



APRIL – MAY 2023

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY



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!

INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER:

2. Calendar Considerations, 2023 Crane Count
3. Programs, Events and Field Trips
4. President's Desk
5. World Migratory Bird Day
6. Spring Stewardship, Freeport Community Composting
7. Spring Bird Migration Bird Walks
8. Updates, Call to Action
9. 2023-2024 Ballot for NIAS Chapter Officers
10. 44th Birdathon
11. Thank You!

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

A chapter of the National 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.

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

- 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)

O **May 7** – Annual Birdathon Fundraiser! Your pledge is MOST welcome! See page 8 for our list of birders and for details about making your pledge that will help birds on their wintering grounds, migration corridors and nesting habitats.

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

E **May 13** – World Migratory Bird Day event, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Oakdale Nature Preserve (see page 5)

O **May 17** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7)

E **May 19** – New Moon Campfire at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. We will take a leisurely stroll to observe blooming plants and resident birds at 7 p.m.; the campfire will start at 7:30. 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.

O **May 22** – Bird Walk, 8-11 a.m. (see page 7)

F **May 26** – Field Trip: An Evening of Birding at Lost Mound, 6:30-9:30 p.m. (see page 7)

M Meeting

F Field Trip

S Stewardship

P Program

E Event

O Other



Illustrations
by Carol Litus

BE PART OF CITIZEN SCIENCE CALLING ALL CRANE COUNTERS

Saturday, April 15 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 3rd 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 website savingcranes.org.

Individual preferences regarding carpooling with others in regard to the COVID 19 situation will be accommodated. In past years we have gathered together after the count to enjoy breakfast and sharing of crane stories. In 2023 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.

NATIVE PLANT TRIVIA:

Blooming March through May, this species is often one of the first to appear on high quality prairie remnants, and grows in full sun to part shade. Plants grow to heights around 6" and prefer medium-dry to dry soils. (Answer on page four.)



QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

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

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 attend. This trip will only happen if the flowers are blooming.

MOVIE NIGHT

Tuesday, April 11, 6:30 p.m.

Freeport Public Library
100 E Douglas Street, Freeport

Coordinator:
Teresa Smith | 815-238-3963



Join us for two short films created by Turnstone Strategies: "Monty and Rose" a story about the 2 Piping Plovers that nested at Chicago's Montrose Beach, and "The Magic Stump" a newly released film telling the story about an Illinois stump that has attracted raptors including two rare Prairie Falcons.

Bob Dolgan, an avid birder and the filmmaker for both of the films, will be available via Zoom to answer questions. Join us for one or both films.

Our chapter is hosting the Monty and Rose film to get people excited about the upcoming World Migratory Bird Day Theme - WATER.

There is no charge to attend this event. Snacks will be provided. Plan to bring your own water bottle.

BOYER COLLOQUIUM AT HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Monday, April 17 via Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

This year's Boyer Colloquium is "Climate Change, Disasters, and Human Migration" Presented by Dr. Pablo Toral, Chair of the Environmental Studies program and the Department of Political Science at Beloit College.

The term "climate change" is widely used by scientists, policy makers, and

by average citizens to refer to a series of changes in weather patterns caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Greenhouse gases get trapped in the atmosphere, causing a cascading chain of atmospheric events, including an overall rise in global temperatures, new patterns of precipitation, erosion, and more extreme weather events. These events often test the resiliency of our infrastructure and lifestyles. Occasionally, they may cause a devastating impact on people's lives and livelihoods, forcing them to move from their homes in search of personal safety and a new chance to rebuild their lives elsewhere. The presentation will discuss these impacts, and explore some of the resources (legal, political, economic, social, environmental, and others) that communities have developed to manage migration caused by extreme weather events.

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.

ACCESSIBLE BIRDING EVENT

Saturday, May 6, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

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

Accessible trail – Meet at the Oakdale Pavilion by the parking lot.

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.

(continued on page 4)

**(ACCESSIBLE BIRDING EVENT
CONTINUED)**

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 nonprofit organization that assists individuals with all types of disabilities, regardless of age, to control and direct their own lives.

AN EVENING OF BIRDING AT LOST MOUND

Friday, May 26, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Coordinator: Mary Blackmore

**Please register for this field trip by
calling 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.

Carpool from the Forreston Municipal Lot (next to the library along HWY 26) at 5:30 p.m. Or meet in the parking area of the Fish and Wildlife office building at Lost Mound at 6:30. There is a restroom in the parking area.

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.

Page two trivia answer:

Ranunculaceae | *Anemone patens*
Pasque Flower

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 geologic blink of time, imagine what can happen given the chance on a larger scale. Nature is resilient when provided the opportunity.

Northwest Illinois Audubon Society members can feel good about a similar rejuvenation taking place at the Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserves. Likewise, large portions of these two preserves were once cropland, which provided little suitable habitat for birds and other wildlife. A visit to either place now can awe the observer as to the diversity of species present and the sheer beauty of the landscape. Much of this change has taken place in that blink of geologic time, and those of you who volunteer at stewardship outings are catalysts for this resurrection.

The late David Brower used the acronym CPR for the land; Conservation, Preservation, Restoration. It has been done, and it is being done now. It needs to be done more, and can be done, on large areas of the landscape. Park the mower and grab the planting shovel!

*Richard Benning,
NIAS President*

UP FROM THE EGG

By Ogden Nash

*Our March presenter
Matthew Vincent, who
spoke to our group
about Wilson and
Audubon, started the
program with this
poem by Ogden Nash.*

Bird watchers top my honors list.

I aimed to be one, but I missed.

*Since I'm both myopic and
astigmatic,*

My aim turned out to be erratic,

And I, bespectacled and binocular,

Exposed myself to comment jocular.

*We don't need too much birdlore,
do we,*

To tell a flamingo from a towhee;

Yet I cannot, and never will,

Unless the silly birds stand still.

And there's no enlightenment in a tour

Of ornithological literature.

*Is yon strange creature a common
chickadee,*

Or a migrant alouette from Picardy?

*You can rush to consult your Nature
guide*

And inspect the gallery inside,

But a bird in the open never looks

Like its picture in the birdie books –

*Or if it once did, it has changed its
plumage,*

*And plunges you back into ignorant
gloomage.*

*That is why I sit here growing old by
inches,*

Watching a clock instead of finches,

But I sometimes visualize in my gin

The Audubon that I audubin.

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2023 WATER: SUSTAINING BIRD LIFE

MAY 13 & OCTOBER 14



WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY 2023
WATER



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 birds. Warmer temperatures also

lead to increased evaporative loss, disrupting the water cycle, causing drought conditions instead of precipitation in those areas. Consequently, humans may then move water from other areas for irrigation, further affecting the water cycle.

Let’s not also forget the effects of pesticides, like DDT used from the 1940s until its ban in 1972. DDT caused a bioaccumulation of toxins through the aquatic food web, causing a severe decline in fish-eating birds because the chemicals disrupted the proper development of egg shells. Despite the bans of DDT, we still bombard our ecosystems with pollutants that harm wildlife.

We need to protect aquatic ecosystems for all forms of life. This year, NIAS will be spreading the message that “water sustains bird life” and will continue to educate the public on water and its importance to bird life.

**For more information, visit;
migratorybirdday.org**

*Juliet Moderow,
Conservation Committee*

ANNUAL WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY EVENT – WATER

Saturday, May 13, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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

*Mogle Building and Oakdale Pavilion
plus the trails and creeks*

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Join us for a fun, family-friendly event at Oakdale Nature Preserve. This location provides wonderful birding opportunities as well as a chance to explore the habitat along the creeks that flow through the preserve. Volunteers from our chapter and from the University of Illinois Extension will be hosting. We will have activities for all ages and abilities.

Throughout the entire event time, there will be ongoing educational activities and crafts at the Mogle Building and/or Oakdale Pavilion. We will have our migratory obstacle course that fits this year’s theme. We will also have giveaways while supplies last.

On each hour at 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m., there will be three outings to take the trails to bird watch and observe aquatic creatures in the creek. Please meet at the Pavilion to join one of these outings lead by NIAS members.

We will ensure that the accessible trail be used for each of these outings before taking other trails.

Oakdale Nature Preserve also provides accessible parking and restrooms. There are benches along many of the trails.

Please wear appropriate footwear, especially if you choose to explore the water. Bring binoculars if you have any and we will have some available to borrow.

This is a rain or shine event and hope to have plenty of shelter in case of rain. Save the Tabernacle, Inc., will also open the Tabernacle.



A group of 14 energetic eradicators descended upon sweet clover and parsnip at Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve on July 3rd, 2018 under Mary Blackmore's leadership. | photo by Pam Richards

SPRING STEWARDSHIP AT OUR PRESERVES

We invite you to join us on one or more of our Spring Stewardship Sessions as we work together to reduce the numbers of Wild Parsnip, Garlic Mustard, Multiflora Rose and honeysuckle on our Silver Creek and Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserves. Early removal means not only cooler working temperatures for us, but also less biomass to handle.

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. The efforts of every volunteer is very much appreciated!

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. If you're available, please join us; if not, we hope you can join us another time. 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 becomes 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.



FREEPORT COMMUNITY COMPOSTING IS UP, RUNNING, GROWING

▲ Sign announcing the compost site located behind Freeport Junior High School, within the Student Garden with entrance off Locust Street.

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 three-bin compost system: food scraps are dumped in left-most section, moved into center for turning, and moved again to right most-section when ready or almost ready for use. | photos by Deborah Lischwe

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 freeport-student-garden-2023-csa-share-sale.cheddarup.com or tinyurl.com/bdddb54f.

Submitted by Deborah Lischwe

ENJOY THE SPRING MIGRATION



Common Yellowthroat by Dan Barron

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 and the Orangeville Wetlands. Walking will be on the hard, level surface of the Jane Addams Trail. Restrooms are available at the trailhead in Orangeville where we begin. Carpool at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Somer Elgin (815-275-0719)

April 28 – Newell Tract, Oakdale Nature Preserve, Freeport. Some parts of the trail are steep and the ground can be uneven. Meet in the parking area of the Newell Tract, the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Rd. Restrooms are available in the parking area.

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! Trails have some steep portions and the surface can be uneven. Restrooms are available in the parking area. Carpool at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279)

May 11 – NIAS Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve, rural Leaf River. We'll walk the mowed trails (uneven ground in some places) of this woodland and grassland area. The timing should be such that we'll hear many songbirds. Carpool 7:30 a.m.

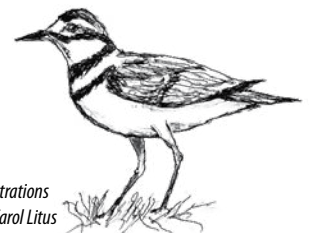
Leader: Mary Blackmore (815-938-3204)

May 17 – Harry and Dorothy Espenscheid Forest Preserve northeast of Freeport. A variety of habitats will be explored including forest, savanna and the riparian areas of Rock Run Creek. There are a few steep portions of the mowed trail and the surface can be uneven. Carpool at 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Richard Benning (815-865-5279)

May 22 – Krape Park, Freeport. We'll meet in the parking lot by the dam and walk the paved path along Yellow Creek and then on some of the road shoulder downstream to the pedestrian bridge. Restrooms are in the park.

Leader: Juliet Moderow (201-233-0946)



Illustrations
by Carol Litus



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.



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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*

BICYCLING WITH BUTTERFLIES COUNTING MONARCHS IN MEXICO PROJECT

Our January 3rd program Bicycling With Butterflies, presented by Sara Dykman via Zoom was a wonderful program. The program was offered as an in person event or via Zoom (The recording of this program is available on the NIAS YouTube channel) with several people attending the program expressing interest in Sara's Counting Monarchs in Mexico project that pays people in Mexico a small wage for counting the monarchs so that data can be used for tracking trends in the monarch population.

At a recent board meeting the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society made the decision to donate \$200 towards this grassroots effort project. If you would like to support the project you can go to the GoFundme website and search for "Counting Monarchs in Mexico".

Eagle Trip with Boys and Girls Club

On January 14, the Boys and Girls club children and their family members enjoyed a special field trip to Lock and Dam 13 to see Bald Eagles, some for the first time! This was part of the 8-week recurring bird class led by Gary Gordon, Juliet Moderow, and Jeff Shriver.

photos by Juliet Moderow



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

OPTIONAL:

Save postage and paper.

Fold and mail the
"2023 – 2024 BALLOT FOR
NIAS CHAPTER OFFICERS"
intact on the same sheet
as the "2023 BIRDATHON
PLEDGE FORM"

FOLD & TAPE

NIAS
PO Box 771
Freeport, IL 61032

APPLY
POSTAGE
HERE

TAPE

CUT HERE

FOLD & TAPE

Birdathon

Your money goes where the birds go



This year our chapter marks its 44th 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 7. 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!

OPTIONAL:
Save postage and paper.

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intact on the same sheet
as the "2023 BIRDATHON
PLEDGE FORM"

2023 BIRDATHON PLEDGE FORM

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

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

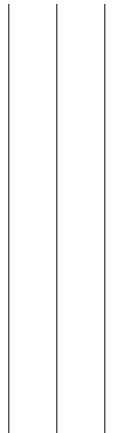
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jesse Akins | <input type="checkbox"/> Gary Gordon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Richard Benning | <input type="checkbox"/> Dylan Lewis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mary Blackmore | <input type="checkbox"/> Kent Lewis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harlan and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

Clip and mail to Mary Blackmore, 9024 W. West Grove Rd., Forrester 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

FOLD & TAPE

FOLD & TAPE

NIAS
PO Box 771
Freeport, IL 61032



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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

rev 5/22



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.*

FEDERAL

Senator Richard Durbin

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

Senator Tammy Duckworth

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

STATE

45th District Sen.

Andrew Chesney
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Freeport, IL 61032
Chesney@ilhousegop.org

36th District Sen.

Michael Halpin
1504 3rd Ave., 2nd Floor,
County Office Bldg.,
Rock Island, IL 61201
309-558-3612 | RepHalpin@gmail.com

90th District Rep.

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1941 Harlem Road, Loves Park, IL 61111
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71st District Rep.

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