

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY



Nashville Warbler *Leiothlypis ruficapilla*

The Nashville Warbler is a boisterous yellow songster with a striking, big-eyed look thanks to a white eye ring that contrasts sharply with its gray hood. Nashville Warblers are fun to watch as they teeter on the ends of leaves and branches searching for food. Despite their name, Nashville Warblers are only found in Tennessee during migration. Look for them in shrubby tangles and regrowing forests—a habitat preference that has helped this species remain fairly common even as other songbirds have declined in number.



40TH ANNUAL BANQUET FEATHERS TO FUR Wednesday, March 29th

Highland Community College,
Freeport
Student Conference Center,
Building H

Silent Auction at 5:30 PM
Dinner at 6:00 PM
Program Begins at 7:30 PM

Please join us for a fantastic evening as David C. Olson, an accomplished photographer, takes us on a visual tour of the natural world. David will present to us images from his travel photography as well as fascinating information about some of North America's native wildlife. David has been photographing the natural world for more than 25 years. His photographs have appeared in a variety of books and magazines, including Alaska, National Geographic, Audubon, and National Wildlife Federation. We have the chance to view and hear firsthand about some of our magnificent furry and feathered inhabitants thanks to this large-screen display of breath-taking wildlife photos and stories from the field. In the world of nature

photography, his perspective and style are distinctive. His subjects appear incredibly stunning and detailed in his photography. David's award-winning studio, Olson Photography, and gallery are located on State Street in Rockford, Illinois. View his imagery at:

davidolsonphoto.com

The deadline for reserving your meal for this event has passed however, reservations are not necessary to attend the program (no meal) which starts at 7:30 p.m. Further details about the banquet can be found at nwilaudubon.org by calling Tim at 815-835-5109. The cost for the program only is \$5 for adults with no charge for children under one year old.

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About Bird: birds.cornell.edu
(top) Nashville Warbler by Susan Cook | (mid) Northern Saw-whet Owl by David Olson | (lower) Yellow Warbler by Patty Weik

MONTHLY PROGRAM THROUGH THE LENS: BIRDING IN NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

Tuesday, May 2nd

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

Join us for an evening of birds and photography with two members of the Freeport Area Camera Club. Rich Hofmaster and Patty Weik will share their passion of photography with photos of birds taken in Northwest Illinois. Many of these birds can be found in your own backyard! Looking through the lens, you will



get an up close and personal view of our feathered friends. Studying the bird's behavior is important in getting a good photo, as is lighting and timing... and of course, a little luck! Rich and Patty will also share some photography tips along the way.

Rich has always been fascinated by wildlife, especially birds. He also enjoys photography, and has been involved with the Freeport Camera Club for several years. Now that Rich is retired after working 40 years at Kelly Springfield Tire Co., he has more time to enjoy photographing birds.

Patty has enjoyed photography since getting her first camera when she was in high school. Her love of photographing sports has shifted to nature and birds! She likes to say that photography has taught her to slow down and "see" the beauty in nature that surrounds us.

CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

O **May 7** – Annual Birdathon Fundraiser!

E **March 29** – NIAS 40th Annual Banquet *(see cover for details)*

O **April 4** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m.
(see page 7)

E **April 8** – Twig picture frames, 10 – 11 a.m. *(see page 3)*

F **April 10** – Field Trip: Blooming Pasque Flowers at the Freeport Prairie, 2-3 p.m. *(see page 3)*

E **April 11** – Movie Night, 6:30 p.m.
(see page 3)

O **April 12** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m.
(see page 7)

O **April 15** – Midwest Annual Crane Count at 5:30 a.m. *(see right)*

E **April 17** – Boyer Colloquium, 7 p.m. Highland Community College *(see page 3)*

O **April 20** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m.
(see page 7)

O **April 28** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m.
(see page 7)

P **May 2** – NIAS Monthly Program
(see cover for details)

O **May 5** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m.
(see page 7)

E **May 6** – Accessible Birding Event, 8-10 a.m. *(see page 3)*

PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

TWIG PICTURE FRAMES

Saturday, April 8, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

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

*Coordinator: Adam Moderow
815-541-5842*

Using the resources provided by nature, (and a little twine) we will build simple frames perfect for pictures or rustic decoration. We will review some basic knot and lashing techniques as well as how to find materials in the woods. Cutting tools will be used to make materials the appropriate size. Rope will be provided. Meet at the Oakdale Pavilion by the main 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.

BLOOMING PASQUE FLOWERS AT THE FREEPORT PRAIRIE

Monday, April 10, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore

Please register for this field trip by calling 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.

The Freeport Prairie is an Illinois Nature Preserve located on Freeport's south side. Meet in the preserve's parking lot just off of Walnut Rd. at 2 p.m.

Please contact Mary if you plan to

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

HOPE IS IN THE LAND

I am fortunate to live in the village of Davis which, arguably, has more natural area square footage per-capita than any other community in the area. On the southwest side of town is the 26 acre Evangeline Forest, and on the northeast side is approximately three acres of newly established prairie. Neither tract is pristine, as in being relatively unchanged since European settlement or having threatened and endangered species. However that is where hope comes from! Both of these areas were predominantly agricultural until their recent rejuvenation. Except for the south facing slope visible from Hwy 75 and the abandoned right-of-way of the CMSP&P Railroad, Evangeline Forest was cropland. In the early 1990s farmer/landowner Donald Norton offered to the Village of Davis the acreage that now comprises Evangeline Forest. Fortunately the village accepted.

Thirty years have henceforth passed. The area now contains a walking trail and has mostly regrown to trees, some planted by humans, and many of them established via natural processes. Walking the trail one would scarcely know that in the 1980s it was a cornfield. Thirty-five years to us seems like a long time, and it is relative to a human life span. However the geologic time scale is far more elongated, relegating thirty-five years as a blink of time. A visit to Evangeline Forest now offers the opportunity to observe numerous resident birds as well as migrants during spring and fall. Such was not the case thirty-five years

ago. Despite the presence of ubiquitous invasive plant species this area likens to the Phoenix rising from the ashes. Hope is written by what is taking place. If this kind of positive change can happen in a

The Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a non-profit organization that has been coordinating International/World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) since 2007, focuses their effort on the flyways in the Americas and strives to educate the public about migratory birds and ways to conserve them. Although their efforts are ongoing throughout the year, WMBD is a special celebration (celebrated in May and October). Every year, a new global theme is determined and this year the focus is about the importance of water. All over the world, people celebrate migratory birds and are united by the same theme, to create a central message and promote the urgency for conserving and protecting migratory birds.

All life on the planet relies on water. Aquatic ecosystems include lakes, rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, and coastal waters. All of these provide food and hydration, nesting areas, places to take shelter, places to rest, and places to refuel. Many migratory birds rely on these aquatic stopovers in order to survive their migration journey.

However, aquatic ecosystems are being dramatically affected by humans. Humans are constantly shrinking natural habitats due to our increasing human population and demand for water, habitat and food for ourselves. These ecosystems are being dammed, dredged, drained, filled, and polluted. Increased use of fertilizers lead to enrichment of the water systems, causing algae populations to increase abundantly. This leads to algal blooms, which often

leads to decreased oxygen levels or “dead zones,” causing fish and other aquatic species to die. Aquatic ecosystems are also affected by climate change. Warmer temperatures and higher carbon dioxide levels lower the water quality by increasing acidity and/or lowering oxygen content. This causes a decline in the biodiversity of the many organisms in the aquatic food web, which then directly impact the

FREEPORT COMMUNITY COMPOSTING IS UP, RUNNING, GROWING

What do you do with your potato peels, apple cores, onion skins and eggshells? If you're like most households, you toss them into the trash. Nationally, about 95% of food scraps including discarded food is thrown away and ends up in landfills, a proportion that is consistent across locations and seasons (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020 and University of Washington, 2018). Once in the landfill, this decomposing food waste produces methane, a strong greenhouse gas that is a major contributor to climate change. But Freeport now has a way for households to compost their food scraps. Instead of these scraps being a detriment to the environment, the matter is composted to become nutrient-rich soil.

In spring 2022, the Freeport School District partnered with the local Environmental Study Group to receive grant funding from the Freeport Community Foundation to set up the community composting pilot project. Located at the Freeport Student Garden, additional support for this project came from Northwest Illinois Audubon Society and University of Illinois Extension.

Headed up by Freeport High School urban agriculture teacher, Ben Skipor recruited student helpers to build and operate the composting system. Fifty households signed up to participate. Households were given a lidded-bucket and agreed to bring their collected food scraps to the compost site where they are dumped, turned, and then turned into soil. To date, 4,000 pounds of food waste have been collected generating 1,009 gallons (42 standard bathtubs full) of compost. This composted soil will be spread and worked into the student gardens this spring.

The Freeport Community Composting project is continuing and growing. There are openings for additional households to participate. Contact Ben Skipor <ben.skipor@fsd145.org> for more information, questions and sign up.

The Freeport Student Garden also operates a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in which shareholders receive a biweekly share (boxes) of seasonal fruits and vegetables grown in this garden. More information at



From the first Killdeer singing on a crisp February day to the last Bobolink checking out nesting sites on a sunny May morning, the spring migration is a phenomenon of wonder. Truly, as many have said, this never gets old! Every year our chapter schedules spring bird walks to leisurely observe, enjoy and learn about these migratory species and the habitats they pass through or stay to nest in. These walks are suited for beginning or experienced birders and everyone in between. All are welcome!

Among the many birds we were happy to encounter last year were Sandhill Cranes dancing and nesting, an up-close male Northern Harrier, Pileated Woodpeckers displaying, and three Yellow-billed Cuckoos displaying and calling. An added bonus at several sites were carpets of blooming spring wildflowers.

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

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

April 4 – Wetland Areas of Eastern Stephenson County. This outing has little walking as we drive to each wetland area and often view the birds from our vehicles. Carpool at 7:45 a.m.

Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204)

April 12 – Duck's Misery and the southern Jane Addams Trail. During most of this outing we are walking on the level, hard surface of the Jane Addams Trail. Some observations will be made from the shoulder of Winneshiek Rd. Carpool at 7:40 a.m.

Leader: Laura Dufford (815-541-8958)

April 15 – Annual Midwest Crane Count
(details on page 2)

April 20 – Northern Jane Addams Trail

CALL TO ACTION FOR BANNING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

The 2023 Illinois legislative session runs through May 19th with over 350 environmental bills introduced by your elected Illinois senators and representatives. One of the bills will help us to decrease single-use plastic. If SB100 passes the use of foam food ware would be banned in Illinois. With less than 1% of Styrofoam getting recycled this is a big step to decreasing single-use plastic in Illinois. If you are someone who wants to decrease your use of single-use plastics by banning Styrofoam in Illinois you might consider taking 10 minutes to write a letter to your senator or representative asking them to support SB100.

You can identify your elected officials address on the back of our newsletter but if you are not sure who your elected official is you can use the website elections.il.gov and click on Find My Elected Officials under the Voter Services tab and it will allow you to type in your address and it

will give you information on the elected official that represents you.

Not sure what to write? You don't need to have an in-depth knowledge of single-use plastics. In fact, more is not better when it comes to letting your elected officials know how you, one of their constituents would like them to vote on this bill.

*Teresa Smith,
Conservation Committee*

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BICYCLING WITH



2023 – 2024 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

VICE PRESIDENT

Steve Simpson

Write-in _____

SECRETARY

Tim Smith

Write-in _____

TREASURER

Mary Blackmore

Write-in _____

MEMBERS AT LARGE *(vote for six)*

Elizabeth Boettner

Pam Richards

Kathy Weber

Jeremy Dixon

Fran Shriver

Gay Broocks

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 | Laura Dufford

Programs | Teresa Smith

Education | Juliet Moderow

Publicity | Leah Dixon

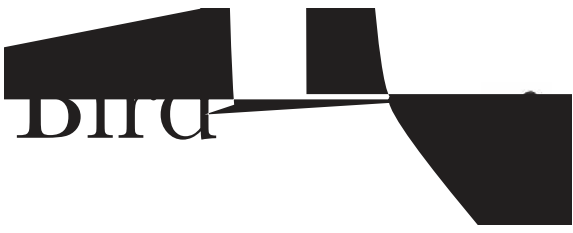
Membership | Jeff Shriver

Field Trips | Chris Kruger

FOLD & TAPE

FOLD & TAPE

CUT HERE



DITC

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 | Richard Benning
Vice-President | Laura Dufford
Secretary | Mary Blackmore
Treasurer | Tim Smith

Board members At-Large:

Elizabeth Boettner, Jeremy Dixon,
Carol Redmore, Fred Redmore,
Fran Shriver, Steve Simpson

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

Equity Diversity Inclusion

Gary Gordon and Juliet Moderow

President Emeritus | Gary Gordon

Newsletter Layout | Dan Barron
56781 W. Fawn Drive | Steuben, WI 54657
815-541-3261 | dan@driftlessflora.com

nwilaudubon@gmail.com



THANK YOU!

Randy and Nancy Ocken, Mae Hemsworth and Mary Blackmore for finishing overseeding at our Silver Creek Preserve in mid-February.

Teresa Smith for updating our Local Foods Brochure for 2023.

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

Merry Blake for her donation for program night beverages.

Tim and Teresa Smith, Kara Gallup and Mary Blackmore for removing downed trees, limbs and branches from the trails of our preserves.

Thank you to Juliet Moderow for posting updates on the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society social media pages and for updating the content on the Kids and Family pages on the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society website

Thank you to Catheen Varner for her recent monetary donation in memory of Virginia Thorn who was a member of Northwest Illinois Audubon Society for many years.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

James Stretch - Davis
Carolee Zuck - Freeport
Tom Neumiller - Savanna
Karen Hager - Elizabeth
Linda Hastings - Freeport
Nancy Holtum - Freeport
Merla Brooks - Polo

**NORTHWEST ILLINOIS
AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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

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ADDRESSES/EMAILS OF YOUR LEGISLATORS

Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121 • State House Switchboard (217) 782-2000

*When using the state switchboard simply ask to be connected to the legislators office.
When using the capitol switchboard follow the series of prompts.*

Senator Richard Durbin

230 S. Dearborn, Suite 3892,
Chicago, IL 60604
www.durbin.senate.gov/contact/

Senator Tammy Duckworth

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

16th District Rep. Darin LaHood

100 NE Monroe Street, Room 100,
Peoria, IL 61602
309-671-7027 | <https://lahood.house.gov/>

17th District Rep. Eric Sorenson

2401 4th Ave., Rock Island IL 61201
<https://sorensen.house.gov/>

45th District Sen.

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

36th District Sen.

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Rock Island, IL 61201
309-558-3612 | RepHalpin@gmail.com

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101 W 1st Street Suite 501
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