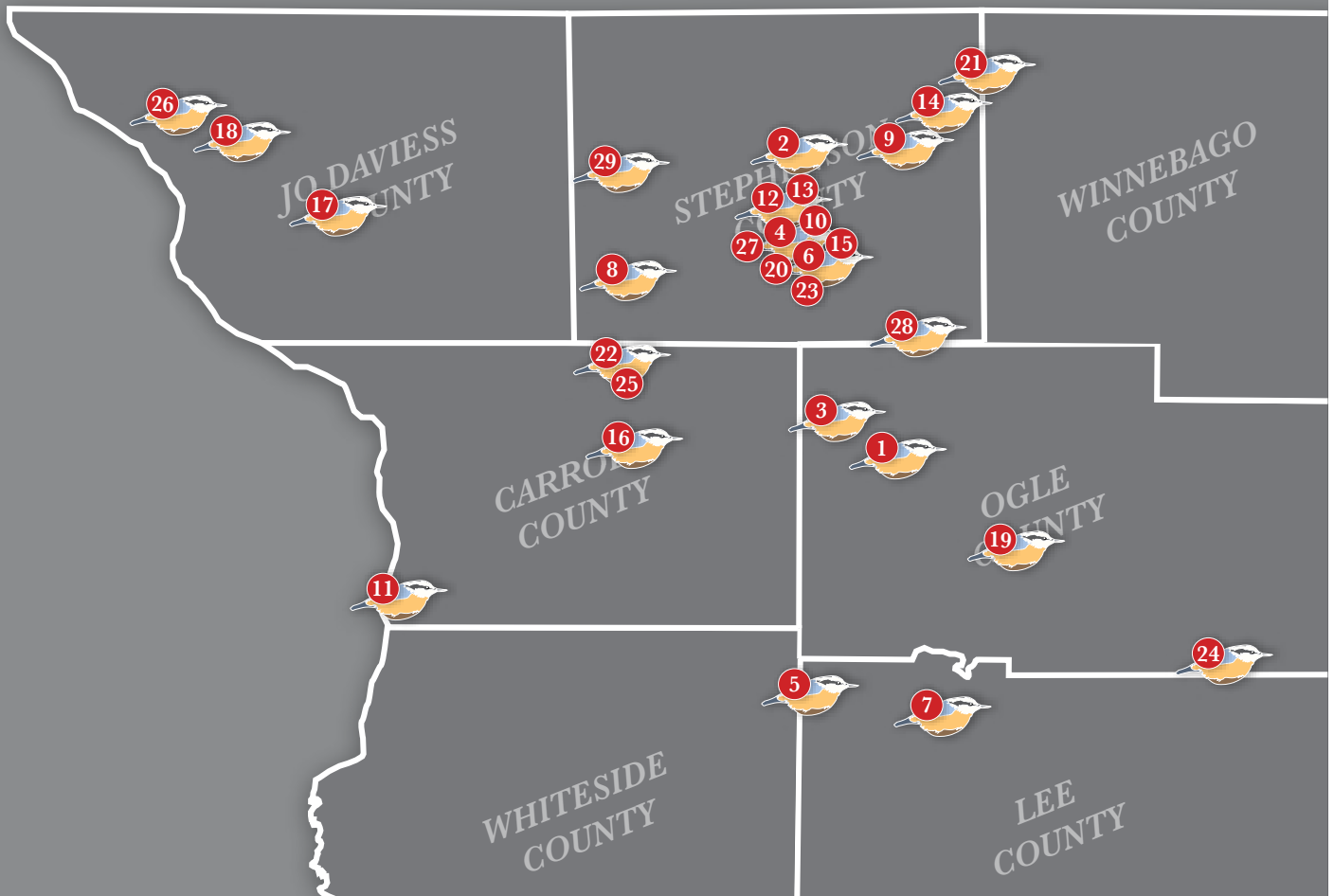
Nuthatch Sightings

In this irruptive year for the Red-breasted Nuthatch, we've been interested in finding out more from our members. At last count the newsletter editor had received 29 sightings. The following list of people have reported seeing this species at feeders or while walking around the past six months.

Thanks for your participation!



Red-breasted Nuthatch, photo by Patty Weik



- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Mary Blackmore – West Grove Rd., Forreston | 11. Anne Straight – Thomson Causeway | 21. Ron Friedell – Lake Summerset |
| 2. Harlan & Judy Corrie – rural Cedarville | 12. Candace Colby – Highland Drive, Freeport | 22. Pam Richards – Lake Carroll |
| 3. Anne Straight – Forreston | 13. Jeff and Fran Shriver – Freeport | 23. Patty Weik - Hillside Ct., Freeport |
| 4. Gary Gordon – Freeport | 14. Diane Phillips – E Rock Grove Rd, Rock City | 24. Esther Schippers – Rochelle |
| 5. Tim and Teresa Smith – Mound Hill Rd., Dixon | 15. Rebecca Shriver – W Lincoln, Freeport | 25. Dave Thompson – Lake Carroll |
| 6. Juliet Moderow – Freeport | 16. Rick and Kathy Weber – Lanark | 26. Denise Tollensdorf – Galena |
| 7. Carla Jaffe – Park Lane, Dixon | 17. Joan and Dick Harmet – Rural Elizabeth | 27. Bill Palmquist – Freeport |
| 8. Steve Simpson – W Loran Rd, Pearl City | 18. Vicky Wegner – Galena Territory | 28. Chris Mulder – German Valley |
| 9. Paul Brown – E Cedarville Rd, Dakota | 19. Kayse Rushford – Oregon, IL | 29. Heidi Thorp – Lena |
| 10. Dick Luthin – Parkview Drive, Freeport | 20. Lurane Slaght – West Palmer Street, Freeport | |

2019 Stephenson County Crane Count



Illustration by
Carol Litus

The 2019 Crane Count was held on Saturday, April 13th with Mother Nature providing us with weather that was delightful for April bird watching. Nearly all of the sites saw or heard at least one Sandhill crane. With temperatures in the mid-thirties and a slight breeze it was a wonderful day for counting cranes. Eleven of the 13 sites in Stephenson County were able to count a least 1 crane. A total of 75 cranes were observed this year with one site observing a flock of 15 birds in flight and another group observing a flock of 18 birds in flight. One of the 13 sites observed an occupied nest with 7 of the sites hearing unison calling.

Twenty NIAS volunteers participated as part of the multi-state Annual Midwest Crane Count sponsored by the International Crane Foundation. Without the help of our many volunteer counters, the Crane Count would not be possible. Big thanks go out to all the volunteers that got out early to count cranes. Volunteers include: Paul Hasenour, Rebecca Shriver-Rice, Jeff Shriver, Carol Beatty, Jesse Akins, Alice Akins, Jeremy Dixon, Mark Keister, Phil Swalve, Glenn Hagemann, Gary Gordon, Bernard Lischwe, Judy and Harlan Corrie, Teresa Smith, Rex Sides, Anne Straight, Juliet Moderow, Sherrie Shoemaker and Colleen Wilson.

Teresa Smith

Nine NIAS members gathered at Horicon Marsh for a last-minute field trip on April 19th. Notable sightings included Whooping Cranes and a Black-necked Stilt.



photo by Dan Barron

Campfires at Elkhorn

by Carol Redmore

One of the greatest delights at Elkhorn is the monthly campfire on summer evenings. With every step up the path to the campfire site on the hill, the serenity of a summer evening in this place increases. First comes an hour's walk on the prairie, finding the summer plants. In early summer a great splash of Spiderwort purples one big area, while the lovely Cream White indigo quietly offers delight to those who look for it. Frogs sing; fireflies flicker. As summer heightens the Bergamot leaps higher; the grasses grow higher, Gray-headed Coneflower bright among it all.

As the sunset flares in scarlet and orange, everyone drifts to the campfire Mary has built and gathers in for a time of conversation, poetry and essay readings, reflections, questions, observations. There are reflections by Thoreau, snippets of Emerson essays, perhaps a Mary Oliver poem, and often part of the seasonal descriptions by Edwin Way Teale.

As the soft darkness envelops us, the fire dances ever more brightly. A bat or two may swoop by. We listen for screech owls.

There is peace in this place. But sometimes there are lively scenes as well. One night the mosquitoes were so bloodthirsty that Keith Blackmore and Anita Neinhaus instigated a dance around the fire to scare away the rapacious bloodsuckers. The mosquitoes were unimpressed, but the cloak of nightfall quieted the frenzy and brought everyone back to the fire circle.

Stars are bright at the campfire. We do hear the screech owls. Alice Akins passes around the oatmeal cookies she has brought, and of course the evening has to end with smores.

Those who come to the campfire are rooted in this place like the deeply-rooted prairie plants.

ELKHORN CREEK BIODIVERSITY PRESERVE

20TH ANNIVERSARY



Western Meadowlark
USFWS - Midwest Region

500TH SPECIES OBSERVED!

On March 28, 2019 a Western Meadowlark was heard singing at Elkhorn Creek. That was our 500th species and 138th bird documented!

Mary Blackmore

VOLUNTEER REFLECTIONS:

In this issue, Elkhorn Creek volunteer comments from Anne Straight (Forreston), Randy and Nancy Ocken (rural Polo), Bernard and Deb Lischwe (Freeport), and John and Anita Nienhuis (rural Pearl City).

What stewardship task or aspect of stewardship do you enjoy most?

Anne: I like using the Parsnip Predator to remove parsnip and thistles. The most rewarding aspect is looking at an area after the work and seeing all the natives, like Spiderwort, dominate the view.

Randy: I enjoy doing the burns.

Nancy: Collecting Indian Grass. I also like the social aspect of stewardship days: good discussions and getting to know people you ordinarily wouldn't get to know.

Bernard: I really like being outdoors at Elkhorn helping native plants thrive.

Deb: Tackling Wild Parsnip, giving the prairie a chance to return to what it once was.

Anita: I like to eliminate non-native plants, especially Multi-Flora Rose, so we may discover native plants.

John: Overseeding a thistle patch.

What are 1 or 2 of your favorite species at Elkhorn Creek?

Anne: It's a tie between American Woodcock and Dickcissel.

Randy: Little Bluestem

Nancy: I love the blooming Spiderwort on Anne's Hill.

Bernard: Little Bluestem and Gray-headed Coneflower

Deb: The fragrant Wild Bergamot and butterflies I don't see anywhere else.

Anita: One of my favorites is the sound of the Western Chorus Frog – so tiny, but so vocal!

John: I think the Woodcock is the most amazing one!



“Distraction is a thief, of all that is shining and brief.”

Where the Light Comes Down,
Carrie Newcomer

Photographs by Keith Blackmore

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

Two types of membership are available:

1. Northwest Illinois Audubon Society and National Membership

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

_____ National Membership \$20

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

2. Northwest Illinois Audubon Society Local only Membership

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

Name of new member or gift recipient _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

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

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 | Juliet Moderow
Vice-President | Fred Redmore
Secretary | Pam Richards
Treasurer | Mary Blackmore

Board members At-Large:

Linda Black, Paul Brown, Jim Richards,
Gary Gordon, Don Miller,
Abby Strominger

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation | Laura Dufford
Programs | Teresa Smith
Education | Richard Benning
Publicity | Deborah Lischwe
Membership | Tim Smith
Field Trips | Chris Kruger

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

BIRDING 101

*Learn some birding techniques
from local experts!*

Saturday, June 1, 9:00 a.m. – noon.

Valley of Eden Bird Sanctuary, Stockton, IL

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

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

THANK YOU!



Candy Colby for all her work in planning and coordinating the Earth Day event at Krape Park. Unfortunately the snow and cold caused us to cancel the 2019 Earth Day event.

Recent field trip and birdwalk leaders: Anne Straight, Laura Dufford, Somer Bozovsky, Mary Blackmore, Richard Benning, Juliet Moderow and Don Miller.

Teresa Smith for coordinating our 2019 Crane Count.

Deborah Cheek for her recent donation.

Tim and Teresa Smith, Pam and Jim Richards, Mary Blackmore, Paul Brown and Richard Benning for burning, overseeding and removing downed limbs from the trails on part of our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve.

Tim and Teresa Smith, Jim Richards, Paul Brown, Mary Blackmore, Anne Straight, Bob Curtis, Bernard Lischwe and Beau Bunders for burning and overseeding multiple sections of our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve.

Jack and Debbie Barron of Freeport Press for donating the printing of our 2019 Local Foods Brochure.

Don and Sandy Tune, Bob and Kara Gallup, Jeff and Fran Shriver, Colleen and Mike Wilson, Amy Bauer, Lyle and Jane Krug, Paul and Carol Soderholm, Tim and Teresa Smith, Connie Michael, and Myrna Nelson for their recent donations.

Thank you to Jim and Pam Richards, Judy and Harlan Corrie and Paul Brown for Stewardship work at Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve in April.

www.nwilaudubon.org

**Northwest Illinois
Audubon Society**

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
FREEPORT, IL
PERMIT NO. 97

This newsletter was printed on Exact Eco 100 paper. It is made with 100% recycled post-consumer use fiber and is processed chlorine-free.



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/

Senator Tammy Duckworth

230 S Dearborn Suite 3900, Chicago, IL 60604
312-886-3506 | www.duckworth.senate.gov

16th District Rep. Adam Kinzinger

628 Columbus Street, Suite 507, Ottawa, IL 61350
www.kinzinger.house.gov

17th District Rep. Cheri Bustos

2401 4th Ave., Rock Island IL 61201
<http://bustos.house.gov/contact>

STATE

45th District Sen. Brian Stewart

50 W. Douglas Street, Suite 1001, Freeport, IL 61032
stewart@ilhousegop.org

36th District Sen. Neil Anderson

1523 47th Ave, Suite 3, Moline, IL 61265
senatorneilanderson@gmail.com

89th District Rep. Andrew Chesney

50 W. Douglas Street, Suite 1001, Freeport, IL 61032
Chesney@ilhousegop.org

90th District Rep. Tom Demmer

105 E First Street, Suite 110, Dixon IL 61021
demmer@ilhousegop.org

71st District Rep. Tony McCombie

9317B IL Route 84, Savanna, IL 61074
McCombie@ilhousegop.org