

The Northwest Illinois Audubon Society celebrates diversity in

nature and among the people

and communities with whom

we work. We are dedicated to

providing an inclusive, welcoming,

and judgement-free atmosphere

where people of all experience

levels, identity groups, and

cultural backgrounds are actively encouraged to participate.

Scan QR to visit:

NIAS MONTHLY

PROGRAMS

Most programs are held the first

Tuesday of the month (Sept.-

May) at St. John United Church of

Christ, 1010 Park Blvd., Freeport

and begin at 7 p.m., followed by

refreshments. All programs and

Check the current newsletter or our

website for specific monthly details,

special events or any changes to

Please note: schedule and location

of programs are subject to change

due to unforeseen circumstances.

Please see newsletter and website

for up-to-date information.

PLEASE JOIN US!

events are open to the public.

the usual time and place.

nwilaudubon.org

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society



Ed on Cormorant Island surveying the pelican colony

One Hundred Year's and Counting, The History of the "Refuge."

Presented by Ed Britton Wildlife Refuge Manager, Savanna District

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Tuesday, September 3rd at 7:00pm

St. John United Church of Christ, Freeport, IL

We hope you come out and listen to Ed Britton's presentation on the amazing 100-year history of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Established in 1924 to be a refuge for fish, wildlife and plants and a breeding place for migratory birds, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge now covers more than 240,000 acres and extends roughly 261 miles of the Mississippi River across four states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa.

Lesser Yellowlegs Tringa flavipes

The Lesser Yellowlegs is a dainty and alert "marshpiper" that occurs in shallow, weedy wetlands and flooded fields across North America during migration. It's smaller with a shorter, more needlelike bill than the Greater Yellowlegs, but otherwise looks very similar. It breeds in the meadows and open woodlands of boreal Canada. Like many other shorebirds, the Lesser Yellowlegs rebounded from hunting in the early 20th century but has declined again from losses of wetland habitats. It is on the Yellow Watch List for species with declining populations.

More than 290 species of birds migrate throughout the refuge every year. About 40% of the waterfowl in the nation use the Mississippi River as a travel corridor in the fall migration. The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge hosts more than 300 pairs of Bald Eagles, in part due to having one of the largest blocks of floodplain forest habitat in the lower 48 states. The refuge is designated as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention and a Globally Important Bird Area.

Just as the refuge provides a great place for wildlife, it also offers phenomenal opportunities for public recreation. More than 3.7 million visits take place each year as people come to hunt, fish, watch wildlife, take pictures, attend public programs, walk, boat, swim and much more.

Ed has worked 47 years with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the National Wildlife Refuge System. He started his career along the Mid-Atlantic Ocean, have worked throughout the United States, including the Bering Sea in Alaska. Currently, he has been at Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge for 29 years as the Savanna District Manager. His office covers 80 miles of river from Dubuque down to the Quad Cities and contains 64,000 acres in IL, IA and WI.

BIRD SEED SALE REMINDER

This year's **Bird Seed Sale** will be held **October 17, 18 and 19.** Sale fliers should begin arriving in mailboxes sometime in September.

If you can volunteer to help sort orders or deliver seed, please call Mary at 815-938-3204.



Programs, Events and Field Trips

INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER:

- Prairie Seed Collecting Preserves Stewardship Town Hall Notes
- 5. Carrie Newcomer Show
- 6. Elkhorn Creek
- 7. Thank You!

Feature Bird: Cornell Lab All About Birds Feature Bird Photo: Gary Eslinger / USFWS



CALENDAR

M August 10 – Board Retreat at Newell Shelter at Oakdale 9 a.m. – noon

August 12 – Perseids Campfire at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 7:30 p.m. We'll hope for clear skies for viewing this annual meteor shower. After a short walk at 7:30 to see what's in bloom, the campfire will start at 8:00. S'mores will be provided. Bring a lawn chair, insect repellent, flashlight and water.

The preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds., with parking off of West Grove Rd. If the weather is questionable call Mary before 6:30 at 815-938-3204.

P September 3 – NIAS Monthly Program and Meeting, "One Hundred Year's and Counting, The History of the Refuge.", See page 1 for more details.

September 10 – Board Meeting at St. John UCC at 7 p.m.

September 12 – Field Trip, Doug Firebaugh Observatory. Registration required *(see details on page 3).*

September 14 – Prairie Seed Collecting at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 10 a.m. – noon. Tools, snacks and guidance will be provided. Bring water and insect repellent. For more information about our seed collecting plans see the article on page 4.

The preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds., with parking off of West Grove Rd. If the weather is questionable call Mary before 9:00 at 815-938-3204.

O September 15 – A Sand County Almanac Discussion Group, 1-3 pm at the home of Mary Blackmore (see details on page 3).

Welcome New Members!

Cindy Shaw – Elizabeth Louis Caruso – Freeport Barbara Stewart – Lena **September 18** – Full Moon campfire at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve. Stroll the trails at 6:30 p.m., and join the campfire at 7:00. S'mores will be provided. Bring a lawn chair, flashlight, insect repellent and water.

Note: Accessibility via ATV transportation to and from the campfire circle will be available courtesy of Bob and Kara Gallup.

The preserve is about 2 miles south of Leaf River in the southwest corner of the intersection of Leaf River Rd. and West Grove Rd. Parking is off of Leaf River Rd. (S. Main St. crosses HWY 72 in Leaf River and becomes Leaf River Rd.). If the weather is questionable call Mary before 5:30 at 815-938-3204.

O September 21 – Beginning Birder Club, Freeport Public Library, registration required. See details on page 3.

September 24 – Field Trip, Guided Tour of the Leopold Shack and the Leopold Center near Baraboo, WI (see page 3 for more details)

September 26 – "A Great Wild Mercy – Celebrating Kindness, Community and Nature", a free public concert featuring Carrie Newcomer, with pianist Gary Walters.

Please join us for this wonderful concert! Doors open at 6 p.m., with the concert starting at 7 p.m., at the Student Conference Center (H-201) at Highland Community College in Freeport (see details on page 5). This venue is handicapped-accessible.

Meeting	P Program
Field Trip	E Event
Stewardship	O Other

View our calendar considerations at: nwilaudubon.org/news/calendar/

Teresa Reel – Lena Rosalee Ernst – Stockton Judith Hammer – Stockton John Blimm – Thomson





▲ Photos from the June 25th, Amboy Marsh Purple Martin field trip | *photos by Juliet Moderow*

BIRD WALK FUN

In spite of record weather-related cancellations (4), participants in our weekly spring bird walks still had some remarkable avian experiences. Among the many favorites were singing Wood Thrushes and both Yellow-Throated and Warbling Vireos, displaying Bobolinks and Eastern Kingbirds, a soaring Broadwinged Hawk and American White Pelican (the former over Krape Park!), plus great views of a perched Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, many Red-Headed Woodpeckers and Sandhill Cranes.

Our average species count was 36, lower than usual, due in part to the windy conditions that made it difficult to hear and see small songbirds like warblers (only 6 species observed).

Many thanks go to the NIAS members who led the walks: Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Laura Dufford, Juliet Moderow, and Anne Straight. We hope you can join us next year when we'll once again enjoy the beauty and wonder of the spring migration.

PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

EXPLORING THE NIGHT SKY

Thursday, September 12th, 8-10p.m. Doug Firebaugh Observatory 2892 W Stephenson St, Freeport, IL

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Contact Chris Kruger at 815-238-9259

On Thursday, September 12th our chapter will host an evening of exploring the night sky at the Doug Firebaugh Observatory. The staff of the observatory will lead an introduction and short program, followed by the opportunity to observe celestial objects visible in August (September). Weather permitting, we will be able to see the moon, galaxies, major constellations, double stars, star clusters, and planetary nebulae through one of the three telescopes located at the observatory.

The event is open to all ages. In case of inclement weather the event will still be held, but limited to a modified program in the observatory.

Please call Chris Kruger to register for the event at 815-238-9259.

A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC DISCUSSION GROUP

Sunday, September 15th, 1-3 p.m.

at the home of Mary Blackmore 9024 W. West Grove Rd. Forreston

12:30 pm carpool from Harbor Freight parking lot in Freeport

This year marks the 75th anniversary of Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac. Join us as we discuss some favorite chapters and some of the back history of this environmental classic.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting Chris Kruger at 815-238-9259.

GUIDED TOUR OF THE LEOPOLD SHACK

AND THE LEOPOLD CENTER NEAR BARABOO, WI

Tuesday, September 24th

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

There will be a \$10 fee per person (*limited to 20 people*)

Contact Chris Kruger at 815-238-9259 to sign up by September 10th

Join us for a tour of the famed Leopold Shack, learn about the history and his philosophy, and walk where A Sand County Almanac was inspired. We will depart from the Harbor Freight lot in Freeport at 7 am. Expected return time to Freeport by 4-4:30 pm. Bring a sack lunch and beverage. A 15 passenger van has been reserved and our tour is limited to 20 people. There will be a \$10 fee per person. Contact Chris Kruger at 815-238-9259 to sign up by September 10th.

Additional information is available at aldoleopold.org. There are also some great PBS videos about Leopold on YouTube.

A personal note: I first read a Sand County Almanac in 1991 as one of Keith Blackmore's ecology students. This was around the same time he invited me to join Audubon. Reading A Sand County Almanac again is like visiting an old friend. The Good Oak, Sky Dance, Thinking Like a Mountain, and The Land Ethic are some favorites. Leopold begins the foreword with "There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. These essays are the delights and dilemmas of one who cannot." In a time when it seems there are fewer people who care about wild things, I am grateful to Keith for introducing me to this group that does. I hope you can join us for the discussion group and field trip.

– Chris Kruger

BEGINNING BIRDER CLUB

Third Saturday of the Month – September through April!

Freeport Public Library, Meeting Room A/B 10:30 a.m. to approximately 12:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Education Chair, Juliet Moderow, will be staring a new year for the Beginning Birder Club starting this September.

This is a fun, educational program for youths to learn about different topics about birds. Lessons will be tailored for ages 6-10. An adult must be present with the youth during the entire program. All sessions are independent from each other, so you are welcome to attend any that you are able and/or interested.

Each program will be held at 10:30 am to approximately 12:00 pm on the third Saturday of the month (to remember, third rhymes with bird!). Sessions will be held at the Freeport Public Library in meeting room A/B, but we will try to end the session outside to look for birds. Please dress appropriately for the weather as well. Please register in advance as space is limited and to help determine amount of materials needed for each session.

Contact Juliet Moderow

at moderowja@gmail.com or phone 201-233-0946

to register or by this form ► https://forms.gle/CFFSbCdzvWsYEK1L9



TOPICS:

September 21, 2024 – What makes a bird a bird?: We will learn about the unique characteristics of a bird.

October 19, 2024 – Finding and naming birds: We will learn about habitats where birds can be found and how to identify local birds that can be found in the area. Later dates and topics will be provided in future newsletters.



Every late summer and fall we collect prairie seeds at our preserves for planting in less diverse areas of those same sites. Our only long-range scheduled collecting outing at our Elkhorn Creek Preserve is September 14, 10am-noon (see calendar on page 2). An October date for Silver Creek will be in your next newsletter.

We will be seed collecting on many more days on shorter notice as weather permits. To get on the contact list for those outings call Mary at 815-938-3204 or e-mail Kathy Weber at nosyturtle@gmail.com. We typically gather seeds for two hours during late morning or early afternoon. This is a wonderful way for you to volunteer to help our restoration efforts! Seed collecting is an easy, leisurely task. Novices always are welcome. There will be a leader to point out which plants to pick seed from. Snacks and equipment will be provided. Wear long pants and long sleeves and bring water and insect repellent.

Note: Some seed collecting will be done on trailsides, but much of the collecting will be done off-trail. Be aware that the terrain is often steep and uneven and that we'll be walking through tall grass.

Seed collecting is a fun way to spend a couple of hours on nice fall days. We hope you can join us!

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER PRESERVES STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship at our preserves for August and September will be scheduled on shorter notice by using our volunteer contact list. To get on the list call Mary Blackmore at 815-938-3204 or email Kathy Weber at nosyturtle@gmail.com. We will try to provide as much notice as possible as we work around hard-to-predict weather.

We plan to do a variety of stewardship, focusing on burdock, honeysuckle and Multi-Flora Rose. Seed collecting also will take place due to earlier than usual seed set. Most 2-hour stewardship sessions will be scheduled for mornings, but on cooler September days we may work in the afternoon.

Volunteers should wear long pants, long sleeves and a hat. Bring water, insect repellent and gloves. Snacks, equipment and guidance will be provided.

NOTES ON OUR FUTURE HOME TOWN HALL MAY 2024

On May 2, 2024, a clean heat town hall was held in Freeport, sponsored by the League of Women Voters, the Environmental Study Group, Citizens Utility Board, Sierra Club and the NAACP. Presenters were Matt Harvey of the Citizens Utility Board and Sam Beard of the Sierra Club. The focus of the town hall was to outline an important step in decarbonizing our energy use to address climate change. The idea is that we first need to clean up the electric grid, sourcing our electricity from renewable energy, and then to "electrify everything" in our homes and businesses and - to the extent possible - in our industries. This presentation mainly focused on the opportunities to electrify our homes' appliances by transitioning to heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, heat pump clothes dryers, and induction/ electric resistance stoves.

However, according to a June 26, 2024 article in Canary Media by Alison Takemura, electrifying our appliances isn't only a climate solution; it's a public health measure. Burning fossil gas in our homes – whether to heat our rooms, warm water for our showers, dry our clothes, or cook our food – releases pollutants that can make people sick.

Unfortunately, stoves, water heaters, furnaces and other fossil-fuel equipment frequently leak gas even when they're off. And although bad-smelling compounds are added to fossil gas to make these leaks easier to sniff out, they can still be evasive — and dangerous for reasons beyond flammability. A study published this month found 25 hazardous air pollutants in gas analyzed from hundreds of U.S. and Canadian homes. The carcinogen benzene showed up in 97 percent of samples. Even low levels of benzene can cause leukemia and other blood cell cancers.*

Combusting gas emits yet more pollutants, the most infamous of which is carbon monoxide, but burning fossil gas also creates dangerous particulate matter.

Gas stoves are often the worst offenders for indoor air quality, because unlike gas furnaces, water heaters, and dryers, they're not typically required to be vented outdoors. Gas stove flames can raise NO₂

Continued on page 5 ►

Town Hall continued ►

levels into the hundreds of parts per billion, exceeding the outdoor national standard in just a few minutes. That pollution can roam quickly throughout the home and linger for hours. Electric stoves, by contrast, don't emit NO_2 .*

Peer reviewed research has shown that gas stove pollution particularly affects children.

Fortunately, there are solutions which can benefit both our health and our planet.

Air source heat pumps are a smart choice for keeping your energy bills low and your home comfortable all year round. Much like a refrigerator, heat pumps utilize electricity to move heat from cool spaces to warm spaces and vice versa. Because heat pumps move heat rather than generate it, they are a more economically sound way of heating and cooling your home. The technology has advanced to the point where cold-climate heat pumps can effectively heat your home through an Illinois winter.**

If you're not able to electrify everything right now, make a plan so that you've already done the homework required to replace your fossil appliances with electric equipment as they age out. As for gas stoves, if you're not sure about induction, you can purchase an induction hot plate online for around \$70.00 to see if you like how it performs. Induction stoves are comparable to gas stoves in terms of quick heating and temperature control while maintaining a cool cooking surface. Please consult the Citizens Utility Board website for more information.

> Candace Colby Conservation Committee

*From the Canary Media article by Alison Takemura, June 26, 2024.

**Information taken from the Citizens Utility Board fact sheet on heat pumps. Please consult this fact sheet, available on the CUB website, for more valuable information (www.citizensutilityboard.org).



"A GREAT WILD MERCY – CELEBRATING KINDNESS, COMMUNITY AND NATURE"

A free public concert featuring

CARRIE NEWCOMER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH

at 7:00 p.m. | Doors open at 6 p.m.

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Conference Center, H-201 | 2998 West Pearl City Road, Freeport, IL

ADMISSION IS FREE WITH NO TICKETS OR RESERVED SEATING

We are pleased to once again sponsor a free concert featuring the fabulous folksinger Carrie Newcomer with pianist Gary Walters.

Carrie is a songwriter, recording artist, performer and educator. She has been described as a "soaring songstress" by Billboard and a "prairie mystic" by the Boston Globe. The Austin Statesman described her as having "a voice as rich as Godiva chocolate" and Rolling Stone once said, she "asks all the right questions." Most simply put, the Dallas Morning News said, "she's the kind of artist whose music makes you stop, think and then say, 'that is so true." The Student Conference Center, Building H, is on the northwest corner of the Freeport campus. Parking is directly north of the building entrance in lots A (East and West); the building is fully accessible.

For directions to the college visit: highland.edu or call 815.235.6121

Questions, please contact us at: nwilaudubon@gmail.com

For more information about Carrie Newcomer, visit her website at: **carrienewcomer.com**

or you can visit the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society website at: **nwilaudubon.org**



▲ (above) Pasture Rose, Rosa carolina | photos by Teresa Smith

Native plant photos taken during the May Wildflower Walk at Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve.

"Thank you Preserve Stewards for helping to make Elkhorn such a beautiful place."

– Teresa Smith



Once or several times per month, Mary Blackmore updates educational resources, posters, calendar items and other information in both of our preserve kiosks. | photo by Dan Barron



Richard Benning was recognized for his service as NIAS President, during the May 7th Program. photo by Debbie Barron

ELKHORN CREEK BIODIVERSITY PRESERVE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

▲ Cream Wild Indigo Baptisia bracteata | photo by Teresa Smith

	Audubon Society and National Membership sletter, local mailings and the national "Audubon" magaz	ine.
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	Audubon Society Local only Membership r and other mailings from our local chapter.	
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Treasurer, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, P.O. Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032

THANK YOU!

- Stewardship volunteers in May and June: Judy Corrie, Randy and Nancy Ocken, Mary Blackmore, Kara Gallup, Pam Richards, Dan and Sarah Barron, Bernard Lischwe, Anne Straight, Paul Brown, Juliet and Adam Moderow, Teresa Smith and Ben Ryan.
- Lynn Feaver for mowing trails at our preserves.
- Mary Blackmore for cleaning and sharpening tools following each stewardship session, and for the continued updating of information in our preserve kiosks.
- Field Trip and Event Leaders and Coordinators: Juliet Moderow, Teresa and Tim Smith, Jim Hampton, Ben Skipor and Mary Blackmore.

• The family of Della Martin for their recent donation in memory of their mom.

rev 5/24

- Molly Doolittle for her recent donation.
- Tom Sorn, in memory of his wife Elizabeth
- Stephenson County Spring Bird Count participants Richard Benning, Lurane Slaght, Laura Keith-Schwartz and Jeff Shriver.
- Teresa Smith, Mary Blackmore, Jeff and Fran Shriver, Juliet Moderow, Elizabeth Boettner, and Gary Gordon for hosting a booth at the Freeport Pride Picnic in June.
- Mary Blackmore and Anne Straight for working at the 100th Anniversary of the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge in June.

BOARD MEMBERS

President | Teresa SmithVice-President | Steve SimpsonSecretary | Elizabeth BoettnerTreasurer | Mary Blackmore

Board members At-Large:

Leah Dixon, Fran Shriver, Terri Clark, Gay Broocks, Pam Richards, Carol Beatty

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership | (open) Programs | Don Miller Conservation | Laura Dufford Education | Juliet Moderow Publicity | Sarah Barron Field Trips | Chris Kruger

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (*adhoc*) Juliet Moderow and Gary Gordon

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ADDRESS CHANGES FOR USPS

If you have recently changed your USPS address, let us know so we can send your newsletter to the correct address. If newsletters are returned to us because of an incorrect address, it can take several weeks for the USPS to return the item to us with your new address and thus you would receive the newsletter much later.

You can email us at

nwilaudubon@gmail.com

or call 815-238-3963 with any change of address information.



NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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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/

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

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