



Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

www.nwilaudubon.org



December 2014 - January 2015
NEWSLETTER

Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) A treat to find in your binocular viewfield, the Cedar Waxwing is a silky, shiny collection of brown, gray, and lemon-yellow, accented with a subdued crest, rakish black mask, and brilliant-red wax droplets on the wing feathers. In fall, these birds gather by the hundreds to eat berries, filling the air with their high, thin whistles.

Wilderness Explained

Tuesday, December 2nd
NIAS Monthly Meeting
St. John United Church of Christ



Greg Keilback, Biologist/Educator at Severson Dells Nature Center near Rockford, will present a program on wilderness, why we need it and how we can keep it. Greg will explain the Wilderness Act, in this 50th anniversary year of its passage, and answer questions you might have. He will use pictures and examples from numerous wilderness trips to help us understand why we need to be part of the resurgence to bring the wilderness back into our lives.

Meeting begins at **7:00 p.m.** for chapter announcements; the program begins at **7:30 p.m.** followed by refreshments.

NIAS MONTHLY MEETINGS

- Held on the 1st Tuesday of the month.
- Oct.-Mar., location is St. John United Church of Christ, 1010 S. Park Blvd., Freeport; 7 p.m. for announcements and reports.
- Program begins at 7:30 followed by refreshments.
- April, May & Sept. special mtg. time/place.

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Member's Night

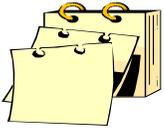
Tuesday, January 6th
NIAS Monthly Meeting
St. John United Church of Christ

This is the night when we tap into the collective nature travels and rich experiences of our members, the night when **WE** are the program! Members are invited to join in the fun by sharing 5-7 minutes of neat nature encounters they have had.

Participants can use slides, photos or story-telling to illustrate their experiences. Please contact Keith Blackmore by the December 2nd monthly meeting if you will be participating. You can reach Keith at 815-938-3204.



Meeting begins at **7:00 p.m.** for chapter announcements; the program begins at **7:30 p.m.** followed by refreshments.



Calendar Considerations

December 2 - 'Wilderness Explained' NIAS Monthly Meeting. See front cover for details.

December 6 - Burpee Museum Visit and Collections Tour Field Trip. See page 10 for details.

December 14 - Christmas Bird Count. See page 5 for more details.

December 18 - Conservation Committee Meeting. The Conservation Committee and all interested individuals will meet at Amigos Restaurant, 306 N. Galena Ave. in downtown Freeport at 5:30 p.m. Bring your appetite. Casual is the key word. We wrap it up by 7:30 p.m.

January 6 - 'Member's Night'. NIAS Monthly Meeting. See front cover for details.

January 10 - Animal Signs and Tales Field Trip. See page 10 for details.

January 10 - Bald Eagle Watch. See page 7 for details.

January 13 - NIAS Board Meeting. 7:00 p.m. at St. John United Church of Christ.

January 20 - "Talking About the Issues" monthly discussion session, 7-9 p.m. at the home of Carol and Fred Redmore, 1643 Hilltop Place, Freeport (815-721-3375). The first hour topic will be environmental ethics regarding the use of technology. To get a copy of the topic article, call Keith Blackmore at 815-938-3204. The second hour will be the customary discussion of whatever issues are brought forth. Directions to Redmore's: from HWY 26, turn east onto Young's Lane at the stoplight by Cub Foods. Before the block ends, turn south onto Hilltop Place. The Redmore home is the last place on the left before you get to the apartment complex.

January 22 - Conservation Committee Meeting. Details same as December 18 meeting.

January 24 - The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium Field Trip. See page 10 for details.

February 6 - Nicholas Conservatory Field Trip. See page 10 for details.

April 14 - NIAS Annual Banquet and Program. Mark your calendars! For more information, see information below.

ANNUAL BANQUET REMINDER

Mark your calendars now for **Tuesday, April 14** for our chapter's annual Banquet and Program. We are pleased to have as our speaker, **Tom Clay, Director of the Illinois Audubon Society.** Tom will present a slide-illustrated program on the recovery of the **Greater Prairie Chicken in Illinois.**

Our banquet will feature turkey from Arnold's Farm, a return of Drake's Farm sweet corn and much more. The banquet location will be the student Conference Center at Highland Community College in Freeport.

A flyer with complete information will be sent to members in March. We hope to see you there!



Greater Prairie Chicken - *Tympanuchus cupido*; sometimes called a 'boomer'.

The greater prairie chicken belongs to the Grouse family. It is easy to identify these birds due to a few unique physical attributes in them. They have black and white or brown and white stripes. They have feathers on their legs and feet which helps to keep them warm in snow.

The population of this species has reduced considerably. Now, they are being declared 'endangered' and steps are being taken to protect them.

THANK YOU TO...

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

*Fall prairie seed collectors at both the Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserves: Larry and Phyllis Seffrood, John and Anita Nienhuis, Judy and Harlan Corrie, Mary and Keith Blackmore, Dan and Diana Nye, Rex Sides, Chris Kruger, Bernard and Deborah Lischwe, Lynn and Sandy Feaver, Tim and Teresa Smith, Carol and Fred Redmore, Juliet D'Souza, Anne Straight, Mark Keister, Nancy Ocken, and Kayse Rushford.

*Leaders for recent field trips: Tim Smith, Richard Benning and Anne Straight.

*Mary Blackmore, Phyllis Seffrood and Alice Akins for providing treats at monthly campfires.

*Fred and Carol Redmore and Mary and Keith Blackmore for bagging ear corn for this year's birdseed sale.

*Jean Koberstein and Marjorie Damon for their recent donation to the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society in memory of Richard Thorn.



Welcome New Members:

Dorothy Laude	Davis
Jeff Dickens	Warren (Welcome to NW Illinois)
Judith Roskam	Freeport
Glenn Karpinske	Hanover
Geri Shanafelt	Thompson



NO BLUEBIRDS THIS YEAR



No Eastern Bluebirds were fledged from boxes at the Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve this year. Again it was a bad Black Fly season, but this year's bluebirds didn't even get beyond the egg stage, with very little overall bluebird activity. Tree Swallows were equally unsuccessful in fledging young, with one nest of fledglings appearing to have succumbed to Black Flies.

Some House Wrens fledged, as did a few nests of Eurasian Tree Sparrows, a non-native species formerly limited in its range to the St. Louis area, and that seems to be gaining a reproductive foothold in our area.

Many thanks go to Anne Straight for monitoring the boxes this year and for many years. Anne is retiring from that task and we very much appreciate her diligence over the years. If you would be interested in helping to monitor the bluebird boxes next year, see the article below.



BLUEBIRD MONITOR(S) WANTED!

Our chapter is in need of an individual or team of individuals to monitor the bluebird boxes at our Elkhorn Creek Preserve, about 14 miles south of Freeport. Our thanks go to **Anne Straight** who has monitored the boxes for many years and is retiring from that job.

Monitoring involves opening each of the 9 boxes and recording the contents, or lack thereof. Monitoring is done on a weekly basis, approximately March through September. If several individuals volunteer, a team can be formed such that each person could make a monitoring visit only once or twice a month. Individuals will be trained regarding nest identification, incubation and fledging time periods, record-keeping, etc.

This is a great opportunity to visit a beautiful area and observe seasonal changes, as well as learn more about Eastern Bluebirds and the other species that sometimes use the boxes — Tree Swallows, House Wrens, Black-capped Chickadees and Eurasian Tree Sparrows. If you would be interested in becoming a nest box monitor at Elkhorn Creek or if you'd like more information, please contact Mary Blackmore at 815-938-3204.



Thank you, Kara Gallup!

For the past five years, (*really, I think it's only been 4.5, guys*) Kara Gallup has been the faithful and creative editor of our Chapter's newsletter – and this is her last edition. We want to thank Kara for all her work. (*boy, this is weird for me to enter this...*)

Every two months since 2009, our members and friends have received in the mail – on time and accurately - (*most of the time*) this well-designed and easy-to-read summary of Chapter events and important conservation issues. In her thirty-some editions, Kara has described every Audubon program, meeting, banquet and field trip. She has announced every workday and volunteer opportunity. (*yes, but I didn't WRITE it*) Among other things, during her tenure as editor, Kara has added:

- *more photos and well-selected graphics,
- *a regular, front-page blurb about a special bird or animal, and
- *columns from members about global climate, books you should read, and books to read to your children.

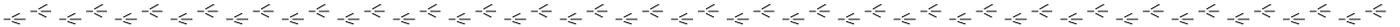
If you're curious about the creativity and energy that Kara has invested in helping our Chapter communicate, browse through some of the past editions which are archived on our website – nwilaudubon.org – under 'News and Events.' In addition to editing the newsletters, Kara has also kept the website calendar accurate and up to date.

Dan Barron will be taking over as our editor in 2015. (*such a talent!*) Please send your ideas and copy for the next newsletter to **Dan** at dan@beewise.us. The newsletter deadline is the 10th of the month preceding the next newsletter. That would be January 10 for the February-March 2015 edition.

Thanks again, Kara, from the Chapter's Board and all our members. We have appreciated your time and energy!

(It's been an honor. Thanks to the board for your support over the years.)

The Board
(and Kara)



CAROL'S CHOICES

For Children:

The Shortest Day of the Year: Celebrating the Winter Solstice.

Wendy Pfeffer 6-9 years; Grades 1-4

This book explains what the solstice is and how it has been

observed in various cultures. There are explanatory diagrams, projects teachers and parents can do with kids, and two "cooking" activities, one for a human party and one for an avian one.

Animals in Winter. Henrietta Bancroft. Ages 4-8

A few lines of simple text about winter habits—why some, like monarch butterflies and many birds, fly south, why and how some hibernate, why some continue to forage. A kindergarten teacher in her review says the kids in her class love it when she reads it to them and then go over it many times on their own.

For Adults:

Gray Mountain. John Grisham. Fiction - a best seller

A good story and filled with solid information on strip mining and its effects. It is a story that illustrates the truths of humanity and of nature.

— Carol Redmore



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

It is time once again for the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society to participate in the annual **Christmas Bird Count**. This will be the **39th time** that our chapter has taken part in this endeavor to take one-day snapshots of bird diversity and population in predetermined areas.

You are invited to be a part of this year's count. It will take place on **Sunday, December 14**. 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, binoculars and dress for the weather. For those wanting to get an early start, **we will meet at 5:00 a.m. in the east end of the Staples parking lot to go owling.**

You may also be a part of the count by being a feeder counter. See the bird list and instructions below. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the December 2nd NIAS monthly meeting for both field counters and feeder counters. If you cannot attend the meeting and wish to participate, contact Richard Benning (815-865-5279) or Keith Blackmore (815-938-3204).



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 or Keith Blackmore at the numbers listed above. On the count day, **Sunday, December 14**, 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 **Dec. 21**. Thanks!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

___ Mourning dove

___ Tufted titmouse

___ House finch

___ Northern flicker

___ White-breasted nuthatch

___ Pine siskin

___ Red-bellied woodpecker

___ Red-breasted nuthatch

___ American goldfinch

___ Red-headed woodpecker

___ Brown creeper

___ Dark-eyed junco

___ Hairy woodpecker

___ Carolina wren

___ Tree sparrow

___ Downy woodpecker

___ European starling

___ White-throated sparrow

___ Blue jay

___ House sparrow

___ Song sparrow

___ American crow

___ Northern cardinal

___ Black-capped chickadee

___ Purple finch

(other)



Please mail form to: Richard Benning, P.O. Box 11, Davis, IL 61019 **NO LATER THAN Dec. 21.**

THANKS!

TERRIFIC BIRDSEED SALE!



This year's birdseed sale was one of our most successful to date. We sold over 25,000 pounds of seed. The total distribution process went especially smoothly and our profit was over \$3,000. The proceeds will be used to support our many chapter programs, activities and publications. Thank you to all of our customers who supported this annual fundraiser!

The sale could not have happened without the work and diligence of many

volunteers: John and Anita Nienhuis, Laura Dufford, Dave Derwent, John Walt, Chris Kruger, Larry and Phyllis Seffrood, Tim Smith, Mary and Keith Blackmore, Richard Benning, Terri Clark, Jeremy Dixon, Lynn and Sandy Feaver, Joe Akins, Kara Gallup, Connie Heinrich, Rex Sides, Mark Keister, and Anne Straight.

Thanks also go to Ray and Sean at the O'Mara Transport Company for hosting our main pickup point in Freeport and to the people who generously volunteered their homes for regional pickup points: John Day, Anne Straight, Chris Kruger, and Jeremy Dixon. Thank you to Kriss Wolff for donating all of our ear corn.

Special thanks go to the hard-working Birdseed Sale Committee: Keith Blackmore, Chris Kruger, Tim Smith and John Walt. (Pictured above are intrepid birdseed watchers: Tim Smith, John Walt and Lynn Feaver)

NEW PRESERVE SPECIES

Twenty-three new species were identified this year at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. Of the 23, we documented 1 tree, 1 mammal, 4 insects (all butterflies), 2 grasses, 3 forbs and 12 birds. Many of the bird species were identified during our chapter's May Bird Festival. Of the 12 new birds, 7 were warblers seen during either spring or fall migration: Black and White, golden-winged, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Pine, Wilson's and Ovenbird. Since we have owned this preserve for only 2 years, it is expected that significant numbers of species will be added to the Silver Creek list for the next several years. The list now totals 197 species.

Even though we've been observing species for 15 years at Elkhorn Creek, we documented 6 new species this year. Three species of forb, on mammal, one insect and 1 bird. The most unusual species were the Golden-winged Warbler and Henry's Marsh Moth (discovered in its larval stage). The Elkhorn list now totals 440 species.

*View of
Silver Creek
Biodiversity
Preserve*



*Golden-winged
Warbler*



5th and Final in a Series of Elkhorn Creek Reflections by NIAS Volunteers

Enjoying Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve seems to get better and better as the years go by. I finally know the difference between Little Blue Stem and Big Blue Stem, Purple Cone Flower and maybe a few others.

At first, I didn't care much for pulling weeds and collecting seeds but now I can recognize some of the grasses that we are trying to eliminate.

Visiting with friends for a couple of hours sure makes getting rid of some weeds a lot less of a chore and more fun as we spend a little time under the sun, or clouds or sprinkles.

Anita can tell a pretty good story about me falling in the creek one day. Just ask her about it! There were a lot of smiles on faces that day. Guess that's what friends do.

– John Nienhuis



31st Annual Bald Eagle Watch - January 10, 2015



The American Bald Eagle visits the Upper Mississippi River and National Wildlife & Fish Refuge lands each year from late fall through early spring. As many as 2500 bald eagles winter along the Upper Mississippi river from St. Paul to St. Louis, MO.

You are invited to participate in the 31st Annual Bald Eagle Watch. Our program is dedicated to the understanding, appreciation, and protection of our national symbol. Programs will feature lectures, videos, stories, and live birds of prey. The Exhibit Hall at Clinton Community College will feature wildlife exhibits, food, drinks and door prizes.

Activities take place at Fulton, IL and Clinton, IA.

Flyers can be sent electronically as you help sponsors "go green". You may send an email to the following: Pam_Steinhaus@fws.gov. and note in the subject line: 'Please add me to the eagle watch mailing list'.

Copies of the flyers will also be available at the December 2nd NIAS Monthly Meeting.

If you have questions, you can also contact Laura Dufford by email at the following: lauradufford@gmail.com.

A Bit of Fun Submitted by Teresa Smith.

Researchers for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority found over 200 dead crows near greater Boston recently, and there was concern that they may have died from Avian Flu.

A Bird Pathologist examined the remains of all the crows, and, to everyone's relief, confirmed the problem was definitely NOT Avian Flu.

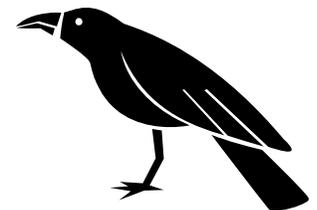
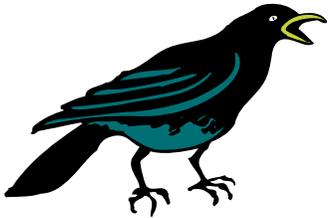
The cause of death appeared to be vehicular impacts.

However, during the detailed analysis, it was noted that varying colors of paints appeared on the bird's beaks and claws. By analyzing these paint residues it was determined that 98% of the crows had been killed by impact with trucks, while only 2% were killed by an impact with a car.

MTA then hired an Ornithological Behaviorist to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentages of truck kills versus car kills.

The Ornithological Behaviorist very quickly concluded the cause: when crows eat road kill, they always have a look-out crow in a nearby tree to warn of impending danger. They discovered that while all the lookout crows could shout "Cah", not a single one could shout "Truck."

Amazing!



Mussel Q & A

On September 2nd, Teri Marche' presented a program entitled "Pearly Mussels of the Upper Midwest". She recently contacted Lynn Feaver and told him that "...as is so often the case when teaching, one learns from ones students, or in this case, audience. Their questions prompted me to do some research. First, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to share the story of the amazing river mussels. I had such a great time, and you were such a great audience. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Also the food was terrific. Here is the result of my research:"

How long do these mussels live?

Estimates run anywhere from 10 to 100 years depending on the species. I don't know how they determined that. Each shell shows on its surface the minute rings of new growth and it retains these rings; however, they do not each represent a year's growth. In fact many rings can be laid down in a single season. Some of the rings are much darker and larger than others and they represent pauses in growth, either seasonal (winter) or when conditions anytime become difficult. Therefore they could be useful, but only as an estimate.

How often do mussels lay eggs?

For most species one brood per year, although a few produce two per year, usually in spring or summer.

How do they saw out the buttons from the shells?

For this account, I checked online at the following websites:

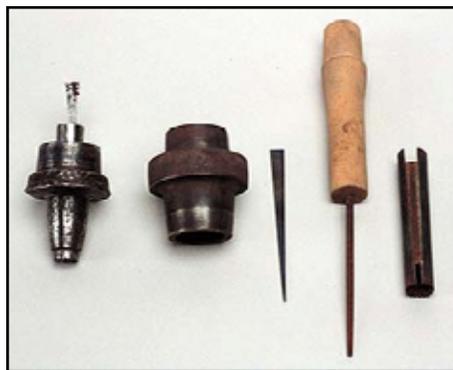
<http://corgisinmygarden.blogspot.com/2012/08/the-history-of-mother-of-pearl-buttons.html>

http://www.museum.state.il.us/RiverWeb/harvesting/harvest/mussels/tools_techniques/cutting_finishing.html

The following account came from the latter website:

(The shells were soaked in water in vats.) "When a button cutter needed more shells, he would take a bucketful from the vats. One man operated each cutting machine, which consisted of a hollow drill bit (hollow cylindrical saw) held by a key pushed into a drill valve. The operator held the mussel shell in place with leather mitts or shell tongs while he drilled out the plugs or blanks. Small, pressurized streams of water sprayed onto the shell as it was cut. This damped down the dust and cooled the saw, which still had to be sharpened by hand with a three-sided rasp, the teeth alternately filed in and out, after every few cuts. Each shell produced from three to twenty button blanks. The blanks pushed one another through the hollow drill bit and out the back end, where they were caught in a container.

I expect they didn't know it then, but by cutting the blanks wet, they also saved the workers from a potentially dangerous lung condition brought on by breathing in the dust.



Button Cutting Tools. From left to right: drill valve with key, drill valve, key, three-sided rasp, and cutting saw bit. For those interested in more info, the Muscatine History and Industry Center includes the **Muscatine Pearl Button Museum** . It is located at 117 West Second Street, Muscatine, Iowa 52761. Hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 4:00 pm or by appointment, Phone: 563-263-1052 Free admission, but donations are accepted.

LET'S GO ON A FIELD TRIP!



Winter travel for field trips will depend on the weather. If weather or road conditions are bad, trips may be cancelled. It is important that you call the leader if you feel there might be a cancellation or you can also call Chris Kruger at the number below. Safe travels!

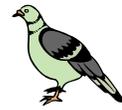
Burpee Museum Visit and Collections Tour - Saturday, December 6, 2014

Leader: Steve Simpson @ 815-821-1956

9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

If you have not been there in the last five years or so, the Burpee Museum in Rockford will be a delightful surprise. With three floors of exhibits on Geology, Paleontology, Biology, and Native Americans, it is like a mini Field Museum just 45 minutes east of Freeport! In addition to checking out the Dinosaur fossils I spoke about in my November program and viewing the temporary exhibit on **Passenger Pigeons that NIAS helped to sponsor**, I have also arranged for a behind the scenes tour of the collections area normally off-limits to visitors. These collections include a truly impressive array of birds and other wildlife, as well as the George Fell plant collection.

We'll carpool from the Freeport Staples parking lot at 9:30 a.m., arriving at the museum a little after they open at 10:00 a.m. Our tour will be from 11-12:00 and then we can have lunch (bring a lunch as there is no food available at the museum) and explore the rest of the museum in the afternoon. We should be back in Freeport between 3 and 4 p.m. **Please call Steve at the number listed above if you would like to go.**



Animal Signs and Tales - Saturday, January 10, 2014

Leader: Richard Benning @ 815-865-5279

9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Audubon will again offer this program which will be a fun winter morning learning about the animals that are out in the woods at this time of year. If you have attended before, come again because every tracking walk teaches us about something new. Families with children are encouraged to attend because much of the program will be hands-on such as going outside and looking for tracks, scat and other clues that animals provide. Hopefully, there will be snow, but even if not there will be plenty of sign for us to observe. Dress for the weather including footwear that protects your feet from snow. We will meet in the Mogle Center which is located at the south end of the parking at the Oakdale Nature Preserve. Oakdale is three miles south of Freeport on Baileyville Road. **Program sign-ups are encouraged so call Richard at the number above if you plan to attend.**



The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium - Saturday, January 24, 2015

Leader: Chris Kruger @ 815-238-9259

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Located in Dubuque, Iowa, the museum includes aquariums featuring fish and wildlife found in the Mississippi River and other river systems. There are exhibits on the culture and history of America's rivers. Find more information at mississippirivermuseum.com. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 8:30 a.m. Admission \$15, Seniors 65+ \$13. We will plan to have a lunch at the museum's River's Edge Café. Expected return time by 4 p.m. **Please confirm your attendance by calling Chris Kruger at the number listed above.**



Nicholas Conservatory Field Trip - Friday, February 6, 2015

Leader: Chris Kruger @ 815-238-9259

10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Join us for a guided tour and lunch at Illinois' third largest conservatory. Located in Rockford on the banks of the Rock River, the facility offers tropical plants, water features, sculptures, and seating areas. The annual orchid exhibit includes hundreds of tropical orchids creatively displayed. Find more information at nicholasconservatory.com.

Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 10:00 a.m. Expected return time is 2:30 p.m. Admission \$8, Seniors (65+) \$6. Call Chris Kruger at the number listed above to **sign up for this trip and confirm your lunch choices by January 29, 2015.**



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.

- ___ Individual \$20
- ___ Senior Citizen \$15
- ___ Student \$9

Prices listed are for NEW national memberships only and DO NOT apply to renewals. 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.

- ___ \$15

Please put an on one of the lines above and complete the information below:

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 - Lynn Feaver

3003 Forest Rd.
Freeport, IL 61032
815-235-9530

Vice President - Rex Sides

Secretary - Laura Dufford

Treasurer - Tim Smith

At-large - Juliet D'Souza, Fred Redmore, Larry Seffrood, Kayse Rushford, Bernard Lischwe, Anita Nienhuis

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation - John Nienhuis

Programs - Keith Blackmore

Education - Richard Benning

Publicity - Carol Redmore

Membership - Mary Blackmore

Field Trips - Chris Kruger

Sustainable Agriculture -

Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Laura Dufford and Heidi Thorp

Newsletter Editor - Kara Gallup

704 N. Ocean Blvd., Apt. 301
Pompano Beach, FL 33062
815-871-8014
karagallup@msn.com

Toward a Cooler Planet - 43rd in a Series

This past May, an uncommon bird — the Golden-winged Warbler — was sighted for the first time at both of our chapter's Biodiversity Preserves, Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek. This bird typically nests a bit farther north in Wisconsin and Michigan (also in the Appalachians) and winters in Central America and northern South America. Those who observed this species at our preserves were thrilled that our chapter was able to provide suitable migration habitat for this warbler.



While we were enjoying the Golden-winged Warbler, National Audubon was putting the finishing touches on their ground-breaking climate initiative, using scientific surveys to predict potential threats to birds posed by climate change. The future of the Golden-winged Warbler does not look bright. The Audubon scientists have classified this species as threatened, meaning that it stands to lose at least 50 percent of its continent-wide range without aggressive action to reduce the severity of global warming. There is a chance for the species to make up some of that loss in new areas - but only if it can adapt to those new locations. (For more information about Audubon's climate work, go to Audubon.org/climate.)

How can we help to make a better future for this species and the other 313 at-risk North American species identified in the Audubon report? In addition to urging legislators to support meaningful climate change policy and using less energy in our personal lives, we can join with others to plant and nurture more native vegetation. Prairie grasses and forbs, especially, very capably remove carbon from the air and then store, or sequester, that carbon in their deep root systems. For example, Kentucky Bluegrass roots are about 3 inches deep. By contrast, the roots of Little Bluestem are 6 feet, Big Bluestem roots go down over 9 feet, and Lead Plant roots surpass 14 feet in length.

By helping to restore native vegetation in places like the Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserves, you are doing two very important things for birds. You are assisting in reducing atmospheric carbon, which is critical for avoiding the worst affects of climate change, and you are creating habitat for birds and other wildlife. Watch for numerous volunteer opportunities at both preserves in future newsletters. I hope you can join us. So goes the Golden-winged Warbler.

— Mary Blackmore

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Save the date!
NIAS Annual Banquet
and Program
Tuesday, April 14, 2015

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