



APRIL - MAY 2020

# Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

A chapter of the National Audubon Society

[www.nwilaudubon.org](http://www.nwilaudubon.org)

## NIAS MONTHLY PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

*Please join us!*

### Questions About Your Membership?

Contact Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963  
or [timtreesmith@gmail.com](mailto:timtreesmith@gmail.com)

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Thank You!

Top text: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)  
Top photo: "Ninahale" -  
Wikimedia Commons  
Program photos provided  
by the presenters.



### Hooded Warbler *Setophaga citrina*

The Hooded Warbler flits through shrubby understories in eastern forests, flicking its tail to show off its white tail feathers. But those flashes are not the only thing that will draw your attention. The male's bright yellow cheeks and forehead surrounded by a black hood and throat will surely capture you. Females lack the bold black hood, but their yellow cheeks still stand out. Listen for their characteristic song on the breeding grounds and their metallic chip on the wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America.

Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

## 39TH ANNUAL BANQUET

Photographic Reflections on Global Weirding

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1ST

Highland Community College, Freeport  
Student Conference Center, Building H

Silent Auction Begins at 5:30 P.M. | Dinner at 6:00 P.M.  
Program Begins at 7:30 P.M.



The 2020 banquet will feature Augustana College Professor Dr. Stephen B. Hager who will share photographic reflections on climate change that seek to ask questions about sustainability and how we might live full and happy lives now and in a future that will most likely continue to get weirder. As global warming and chaos make for continued strange, and at times devastating, events some argue 'global warming' isn't the right term for our current and future state of affairs, but rather 'global weirding' best describes the situation.

Reservations for the banquet must be received by March 20th; 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 [www.nwilaudubon.org](http://www.nwilaudubon.org), by calling Tim at 815-835-5109 or by requesting a form through e-mail at [nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com). The cost for the program only is \$3 for adults with no charge for children under 12



### MAY PROGRAMMING

## "GONE SOLAR" STORY:

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

TUESDAY, MAY 5TH AT 6:00 P.M.

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

Start the evening with a delicious potluck meal. Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. NIAS will provide beverages. After the meal, there will be a short business meeting with announcements. The program will follow at approximately 7:15 pm. Our speaker this month will be Pastor Hank Fairman, Senior Pastor at St. John United Church of Christ and he will share the story of their solar project.

In the summer of 2019, the members and friends at St. John United Church of Christ made a bold choice. "Putting their faith into action," the congregation embarked on a major project in creation care and environmental justice by going solar with the installation of solar panels to provide electricity for the church. The solar panels have been installed at the church and are producing enough renewable electric energy to provide the power needed to operate the church campus. The goal of the project is to make St. John UCC the first 100% self-generated solar powered faith community in Illinois, and the first 100% renewable electric powered business in Freeport and Stephenson County.

# Earth Day 50th Anniversary



This year, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. The first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970 because of an idea formulated by Gaylord Nelson, who was a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin at the time. He witnessed a massive oil spill in California and recognized the need for environmental protection in our country. Water and air pollution were at the forefront of the news. He recruited Denis Hayes as a national coordinator. That first year, 20 million Americans (10% of the population) headed to the streets, parks, and public spaces to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in large rallies. As a result of that first Earth Day, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created by the end of 1970. From here, the Clean Air Act (1970), Clean Water Act (1972), and Endangered Species Act (1973) were passed. Earth Day has been celebrated each year since. Each decade brings in more people, more countries, and more concerns. In 1990, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries. This brought a huge boost to recognizing the need for recycling world-wide and paved the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In 2000, hundreds of millions of people in over 180 countries took part in Earth Day festivities and brought focus to global warming and clean energy.

It would be nice to think that after 50 years we could sit back and simply enjoy and appreciate the work that others have done. Sadly, we still have a fight ahead of us. The last few years has brought an onslaught of policies by the current administration that undermine environmental regulations. The Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts are being threatened or being gutted. Climate Change and plastic pollution are of utmost concern to a majority of citizens, but this falls on deaf ears of policy makers. We must continue the fight for a clean and healthy environment for all that live there. Earth Day is recognized once a year, but we need to make it a part of our everyday lives.

NIAS and other groups have activities running throughout April in recognition of Earth Day. Please see the schedule of events in the Earth Month Calendar. These events are open to the public. Take part in some of these events or do your own Earth Day activity!

## NIAS IS CELEBRATING EARTH DAY ON SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH.

Different activities will be happening throughout the day. We hope Freeport and the surrounding area will join us as we celebrate our Earth and voice our concerns on Climate Change, clean air and water, declining numbers of birds and other species, over use of plastics.

There are activities happening throughout April to focus our attention on our Earth and humans impact on its precious natural resources.

## APRIL EARTH DAY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### Tuesday, April 14th

Highland Community College will present a day of speakers discussing the impacts of climate on local agriculture and our communities.

*Highland Community College, Freeport  
Student Conference Center, H-201*

#### 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Representative Cheri Bustos will discuss "Rural Green Partnership to Combat Climate Change and Spur Economic Growth".

#### 11:00 - 12:00 p.m.

Boyer Colloquium speaker Margaret Krome, program director of Michael Field Agricultural Institute, will present "Water, Water Everywhere: Farming and Local Community Resilience in the Face of Climate Change".

#### 7:00 p.m.

Boyer Colloquium speaker Margaret Krome, program director of Michael Field Agricultural Institute, will present "Water, Water Everywhere: Farming and Local Community Resilience in the Face of Climate Change". This session will be followed by Q and A.

### Thursday, April 23, 7:00 p.m.

Free film screening of "Racing Extinction" Highland Community College, Student Conference Center, H-201

This is a 2015 documentary about the ongoing Anthropogenic mass extinction of species and the efforts from scientists, activists, and journalists to document it. For more information and a trailer of the film, visit [racingextinction.com](http://racingextinction.com)

*Co-sponsored by NIAS, HCC's Earth Club & Women in Science Club.*

### Saturday, April 25

*Earth Day Celebration 2020!*

#### 8:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Bird Walk, Oakdale Nature Preserve, Newell Tract. *See info on page 7*

Earth Day Activities at Freeport Public Library and Debate Square. The entire event is FREE and will run from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Freeport Public Library followed by special concert at 5:00 p.m. at the Wagner House.

#### 10:00 a.m.

Earth Day themed Storytime in Children's area of Freeport Public Library

#### 10:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Exhibits inside and outside, weather permitting. Includes Composting, Plastics, Solar (solar oven, solar E-trike, garden tools), Solar installers and Pollinators.

*Children's Activities sponsored by Freeport Art Museum and U of I Extension.*

**11:00 a.m.**

Northern IL Raptor Rehab – Live Bird Presentation; Many live Birds of Prey for viewing

**1:30 p.m.**

Hoo Haven – Live Bird Presentation – Live Pelican and other critters

**Time TBD:**

Yoga or walking meditation with Pat Leitzen Fye at Debate Square. *Check the NIAS website for updated times.*

**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

Earth Day themed music with Kendra Swanson at the Wagner House, 1 E. Spring Street, Freeport. *See page 5 for more details.*

*Kendra Swanson, local singer/songwriter will share her talents and love of the natural world with audience. Free admission.*

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**Sunday, April 26  
Hands-on with Birds!**

**2:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

Children's Hands-On Museum, Lincoln Mall, 1233 W. Galena Street, Freeport. Juliet Moderow will bring bird specimens to the museum to provide a chance for the children to see and touch the birds.

*Note: The museum is open from 1:00 to 4:00, so enjoy it longer!*

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**March 13, 20 and 27**

The Environmental Study Group will be offering a series of Climate Conversations with the hope of engaging the community in good conversations about climate.

The effort is being led by Lynn Feaver, Alan Wenzel, Tony Honchar and Hugh Knapp.

A pilot of the series will be held on March 13, 20 and 27. The first set of discussions will be launched during Earth Month and held at Faith United Methodist Church.

*If you or anyone you know would be interested in participating in future Climate Conversations, please contact Lynn Feaver (815-235-9530) or any member of the Environmental Study Group.*

# CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

**April 1** – Banquet at Highland Community College. See page 1 for details. Reservations for the meal required prior to March 20.

*No reservation required for the program only.*

**April 3** – Bird Walk, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**April 7** – Bird Walk, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**April 9** – Field Trip: Blooming Pasque Flowers at the Freeport Prairie, 3:00–4:00 p.m.  
*See page 8 for details.*

**April 12–21** – NIAS Field Trip to Big Bend National Park, Texas (*trip is full*).

**April 14** – Highland Community College will present a day of speakers discussing the impacts of climate on local agriculture and our communities.  
*See page 2 for details.*

**April 16** – Annual Midwest Crane Count, 5:30–7:30 a.m. Each year our chapter volunteers to census cranes in Stephenson County.  
*See page 5 for details.*

**April 16** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**April 23** – Free film screening of “Racing Extinction” 7:00 p.m. *See page 2 for details.*

**April 25** – Bird Walk, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**April 25** – Earth Day Celebration 2020!  
*See page 2 for details.*

**April 26** – Hands-on with Birds! Children's Hands-On Museum, Lincoln Mall, 1233 W. Galena Street, Freeport *See left for details.*

**April 29** – Bird Walk, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**May 3** – Annual Birdathon Fundraiser! Your pledge is MOST welcome! *See page 5 for details and how you can make a contribution that will help birds on their wintering grounds, migration corridors and nesting habitats.*

**May 5** – Membership Meeting and Potluck at 6:00 p.m.. *See page cover for details.*

**May 12** – Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at St. John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd

**May 7** – Bird Walk, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**May 9** – Field Trip: Wildflowers and Birds of the Palisades, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
*See page 8 for details.*

**May 14** – Bird Walk, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**May 16** – Annual Bird Festival at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 8 for details.*

**May 18** – Bird Walk, 8:00–11:00 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**May 21** – “Talking About the Issues” monthly discussion session, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the home of Fred and Carol Redmore, 1809 Parkview Circle, Freeport, 815-721-3375. *The first hour topic will be determined. For a copy of the article, call Carol or obtain one at the May 5 potluck and program. The second hour will be a discussion of whatever issues are brought forth by participants. All are welcome!*

**May 22** – Field Trip: An Evening of Birding at Lost Mound, 5:30-10:30 p.m. *See page 8 for details.*

**May 23** – Birding trip to the MAGIC HEDGE BIRD SANCTUARY at Montrose Point in Chicago. *See page 8 for details.*

**May 23** – Family Bird Watching at Oakdale Nature Preserve, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
*See page 8 for details.*

**May 26** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m.  
*See page 7 for details.*

**May 29** – First campfire of the year at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. At 7:00 p.m. we'll take a leisurely stroll to observe blooming plants and nesting birds. The campfire will start at 8:00 p.m. S'mores and water will be provided. Bring a lawn chair and flashlight. Carpool from the Harbor Freight east lot in Freeport at 6:15 p.m.

*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.*

**May 30** – Family Bird Watching at Oakdale Nature Preserve, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
*See page 8 for details.*



Photo by Mary Blackmore

# GOT CAROLINA WREN?

There have been numerous reports in northwest Illinois of overwintering Carolina Wrens this year, seen primarily at bird feeders. We want to tap the experiences of our members to get a better picture of how widespread this phenomenon has been.

Although Carolina Wrens are non-migratory, they can experience some northward or southward movement from the fringes of their range in some years, usually based on winter conditions. After last winter's harsh conditions, including a visit from the polar vortex, Carolina Wrens would have been expected to have retreated from the northern edge of their range or perhaps even not have survived the intense cold. However, that appears to not be the case.

*If you have seen a Carolina Wren during this past winter, please contact newsletter editor Dan Barron at 815-541-3261 or at dan@beewise.us with your name and location.*

# 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.

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 usually occur in the morning, though some afternoons may be scheduled if the temperatures are cool. Be sure to wear a hat, long sleeves, long pants (light colored is best) and socks long enough to tuck your plant legs into (for tick avoidance). Tools, gloves, water and snacks will be provided. 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. Carpool at the times listed above from the Harbor Freight east lot in Freeport.*

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

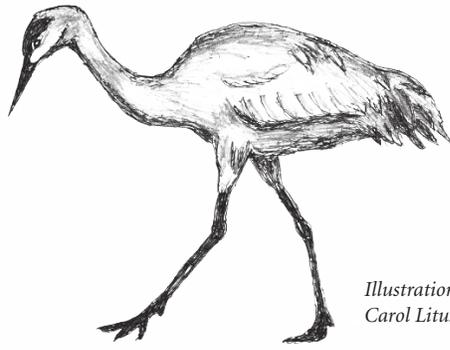


Illustration by Carol Litus

# BE PART OF CITIZEN SCIENCE JOIN US FOR THE MIDWEST CRANE COUNT

Mark your calendar now for Saturday, April 16 when we'll once again be counting Sandhill Cranes in Stephenson County. Our count is part of the larger Midwest Crane Count organized by the International Crane Foundation. Following the count we'll gather at a local restaurant for breakfast and to turn in count forms. No experience is necessary! If you are new to the Crane Count you will have a veteran counting partner. Last year 20 counters at 13 sites observed a total of 77 cranes, including one flock of 34 cranes.

Volunteers make this count happen so we hope you can join us! To participate call Teresa Smith at 815-238-3963 before April 1. The count is early, brief and rewarding. Counters are on site from 5:30-7:30 a.m. on count day to listen and watch for cranes.



## EARTH DAY CONCERT with KENDRA SWANSON

April 25, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. (FREE!)  
Wagner House | 1 E. Spring St., Freeport

Kendra Swanson is a song-writer and performer of lively, folk music, frailing banjo, rigorous guitar, soulful strings, and hearty vocals to boot. Her music distinctly embodies a truly Americana sound from (and about) the heartland, with intimate reflections on its flora, fauna, and people. Kendra lives in Madison and is not only a musician and mother, but is also a consulting Environmental educator and professional naturalist. We hope her music inspires you as you celebrate planet Earth! Come and go as you please!

# Birdathon



Your money goes where the birds go

This year our chapter marks its 41st 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 3. 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!

## 2020 BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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 and Ada Coomer |
| <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"/> Katelyn McWethy             |
| <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., Forreston IL 61030 or include your pledge form with your chapter ballot (to the right) mailed to NIAS, PO Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032. Questions? Call Mary at 815-938-3204

CUT HERE

# 2020 – 2021 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. Out-going President Juliet Moderow will serve one additional year on the board as President Emeritus.

## Elected Officers

### PRESIDENT

- Gary Gordon  
 Write-in

### VICE PRESIDENT (PRESIDENT ELECT)

- Linda Black  
 Write-in

### SECRETARY

- Pam Richards  
 Write-in

### TREASURER

- Tim Smith  
 Write-in

### MEMBERS AT LARGE (vote for six)

- Jeremy Dixon  
 Molly Doolittle  
 Carol Redmore  
 Fran Schriver  
 Jeff Schriver  
 Rebecca Schriver-Rice  
 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)

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Conservation</b>   Laura Dufford | <b>Publicity</b>   Deborah Lischwe |
| <b>Programs</b>   Don Miller        | <b>Membership</b>   Paul Brown     |
| <b>Education</b>   Richard Benning  | <b>Field Trips</b>   Chris Kruger  |

# 2020 Local Foods Brochure Available



Tom Arnold of Tom's Turkeys

Each year the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension Stephenson County produces a Local Foods Brochure. It is a resource to connect local food buyers with local food growers.

The 2020 brochure lists over 40 growers in Northwest Illinois that offer local produce, maple syrup, cheese, honey, eggs, poultry and meat. Buying food locally has many advantages; limiting the amount of fuel used to transport food across the country, an opportunity to get to know the farmer that produced the food that you consume, and keeping dollars locally to promote a healthy community.

If you are interested in a free copy of the 2020 Local Foods Brochure you can pick one up at the University of Illinois Extension Stephenson/ Winnebago/Jo Daviess County, University of Illinois Extension Ogle County, University of Illinois Extension Lee/ Whiteside County, or the Farm Bureau of Stephenson County.

The brochure is also available at [www.nwilaudubon.org](http://www.nwilaudubon.org) or by calling 815-835-5109. The 2020 brochure will also be available at the banquet on April 1st.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Norman Homb – Apple River  
 Lucinda Fahr – Winslow  
 Ken Eichholz – Davis  
 Elizabeth Boettner – Freeport

# ENJOY THE SPRING MIGRATION!



Wilson's Warbler | Photo by Dan Barron

From the first Killdeer in February to the last Willow Flycatcher in May, 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. Last year's walks included both Barred and Great Horned Owls, the latter with an owlet, displaying Bobolinks and Henslow's Sparrows, and great looks at Indigo Bunting, Veery, Brown Creeper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and dozens more.

All of the walks will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 11 a.m. Feel free to join or depart the group at any time during those three hours. Join the carpool at the Harbor Freight east lot in Freeport at the time listed for each walk.

Following the walks, those who would like to will gather at a local restaurant for an early lunch. Contact the respective walk leader if the weather is questionable or if you need further directions to the site. And don't forget our Annual Bird Festival at Silver Creek on May 16. Happy Birding!

**April 3** – Wetland areas of eastern Stephenson county. Carpool at 8 a.m. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204).

**April 7** – Duck's Misery and the southern Jane Addams Trail. Carpool at 7:40 a.m. Leader: Laura Dufford (815-947-2720).

**April 16** – Northern Jane Addams Trail and the Orangeville Wetlands. Meet at the trailhead in Orangeville, just east of the BP gas station. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Somer Elgin (815-275-0719).

**April 25** – Newell Tract, Oakdale Nature Preserve, rural 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).

**April 29** – Pecatonica River Forest Preserve (main entrance by the campground). A special bonus of this walk will be stunning wildflowers and possible singing frogs! Carpool at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279).

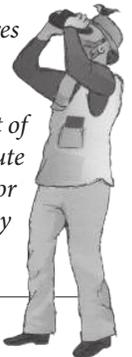
**May 7** – Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. The parking area is off of West Grove Rd. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. We also hope to observe blooming spring prairie flowers. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204).

**May 14** – Krape Park, Freeport. Meet in the parking lot by the dam. Leader: Juliet Moderow (201-233-0946)

**May 18** – Harry and Dorothy Espenscheid Forest Preserve, northeast of Freeport. Carpool at 7:30 a.m. or follow these directions: from the junction of HWY 20 Bypass and HWY 75, take HWY 75 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 and go 1.8 miles to Farm School Rd. turn right (east) and go 0.3 miles to the preserve (on north side of the road). Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279).

**May 26** – Bald Hill Prairie Preserve, Ogle county, features grassland habitat that often hosts Bobolinks. A bonus for this walk will be viewing the Illinois record cottonwood tree that grows in this preserve. Bald Hill Prairie Preserve, a unit of the Byron Forest Preserve District, is only about a 10 minute drive from our Silver Creek Preserve. Carpool at 7:15 a.m. or meet at the Forreton municipal lot at 7:30. Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204).

Illustration by Carol Litus



## NIAS PRESIDENT'S TWEET

*Spring is arriving soon and it means a busy and exciting time for Audubon.*

April is always full of extra activities – we have the Audubon banquet starting the month and many Earth Day related activities throughout the month. This year's Earth day event is scheduled indoors at the

Freeport Public Library (recall last year's snowstorm!), but we hope that we have the option of some outdoor fun in the Debate Square! We have TWO bird of prey events as well as something new – A Kendra Swanson concert to end our day at the Wagner House. If you are not familiar with her music, you will be in for a treat. Many of her songs are bird and nature inspired that will no doubt make you smile.

May brings the Birdathon, bird walks, and bird festivals! What a great time to be a bird and a birdwatcher! It will be Willow's THIRD Birdathon (yet she turns TWO in

April – I'm not very good at math). May also brings the last month of my term as president of NIAS. It's been a great two years as your president and I enjoyed being a part of this wonderful and dedicated group.

Keep fighting the good fight. We have to continue our progress on educating others on the effects of climate change and showing others how to celebrate Earth day every day by respecting the Earth every day.

*Juliet Moderow, President*

# FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS



## BLOOMING PASQUE FLOWERS AT THE FREEPORT PRAIRIE

*Thursday, April 9, 3:00–4:00 p.m.*

*Leader: 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. 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 3:00 p.m.*

## WILDFLOWERS AND BIRDS OF THE PALISADES

*Saturday, May 9, 8:00 a.m – 2:00 p.m.*

*Leader: Chris Kruger*

*815-238-9259 or [chriskruger88@gmail.com](mailto:chriskruger88@gmail.com)*

Each spring the Mississippi Palisades State Park just north of Savanna, is a destination for birders and botanists alike. Due to its unique topography, unusual birds such as the Yellow-throated Warbler and Northern Parula Warbler, and uncommon plants like Large-Flowered Trillium and Amethyst Shooting Star are found.

*Carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport at 8 a.m. or meet our group at the first parking lot inside the south entrance to the Palisades. We'll eat lunch at a restaurant in Savanna and return to Freeport by 2 p.m. Please confirm your attendance with Chris by email or phone.*

## SILVER CREEK BIRD FESTIVAL

*Saturday, May 16*

Join us on May 16 for an informative, fun, family-friendly morning as we explore our Silver Creek Biodiversity preserve for the many migrating and resident birds found there. Over 100 species of birds have been documented in the grasslands, woodlands and stream corridors of the preserve. If the weather cooperates, we should observe many migrating and resident songbirds.

Tours will begin at 8:00, 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. or you may bird on your own at any time. No binocs? No worries? Audubon binoculars will be available to use during the morning. Tours are suitable for all levels of birding skills – everyone is welcome!

## SILVER CREEK BIRD FESTIVAL CONTINUED

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, snacks and informational displays. This is a free event! 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!*



## AN EVENING OF BIRDING AT LOST MOUND

*Friday, May 22, 5:30-10:30 p.m.*

*Leader: 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. In addition, the 22nd is a new moon, so with any luck we'll have a brilliant show of stars for a stunning finale.

*Meet at the Fish and Wildlife office building at Lost Mound at 6:30 or carpool from the Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport at 5:30 p.m. Return to Freeport around 10:30 p.m. Call Mary to confirm your attendance.*

## BIRDING TRIP TO THE MAGIC HEDGE BIRD SANCTUARY

*Montrose Point, Chicago*

*May 23, 6:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.*

*Leader: Gary Gordon, 815-541-1228*

We will be hosting a birding trip to the MAGIC HEDGE BIRD SANCTUARY at Montrose Point in Chicago along Lake Michigan. Space will be limited to 8 to 10 people. We will leave Freeport at 6:00 a.m. and expect to return between 2:00–3:00 p.m.

*We will have a sign up at the next Audubon meeting. If you have questions please contact Gary Gordon at 815-541-1228*

## 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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Make check payable to **NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY** and mail to:  
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[nwilaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:nwilaudubon@gmail.com)

## FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS CONTINUED



# THANK YOU!

## FAMILY BIRD WATCHING AT OAKDALE NATURE PRESERVE

May 23 and 30, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Leader: Richard Benning

This event is for novice bird watchers and families. You are welcome to attend both sessions, or just one. The basics of bird watching, such as how to become a better observer and selection of equipment, will be covered. One of the goals will be to get good looks at resident birds. We will meet at the shelter in the Newell area of the Oakdale Nature Preserve.

Dress for the weather and bring binoculars if you have them. Binoculars will be available for those who don't have them. If you have questions about this event call Richard Benning 815-865-5279.

Recent field trip leaders/coordinators Mary Blackmore and Chris Kruger.

Jim Richards for removing downed trees across trails at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve.

Teresa Smith and Mary Blackmore for updating our Local Foods brochure.

Debbie and Jack Barron of Freeport Press for donating the printing of the Local Foods Brochure vendor postcards, Monarch butterfly fact sheets and our banquet flier.

Teresa Smith and Mary Blackmore for serving on the nominating committee and to the many willing members who said, "Yes!"

Shey Lowman for updating the species lists for our preserves.

Mary Blackmore for finishing our seed processing and making seed mixes for late winter planting at our preserves.

Jeff and Fran Shriver, Ken Eichholz and Colleen Kaney for their recent donations.

Kara Gallup and Mary Blackmore for overseeding sections of our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve in late February.

**Northwest Illinois  
Audubon Society**

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

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