



APRIL – MAY 2022

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society



Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*

Whether stepping singly across a wet meadow or filling the sky by the hundreds and thousands, Sandhill Cranes have an elegance that draws attention. These tall, gray-bodied, crimson-capped birds breed in open wetlands, fields, and prairies across North America. They group together in great numbers, filling the air with distinctive rolling cries. Mates display to each other with exuberant dances that retain a gangly grace. Sandhill Crane populations are generally strong, but isolated populations in Mississippi and Cuba are endangered.

www.nwilaudubon.org

NIAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

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

Please note: schedule and location of programs are subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions; please see newsletter and website for up-to-date information.

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

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

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

Please join us!

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About Bird Information:
birds.cornell.edu

Bird Photo: Frank Schulenburg
Program photos provided by the presenters.



SEA LIONS, TORTOISES AND IGUANAS, OH MY!

Mark Luthin

April 5th 7:00pm

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

A natural "bucket list" adventure for a biology and environmental science instructor is a trip to the Galapagos Islands. This past January, Mark was finally able to cross The Galapagos off of his bucket list. The presentation will include some discussion and pictures of the week spent in Ecuador prior to departing to the islands, and then culminate with what Marks calls an "all too short experience in the Galápagos."

Mark Luthin is a retired educator, having taught Biology and Environmental Science in the Belvidere School District for 32 years. Always eager to travel to and explore this big and fascinating world that we live in. Mark occupies his time volunteering with the Natural Land Institute, serving on the Board of Trustees and as chair of the Education Committee. Mark also is a frequent volunteer land steward with the Boone County Conservation District, and also occupies his time with several other local organizations. •

NO BORDERS BENEATH THEIR WINGS.

Suzanne Falconer

May 3rd 7:00pm

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

Tropical Wings is the Friends Group of the National Park Service Sister Parks partnership between 14 National Parks in the Upper Midwest, and 7 National Parks in Costa Rica, focused on the neotropical migratory birds that we share. "No Borders beneath their Wings" will explore the work being done "for the birds," including the annual Bird-a-thon trip to Costa Rica. Tropical Wings is committed to engaging citizens in celebrating and sustaining this natural phenomenon through education and habitat preservation both in Costa Rica and the Upper Midwest.

Suzanne Falconer works in education and humanitarian concerns globally. The natural world has absorbed her attention since her eyes spotted bright birds in a mobile swirling above her crib. As birds connect our world beyond geographical lines, Suzanne said yes to an invitation to participate in and forward the collaboration of the Sister Parks. Her leisure pursuits overlap with land restoration, volunteer citizen science, and wandering our IL prairie terrains. •

CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the uncertainty of future cancellations associated with COVID-19, please check our website calendar before any scheduled event or call any leader on the event. If you would like to be notified by email, please send a message to nwilaudubon@gmail.com to be placed on an email contact list.

NIAS is excited to let you know that in April and May, we will once again be meeting **IN PERSON** for our monthly program. Masks will be optional, but it will be good see those smiling faces again.

Programs will held at the St John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd., in Freeport. The programs begin at 7 PM with announcements, followed by the program and then refreshments.

April through May – Stewardship at our preserves (see page 8)

April 5 – Monthly program (see page 1)

April 6 – Conservation Committee Meeting at 6:30 pm. Contact Teresa at 815-238-3963 if you would like to participate.

April 7 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

April 9 – Crane Count (see page 8)

April 10 – Field Trip: Blooming Pasque Flowers at the Freeport Prairie, 3-4 p.m. (see page 3)

April 14 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

April 15 – Field Trip: Listening to Amphibians at Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 6:30 p.m., (see page 3)

April 19 – Boyer Colloquium at Highland Community College (see page 3)

April 18-27 – Field Trip: Birding at Big Bend National Park (trip is full)

April 23 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

April 23 – Knotted up, Oakdale (see page 3)

April 29 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

May 1 – Annual Birdathon Fundraiser! Your pledge is MOST welcome! See page 6 for our list of birders and for details about making your contribution that will help birds on their wintering grounds, migration corridors and nesting habitats.

May 3 – Monthly Program (see page 1)

May 4 – Conservation Committee Meeting at 6:30 pm. Contact Teresa at 815-238-3963 if you would like to participate.

May 5 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

May 7 – Accessible Birding Event, 8-10 a.m. Oakdale Nature Preserve (see page 3)

May 9 – Field Trip: Wildflowers and Birds of the Palisades and Green Island, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. (see page 4)

May 12 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

May 14 – World Migratory Bird Day Celebration

May 19 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

May 21 – The return of the annual Bird Festival at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 8-11 a.m. (see page 8)

May 24 – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 9)

May 27 – Field Trip: An Evening of Birding at Lost Mound, 6:30-9:30 p.m. (see page 4)

May 28 – Shelter, Oakdale (see page 4)

May 31 – New Moon Campfire at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. At 7 p.m. we'll take a leisurely stroll to observe blooming plants and resident birds. The campfire will start at 8 p.m. S'mores will be provided. Bring a lawn chair, flashlight and water (if desired).

The preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River (S. Main St. in Leaf River becomes Leaf River Rd.) The preserve parking lot is just off of Leaf River Rd. If the weather is questionable call Mary at 815-938-3204.

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



(top) Education chairperson Adam Moderow demonstrating how to build a fire during his last program at Oakdale Nature Preserve.
(lower) A workshop attendee hones their fire building skills.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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

PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

If participants are interested in carpooling to any of our April or May events, contact the listed leader for confirmation. Event and field trip leaders should be able to relay if current CDC guidance discourages carpooling.

BLOOMING PASQUE FLOWERS AT THE FREEPORT PRAIRIE

Sunday, April 10, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

Join us as we admire one of the prairie's harbingers of spring, the Pasque Flower. Unlike the crocus it resembles, a Pasque Flower, *Anemone patens*, is a member of the buttercup family. In early spring the plant sends up a flower stalk in advance of leaves so what you see are delicate pale violet blooms nestled in the muted tan tangle of last year's prairie grasses. Come and see how Pasque Flower blooms actually move to track the sun.

We also will take time on this trip to remember Dave Derwent, one of the biggest fans of and hardest workers on the Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve. As we stroll the prairie, participants are encouraged to tell "Dave Stories."

Please contact Mary if you plan to attend. This trip will only happen if the flowers are blooming. We'll meet in the prairie's parking lot just off of Walnut Rd., at 3 p.m.

LISTENING TO AMPHIBIANS AT ELKHORN CREEK

Friday, April 15, 6:30 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

Join us at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve to listen to the spring advertisement calls of frogs and toads. While 6 species of amphibians have been identified at Elkhorn Creek over the years, our best chances are for hearing the rapid

metallic clicks of the Western Chorus Frog and the long musical trill of the American Toad. We'll walk near both wetland areas at the preserve that provide amphibian habitat. As an added bonus we still may hear courting American Woodcocks!

Meet in the parking lot in the northeast corner of the preserve off of West Grove Rd. The preserve is located 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the SE corner of Freeport and West Grove Rds. If weather is questionable, call Mary.

BOYER COLLOQUIUM AT HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Tuesday, April 19 via Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

This year's Boyer Colloquium is "The Impact of Microplastics on the Environment and Human Health."

This program will be a panel discussion with Dr. Jodi A. Flaws, Professor in Comparative Biosciences at the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign, Dr. Tim Hoellein, Associate Professor of Biology at Loyola University, Chicago, and Dr. John Scott, Senior Analytical Chemist at the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center in Champaign, IL.

Although NIAS is not a sponsor of this event, we wanted to share this community event since it will cover a major ecological concern. For more information and to acquire the Zoom link, please visit www.highland.edu and look for the campus calendar, or contact Juliet Moderow at Juliet.moderow@highland.edu for information.

KNOTTED UP

Saturday, April 23, 2022, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Oakdale Nature Preserve,
4433 S. Cranes Grove Rd., Freeport, IL

Coordinator: Adam Moderow,
815-541-5842

From the basics of lacing up your hiking boots to the complicated matter of finding the correct lashing to build a bridge across the river, knots are a diverse tool for any fan of the wild. In this lesson, we will spend time learning some basic knots and their uses for various projects when enjoying nature. Time allowing, we will also spend some time building simple structures out of twigs and the knots demonstrated. Rope will be provided. Meet by the Mogle building, just off of the parking lot.

Contact Adam Moderow at adamoderow@gmail.com or at 815-541-5842 to register in case it becomes necessary to limit the number of participants.

ACCESSIBLE BIRDING EVENT

Saturday, May 7, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Oakdale Nature Preserve,
4433 S. Cranes Grove Rd., Freeport, IL

Accessible trail – Meet at the trail opening near Mogle Center (we will have signs)

Coordinators:
Gary Gordon, 815-541-1228
and Juliet Moderow, 201-233-0946

The Northwest Illinois Audubon Society is committed to ensuring that birding and the outdoors are welcoming, inclusive, and safe to everybody and every body! We are working with the RAMP Center to lead an accessible birding event to enjoy this year's spring migration.

We will use the 1/3-mile hard-packed accessible trail at Oakdale Nature Preserve and will lead a birding identification outing. If you do not have binoculars, we will have some available to borrow during the event.

More information about RAMP: RAMP Center for Independent Living is a non-profit organization that assists individuals with all types of disabilities, regardless of age, to control and direct their own lives.

PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

WILDFLOWERS AND BIRDS OF THE PALISADES AND GREEN ISLAND

Monday, May 9, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

Each spring the Mississippi Palisades State Park just north of Savanna is filled with a dazzling array of woodland wildflowers and unique songbirds. This year we also will look for shorebirds and other wetland species at Green Island Wildlife Management Area, just across the Mississippi River.

We'll begin at the Palisades, observing such wildflowers delights as Large-Flowered Trillium and Amethyst Shooting Star, as well as looking for Palisades specialty birds like the Yellow-throated Warbler and the Northern Parula Warbler.

After eating our sack lunches at the Palisades, we will head for Green Island in Jackson county, Iowa. There we will slowly cruise the roads adjacent to the wetlands looking for sandpipers, plovers, rails and other wetland birds.

Bring binoculars and a sack lunch. Parts of the trail at the Palisades are steep and/or narrow so a hiking stick may be helpful.

Meet at the first parking lot inside the south entrance to the Mississippi Palisades State Park, about a mile north of Savanna just off of Hwy. 84. Please confirm your attendance by calling Mary.

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY CELEBRATION

Saturday, May 14, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Freeport Art Plaza
11-15 E. Douglas Street

(between the blocks of N. Chicago and N. State, across from Freeport Public Library)

Our chapter will be celebrating our second

annual World Migratory Bird Day on this day with the global theme "Dim the Lights for Birds at Night" to focus on the impacts of light pollution on migratory birds.

The University of Illinois Extension and the Freeport Public Library will also be part of this event! We will also have bird treats from The Cookie Jar bakery!

We plan to have a bird-themed story time with Ms. Amanda from the library as well as various activities led by Extension and our chapter volunteers. We will provide educational materials related to migrating birds and how to provide resources and protection during their migration.

In case of inclement weather or need for indoor space, the event will be held in the Freeport Public Library, conference Room A and B.

For up-to-date information, please visit our Facebook page and website closer to the event.

AN EVENING OF BIRDING AT LOST MOUND

Friday, May 27, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore
815-938-3204

Join us as we travel alongside sand prairies, sand savannas and the mighty Mississippi in search of birds at the Lost Mound Unit of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge just north of Savanna. Of primary interest will be the awesome courtship display of the Common Nighthawk, as well as vocalization of both Eastern Whip-poor-wills and American Woodcocks. There will be enough time to observe many of the grassland species of Lost Mound as well.

Meet in the parking area of the Fish and Wildlife office building at Lost Mound. The refuge entrance road is about nine miles north of Savanna on Hwy. 84. Turn left onto the refuge entrance road, cross the railroad tracks and continue up the hill. At the intersection at the top of the hill turn right and continue for about ½ mile. The parking area is on your left.

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

Call Mary to confirm your attendance.

SHELTER

Saturday, May 28, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Oakdale Nature Preserve,
4433 S. Cranes Grove Rd., Freeport, IL

Coordinator: Adam Moderow
815-541-5842

One of the most difficult things about being in nature is staying warm and dry. Shelter, protection from the elements, can be one the most complicated and necessary resources when in the wild. In this lesson, we will discuss and demonstrate materials and techniques of constructing a simple shelter. We will then get our hands dirty and put up our own small shelter. We aren't building a house, but we can provide protection with what we find at our feet. Meet by the Mogle building, just off of the parking lot.

Contact Adam Moderow at adamoderow@gmail.com or at 815-541-5842 to register in case it becomes necessary to limit the number of participants.

2022 – 2023 BALLOT FOR NIAS CHAPTER OFFICERS

The individuals listed below have been nominated to serve on next year's NIAS Chapter Board of Directors in the positions indicated. Please vote in the spaces provided if you support the nominated candidates, or insert and vote for write-in candidates if that is your wish. All Board terms, except for President, are for one year.

Elected Officers

PRESIDENT

- Richard Benning
 Write-in
-

VICE PRESIDENT

- Laura Dufford
 Write-in
-

SECRETARY

- Mary Blackmore
 Write-in
-

TREASURER

- Tim Smith
 Write-in
-

MEMBERS AT LARGE *(vote for six)*

- Elizabeth Boettner
 Jeremy Dixon
 Carol Redmore
 Fred Redmore
 Fran Shriver
 Steve Simpson
 Write-in
 Write-in
 Write-in
-

Send your ballot to NIAS, PO Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032 before April 15. Results will be announced in the next newsletter and the new Board will assume its duties in mid-May.

Standing Committee Chairs *(appointed)*

Conservation | Teresa Smith
Programs | Don Miller
Education | Adam Moderow
Publicity | Leah Dixon
Membership | Jeff Shriver
Field Trips | Chris Kruger
President Emeritus | Gary Gordon

PRESIDENT'S TWEET

It's hard to believe it's been two years as chapter president of Northwest Illinois Audubon as I prepare my final tweet. I think it's a good time to look back at the last couple years which will likely be remembered as the "Zoom" years or the "Lockdown while we battle COVID-19" years, but there have been so many wonderful accomplishments during that time.

Firstly, I can't even begin to take any credit as I've been blessed to be part of two separate Audubon boards who believe with their hearts in the importance of this organization and all for which it stands. I will try and list the major accomplishments but that might then minimize the importance of the many smaller but no less important activities of this group. So I will also touch on some of those accomplishments as well. Each individual who has served on those two boards has given up their time and energy to contribute to the cause. They fight battles and give of themselves to reach this community in so many different ways.

Consider the Christian Cooper event, the Birds in Art program, our work with the Boys and Girls club, the variety of programs and field trips and conservation activities, the work days, Migratory Bird Day, Earthfest, and the exceptional bi-monthly newsletter. We can't forget all the community science including the Crane Count, the Christmas Bird Count, the birdseed sale, and the various programs for kids and families. And of course Freeport being the first of 3 Bird Cities in Illinois.

The underpinning of this all is the desire to share the importance of so many environmental and conservation needs with as many people as possible to make a difference in the world in which we live. This team of people use their gifts and desires to engage in education, science, literary, historical, philanthropic and charitable pursuits as outlined in the Chapter Constitution. It hasn't always been easy or fun but when we are able to see the result such as an individual coming away from a program or an event or an encounter where they have learned something and leave with a better understanding or an idea about the importance of caring for our environment we know it has been a worthwhile endeavor.

There is a lot more work to be done, a lot more to be accomplished, and I look forward to, hopefully soon, being able to once again gathering together in the same room and sharing our thoughts, our ideas, our dreams, our teaching and lessons to pass on and live and learn from one another. It won't be as President, and that is ok, but I thank everyone for the opportunity it has been and I consider it a blessing to be part of this great team. I'm not going anywhere, as I still will serve on the Board, but there is still much to accomplish so let's keep moving.

– G3 (Gary Gordon)

Birdathon

Your money goes where the birds go



This year our chapter marks its 43rd year of sponsoring a BIRDATHON fundraising event! In that time thousands of dollars have been raised for bird conservation. Please join us in making this year's effort our best yet!

We invite you to make a pledge to any of the birders listed below who will be participating in our chapter's annual BIRDATHON on May 1. Your pledge, for instance 15¢, will be per SPECIES of bird that your selected birder(s) identifies on that day. Your birder will contact you after the count with his or her species total and collect your contribution.

Your money indeed goes where the birds go! All BIRDATHON proceeds are shared by organizations that do a tremendous job of:

- protecting and improving bird habitat
- on wintering grounds, migration corridors and nesting sites, connecting people with nature,
- providing education opportunities for the public, and
- collecting scientific data through bird counts and birdbanding.

Those organizations are:

Northwest Illinois Audubon Society
National Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin | Belize Audubon Society
Stewards of the Upper Mississippi | Sand Bluff Bird Observatory

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

2022 BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

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

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

Clip and mail to Mary Blackmore, 9024 W. West Grove Rd., Forreton IL 61030 or include your pledge form with your chapter ballot mailed to NIAS, PO Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032.

Questions? Call Mary at 815-938-3204

APPLY
POSTAGE
HERE

FOLD & TAPE

**NIAS
PO Box 771
Freeport, IL 61032**

FOLD & TAPE

CUT HERE

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

EARTH DAY 2022 INVEST IN OUR PLANET

According to Earthday.org Earth Day is the largest secular observance in the world. Earth Day has been observed for 52 years with the first Earth Day in 1970 inspiring over 20 million Americans to take action. In 1990 Earth Day was recognized globally by 141 countries with over 200 million people taking action. Since 2010 Earth Day has inspired over 1 billion people to take action to preserve the environment for the next generation.

In 1970 for the first Earth Day I was in third grade and I remember the teacher talking about Ecology Day. The teacher used the theme "Give a Hoot - Don't Pollute" to help us give meaning to the day. We all got Give a Hoot - Don't Pollute stickers for our lunch box and each class spent time outside picking up garbage. Today kids continue to learn about preserving the health of our environment and they look to adults to help them learn and grow. Locally we see schools involved with prairie projects, local gardens, composting projects and recycling efforts just to name a few. Globally we see young faces and hear young voices at the United Nation Climate Change Conference.

This year Earth Day falls on Friday, April 22 and the theme is "Invest in our Planet." Back in 1970 when the late Senator Gaylord Nelson spoke to the public about Earth Day he talked about it being a broad issue that impacts every living thing. So many things have changed since 1970 and we have seen great action throughout the world to help improve the health of our environment. As we celebrate Earth Day 2022 we all need to invest in the planet by taking actions to slow climate change.

So invest in our future of the Earth with the 6R's.

- Reduce your use of single use plastics by drinking water from the tap and refilling your stainless steel bottle. Reduce your use of single-use plastic food storage bags by using reusable containers.
- Refuse the single use plastic straw that is given to you at the local restaurant.

Maybe even take it a step further and let the server know why you are refusing a single-use plastic straw.

- Reuse clothing by purchasing used clothing and giving your used items to shops like Goodwill and Amity's Attic in Freeport or My Friends Closet in Lena.
- Recycle properly paying close attention to the number in the triangle of chasing arrows on plastic items.
- Remove plastic waste in the environment by stepping up as a volunteer to clean up a roadside, park or trail.
- Rot those food scraps instead of putting them in the landfill. Kitchen composters are easy to use and when you put the compost on your garden your plants will be delighted.

We are all in this together with a common goal to make the planet a better place for all both today and tomorrow. If you are looking for a bit more information on Earth Day check out the 7 minute YouTube video When the Earth Moves: earthday.org/history/

– Teresa Smith

COFFEE... FOR THE BIRDS!

We've all heard about the tremendous loss of bird populations in recent years. One of the main reasons for this has been attributed to habitat loss. Some of us have been 'doing our part' and planting more native shrubs, trees, and wildflowers in our yard. Some of us are helping to promote these activities in our local parks and neighborhoods and we've been supporting organizations that are doing great things for habitat protection for birds and other wildlife. These are all wonderful things to do, but we need to remember that many of our birds migrate to warmer climates in the winter. There has been major habitat loss in Central and South America where many of our local birds spend their winters. So, it's important that we support organizations that help with habitat loss in those areas as part of our actions if we can. Those of us that drink coffee can do one more thing locally. Drink Bird Friendly® certified coffee. Much of our coffee is



grown with farming practices that replace trees with coffee plantations. This means less habitat for our migrating songbirds.

Bird Friendly® certified coffee was developed by Smithsonian Scientists in the late 1990's to preserve critical habitat for nesting and migratory songbirds. The stringent guidelines needed for this special certification ensures a mix of foliage, tree height, and canopy cover on coffee growing farms. The certification requires the farmer to use 100% organic practices. Using no pesticides which means it's better for the environment and also better for farm workers growing the coffee. It also allows farmers to receive a premium for their products (so yes, it does tend to cost more). By having trees in the canopy in the coffee fields, it also helps reduce soil erosion by protecting the bare soil from raindrops. The increase in tree canopy also increases carbon sequestration, which helps to fight climate change.

It's becoming easier and easier to find Bird Friendly® certified Coffee. Many coffee companies offer this title of coffee, but it's best to look for the Smithsonian Bird Friendly® symbol to guarantee the coffee is grown with the strictest guidelines. NIAS uses the coffee brand "Birds and Beans" when we serve coffee at meetings and events. There are many other brands found on the Smithsonian National Zoo website: <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/bird-friendly>. If you're a coffee drinker, grabbing a cup of Bird Friendly® certified coffee every morning is just another way we can help those beautiful feathered friends we enjoy seeing each spring.

– Laura Dufford

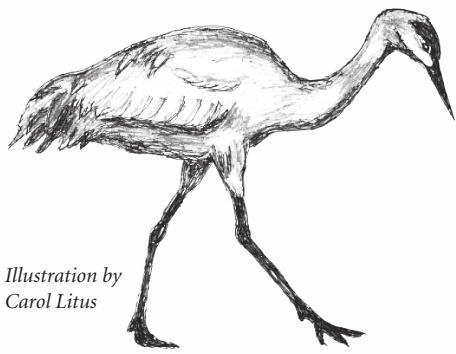


Illustration by
Carol Litus

BE PART OF CITIZEN SCIENCE

CALLING ALL CRANE COUNTERS

Saturday, April 9 is the Annual Midwest Crane Count and Stephenson County has over 12 sites that are monitored each year as part of the Crane Count. Participants are on site from 5:30-7:30 am to listen and watch for cranes. It is a great way to participate in a citizen science project and enjoy the early morning sights and sounds. Notify Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963 by April 1st if you are interested in participating in this event.

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

With the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic carpooling with individuals outside of your household and sharing of spotting scopes continues to be discouraged. In past years we have gathered together after the count to enjoy breakfast and sharing of crane stories. In 2022 we will not plan to meet as a group. All count forms will be returned to Teresa Smith and a summary will be included in the next newsletter. •

SPRING STEWARDSHIP

We invite you to join us on one or more of our Spring Stewardship days as we work together to reduce the numbers of Wild Parsnip, Garlic Mustard and honeysuckle on both of our preserves and the Freeport Prairie Nature Preserve. Early removal means not only cooler temperatures for us, but less biomass. We just slice and fling with our trusty parsnip predator tools and don't have to carry out seedheads.

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

Considering both the unpredictability of plant emergence times and the increasing wild fluctuations in spring weather, we're going to use our contact list to notify volunteers of each work session in April and May. We'll do our best to provide as much advanced notice as we can. When contacted, if you're available, please join us. To get on the contact list email Nancy at rnocken@gmail.com or call Mary at 815-938-3204.

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

Our Elkhorn Creek preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. The parking lot is off of West Grove Rd. Our Silver Creek preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River (S. Main St. in Leaf River becomes Leaf River Rd.), with parking just off of Leaf River Rd. The Freeport Prairie is located off of Walnut Rd. on Freeport's south side. •



SILVER CREEK BIRD FESTIVAL

Saturday, May 21st, 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Join us on May 21 for an informative, fun, family-friendly morning as we explore the Silver Creek Biodiversity preserve for the many migrating and resident birds found there. One hundred five species of birds have been documented in the grasslands, woodlands and stream corridors of Silver Creek. If the weather cooperates we should observe lots of resident and some late-migrating songbirds

Tours will begin at 8:00, 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. **The 10:00 tour will be specifically oriented to kids and families, including information on how to use binoculars.** No binocs? No worries! Audubon binoculars will be available to use during each tour.

Free "Illinois Birds" pocket guides will be distributed while supplies last. We'll have a shady rest area with chairs, as well as a restroom, beverages and snacks. There are no fees. Like all Audubon activities, non-members are welcome. Bring your family and friends!

The preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River (S. Main St. in Leaf River becomes Leaf River Rd.), with parking just off of Leaf River Rd. If weather is questionable, call Mary at 815-938-3204. We hope to see you there! •



Wilson's Warbler | Photo by Dan Barron

ENJOY THE SPRING MIGRATION!

From the first Killdeer singing on a crisp February day to the last Bobolink checking out nesting sites on a sunny May morning, the spring migration is a phenomenon of wonder. Truly, as many have said, this never gets old! Every year our chapter schedules spring bird walks to leisurely observe, enjoy and learn about these migratory species and the habitats they pass through or stay to nest in. Among the many birds we were happy to encounter last year were a nesting Sandhill Crane, a perched Great Horned Owl, a foraging Northern Waterthrush, and soaring American White Pelicans. An added bonus at several sites were carpets of blooming spring wildflowers.

All of the walks will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 11 a.m. Feel free to join or depart the group anytime during those three hours. If the weather is questionable or you need further directions to the site, please call the respective leader.

April 7 – Wetland areas of Eastern Stephenson County. Meet at Nieman's

Pond just east of Freeport. *Take Hwy. 20 east out of Freeport and turn left (north) on Springfield Rd. and drive about a mile to the pond. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204).*

April 14 – Northern Jane Addams Trail and the Orangeville wetlands. *Meet at the trailhead in Orangeville, just east of the BP gas station off of Hwy. 26. Leader: Somer Elgin (815-275-0719)*

April 23 – Duck's Misery and the southern Jane Addams Trail. *Take Hwy. 26 north out of Freeport. Shortly after the Willow Lake subdivision, turn left (west) on Winneshiek Rd. Drive about 2.5 miles (the road will curve at times, but bear west). Just past the intersection with the Jane Addams Trail we will park along the road. Leader: Gary Gordon (815-541-1228)*

April 29 – Newell Tract, Oakdale Nature Preserve, Freeport. *Meet in the parking area of the Newell Tract (the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Rd.). Leader: Anne Straight (815-938-3263).*

May 5 – Pecatonica River Forest Preserve (main entrance by the campground). A special bonus of this walk will be stunning wildflowers and perhaps singing frogs! *Take Hwy. 20 east from Freeport and turn left (north) on Pecatonica Rd. Drive through the village of Pecatonica. After*

crossing the river continue north about 3 ½ miles until Brick School Rd. Turn right (east) and drive about 2 miles, then the road curves to the left (north). The entrance is about ¼ mile past the curve. Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279).

May 12 – Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. *The parking area is off of West Grove Rd. We also hope to observe blooming spring wildflowers. Be sure to wear a hat, long sleeves, long pants (light colored is best) and socks long enough to tuck your pant legs into (for tick avoidance). Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204).*

May 19 – Krape Park, Freeport. *Meet in the parking lot by the dam. Leader: Juliet Moderow (201-233-0946)*

May 24 – Harry and Dorothy Espenscheid Forest Preserve, northeast of Freeport. *Take Hwy. 75 east out of Freeport. From the junction of Hwy. 20 bypass and Hwy. 75, continue about 5 miles to Cedarville Rd. Turn right (east) on Cedarville Rd. and drive 4.2 miles to Eggert Rd. Turn left (north) on Eggert Rd. and go 1.8 miles to Farm School Rd. Turn right (east) and go .3 miles to the preserve parking area, on the north side of the road. Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279). •*



Top/Below: Silver Creek trail surrounded by *Geranium maculatum* (Wild Geranium) | Photos by Kara Gallup

SILVER CREEK 10TH ANNIVERSARY

This year we celebrate 10 years of caring for and about the woodlands, creeks, and grasslands, and the many creatures that call those habitats home, that comprise our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. The foresight and generosity of Joanne Tarbox Styles, who donated those 50 acres to us, made the preserve a reality.

We plan to have several special events at Silver Creek this year, beginning with the return of our Bird Festival. Cancelled for two years due to the pandemic, the Bird Festival is back on May 21 (*see details on page 8*). We hope you can join us!

Many Audubon members have great memories from time spent at Silver Creek

these past 10 years. And we're busy creating new ones! We invite you to share those memories in our newsletter in the form of poetry, prose, or photography (or all 3!). Send your submission(s) to our newsletter editor Dan Barron (*contact information on page 11*).

Most important we urge you to visit Silver Creek this year and experience the beauty and wonder of this terrific place. Join us for a scheduled event, volunteer for some stewardship activities (*see page 8 for information on spring stewardship*), or stroll the trails on your own. You'll be glad you did. •

– Mary 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 _____

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

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*Make check payable to **NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY** and mail to:
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

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Loretta McCoy – *Freeport*

Raymond Eder – *Orangeville*

Suzanne Falconer – *Rockford*

THANK YOU!

Adam Moderow, Mary Blackmore and Anne Straight for leading recent field trips and outdoor activities.

Teresa Smith and Mary Blackmore for updating our local foods brochure.

Jeremy Dixon for replacing worn cleat-strips on the wooden bridge at Elkhorn Creek.

Suzanne Falconer, Juliet and Adam Moderow, Jeff and Fran Shriver, Mike and Deb Eickman, and Jenn and Alan Nowicki for their recent donations to Northwest Illinois Audubon.

**Northwest Illinois
Audubon Society**

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