WOODCOCKS DANCE FOR SPRING

Here's a grand way to start your Spring. There are two programs offering a spot to view the American Woodcock spectacular “sky dance”. If you haven’t yet experienced this bird behavior attending one of these programs is a must.

Saturday, March 16, at 7:00 pm Woodcock Walk at Plum Creek Nature Center
Fee: Free! Age: Ages 7 or older

Friday, March 22, at 6:30 pm Woodcock Walk at Hickory Creek
Fee: Free! Age: Ages 7 or older
For more information, go to www.reconnectwithnature.org or Phone: 708.946.2216

Both of these locations are pretty much guaranteed to see the courtship flights. The birds will dance no matter what the weather is like. The woodcock spends most of its time hidden in fields and on the forest floor, where they probe for earthworms. They often rock back and forth while walking. On spring nights males perform very conspicuous displays, giving a buzzy peent call, then launching into the air. Their erratic display flight includes a distinctive, twittering flight sound and ends with a steep dive back to the ground. The programs will provide history and behavior notes on the birds.

Both sights have ample parking and the walk to see the birds is on designated trails. Plum Creek Nature Center also has bathrooms.
PROGRAMS

THE THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY HOLDS PROGRAMS THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY. PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED PROGRAMS ARE HELD AT 7 P.M. AT THE PARK FOREST LIBRARY.

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 7:00 PM
DENIS KANIA
Program - A Little Bird Told Me

Denis has been teaching ecology and bird related classes at the Morton Arboretum for over 20 years. With the free time that he has left, Denis organizes birding trips to all the friendly corners of the world.

His travels have taught him much about people, the world we live in and the perils of the future. Having recently traveled twice to Ecuador as well as Ghana and Panama in 2018 his interest in worldwide conservation efforts has grown. After seeing conservation efforts in developing countries, it is easy to see how we all can make better decisions at home that not only affect our own local environment but also affecting places half way around the world that we may never see.

Join Denis as he explains how his world travels have shaped his perspective on ecological conservation both near and far away.

Wednesday, April 10, 2019 7 P.M.
SAVING OUR AVIAN RESOURCES (SOAR)
FREEDOM HALL
410 Lakewood Boulevard, Park Forest, IL
Refreshments will be served

SOAR was established in 1999 and is dedicated to saving our avian resources through raptor rehabilitation, education and research. SOAR maintains all necessary US Fish & Wildlife Service and Iowa DNR permits to provide the rehabilitation and education.

THEIR GOALS ARE TO
Provide educational programs featuring their non-releasable birds of prey.
Establish a regional raptor rehabilitation facility to serve western Iowa.
Use personal connections with individual wild animals to bring attention to important natural resource conservation projects and issues.
Conserve habitat, conduct needed research, and provide educational opportunities.

COME AND JOIN US TO SEE THE RAPTORS AT FREEDOM HALL!
FIRST DAY in NATURE JANUARY 1, 2019
Hosted by Michelle O'Connor, Audubon Member and
Rob Gunther, Director of Recreation and Parks

To celebrate the beginning of the New Year, on January 1st, 2019, a group of nature lovers met at Central Park in Park Forest to participate in a quiet “Walk in Nature”. Everyone was bundled up as this was a pretty cold day! After we had warmed ourselves by the fire and had a chance to meet one another, we were off on our walk.

Michelle started off the morning with a demonstration about the ground squirrels winter habitat. Then we went to the stream that flows through the park to see the beaver lodge and dam. We learned interesting facts about the beaver, it’s lodge and what happens to the water flow once the dam is built.

After our walk and talk we headed back for some hot chocolate and roasted marshmallows. It was a lovely way to start the year!

For more information about other programs the village is offering, go to www.vopf.com.

Terrie Spillers

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Two ways to join:

DUAL MEMBERSHIP — $20

NATIONAL AUDUBON plus Local Chapter-THORN CREEK AUDUBON
Membership dues to National Audubon support efforts to address environmental concerns and foster wildlife protection at state levels, with a small percentage of dues shared with the local chapter. Members receive AUDUBON magazine as well as THORN CREEK NEWSLETTER.

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________ City/Zip ____________________________

Phone ____________________________________________ Email ________________________________

Recommended way to join or renew National Membership - www.audubon.org

OR

Make check, payable to National Audubon Society;
Send to Thorn Creek Audubon Society, PO Box 895, Park Forest, IL 60466

THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY – CHAPTER ONLY MEMBERSHIP
“Chapter Only” dues remain at home and support environmental efforts in our community. Members receive the chapter newsletters.

CHAPTER ONLY DUES CATEGORIES:
Basic Annual dues-$15.00
Supporting Annual Due-$25.00
Benefactor Annual Dues-$50.00

Name ____________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

City/Zip ______________ Phone ____________________________

Email ____________________________________________

Make checks payable to: THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY, P.O. BOX 895, PARK FOREST, IL 60466
FIELD TRIPS

TO TELL US YOU WILL ATTEND AND FOR DETAILS, PLEASE CONTACT THE TRIP COORDINATOR. FOR TRIPS MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK, MEET AT THE PARK FOREST LIBRARY ONE HOUR EARLIER. WE WILL CAR POOL FOR DISTANT TRIPS BUT NOT FOR LOCAL ONES. IF RAIN IS FORCAST FOR THE TRIP DATE, CALL THE TRIP LEADER THE PRIOR EVENING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Saturday, April 6, 3 p.m.
HERON ROOKERY, HIGHLAND, INDIANA
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)
McLean908@comcast.net

This will be an afternoon walk because visitors can only see the rookery from one side and viewing is best in the afternoon when the sun is not in one’s eyes.

Some Herons may be back. There should be many water fowl such as Mallards, Coots, Mergansers, Shovelers, Teals and possibly Buffleheads.

To find the rookery, come to Highland and drive through the center of town on Highway Avenue to Liable Street. Turn left (north) and go to the end of the road. For more questions regarding directions please call Mary Anne.

Wednesday, April 10, 9 a.m.
SAND RIDGE NATURE PRESERVE
Al Thomas (708-957-9847)

There are many trails that pass through a number of habitats in the preserve including prairies, oak savannas, woodlands, sand dunes, marshes and ponds.

The parking lot is on the east side of Paxton, a short distance north of 159th street, west of Torrence and east of the Bishop Ford.

Saturday, April 13, 8 a.m.
GOODENOW GROVE
Al Thomas (708-957-9847)

Goodenow Grove is located 2 miles east of Route 394 on Goodenow Road. Take Dutton Road north one mile to the entrance and follow the winding road to Plum Creek Nature Center parking lot. Meet in the first parking area just below the nature center building. The area has a big woodland and some open prairie. Bluebirds, Gnatcatchers, Red-Headed Woodpeckers. A Yellow-breasted Chat has also been seen here.

Wednesday, April 17, 8 a.m.
PLUM CREEK PRESERVE
(Plum Creek Play Meadow Parking Lot)
Al Thomas (708-597-9847)

This preserve is a birding opportunity to include in your annual field trips with Thorn Creek Audubon Society. It is comprised of a large tract of woods, scrub and large fields. In the spring sightings have included Barred Owls, Acadian Flycatchers, Kentucky Warblers, Dickcissels, Western Meadowlarks and early arriving Warblers.

Take Sauk Trail east to Burnham Avenue, go right (south) on Burnham and the entrance is just before 223rd Street.

Saturday, April 20, 8 a.m.
MONEE RESERVOIR – RACOON GROVE
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)
McLean908@comcast.net

Monee Reservoir is one mile east of Raccoon Grove over the I-57 overpass and south one quarter mile. Raccoon Grove is at Route 50 (Governor’s Highway) and Pauling Road, one mile south of Monee. Meet at Monee Reservoir to see Bluebirds, Green Herons, Red-headed woodpeckers, Teals and perhaps other migrant ducks as well as songbirds. Then we will go the Raccoon Grove to see spring wildflowers.
Field Trips continued/...

Wednesday, April 24, 9:30 a.m.
GIBSON WOODS NATURE PRESERVE,
INDIANA
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)
McLean908@comcast.net
The dune and swale features of the
preserve were produced after the last glacier
created ancient Lake Chicago, the
forerunner of Lake Michigan. The parallel
sand ridges still found in Gibson Woods
today represent the effect of Lake Chicago as
it retreated thousands of years ago.
Because of its natural diversity, Gibson
Woods Nature Preserve provides differing
habitats which offer feeding and nesting
cover for many birds and animals. More than
160 species of birds have been recorded at
this sight.
Hopefully we will see spring flowers and
perhaps some early arriving warblers and of
course, woodland birds. Sightings in the past
include the following: Red-headed
Woodpeckers, Chipping Sparrows, Ruby-
crowned Kinglets, White throated Sparrows,
Blue-winged Teals, Yellow-rumped
Warblers, Brown Creepers and Hermit
Thrushes.
Take Route 30 to Indianapolis Boulevard,
go North to 165th Street, then east to Parrish
Avenue to the Nature Center entrance.

Saturday, April 27, 8 a.m.
MCCLAUGHRY SPRINGS AND THE
LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)
McLean908@comcast.net
We will hope to see a variety of
waterfowl, such as Egrets, Pie-billed Grebes,
Coots, Blue-winged Teals, White Egret,
Ruddy Ducks, Common Merganser, Ring-
ecked Ducks, Great Blue Heron, Lesser
Yellowlegs, Buffleheads, Gadwalls and
warblers too. We will meet in the
McClaughry Springs parking lot, off Kean
Road, north of 119th Street. From LaGrange
Road turn east onto 119th, then go north a
short distance to Kean Road.

Wednesday, May 1, 8 a.m.
ORLAND GRASSLAND SOUTH
Gene Rothgery, erothgery@comcast.net
These grasslands were created by a
retreating glacier into meadows, sedge
marshes, wet prairie and oak savannas.
With this diverse landscape we hope to see
a variety of birds such as Dickcissels, Sedge
Wrens, Northern Harriers, Eastern Kingbirds,
American Bittern, Pied-billed Grebe and
early warblers. Hopefully there will be
wildflowers too. This grassland has also
become an “Important Breeding Area”, or
IBA. Go north on Lagrange Road to 167th
Street. Turn left/west and look for the
entrance to the parking lot on the left/south
side of the street.

SPRING BIRD COUNT SET FOR
SATURDAY, MAY 4
The annual spring bird count will take
place on May 4, when teams of birders will
go out into the field to tally species and
numbers of birds seen.
Other birders will be watching their
feeders and all collected data will go to Al at
www.woodduck_1999@yahoo.com. Thank
you in advance for your participation.
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (CBC)
(January 5th, 2019)

On the first Saturday in January 2019, a clear day with little wind and moderate temperatures, 11 teams of 36 volunteers walked and drove to survey a circular territory of bird habitat 15 miles in diameter with a center at Governor’ State University.

The result produced 9500 birds of 57 species. As you may guess, Canada Geese led the way with over 4000 counted with European Starlings a distant second with just over 1800. It’s somewhat hard to believe that 57 species could still be staying here over winter, but they are.

A few of the more unusual sightings were the Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Creeper and Carolina Wren. These birds are usually here but not in great numbers. Many hawk species and owl species winter in our area and start their nesting process in our winter. Some birds migrate as far south as Illinois for the winter including the American Tree Sparrow, Dark-Eyed Junco and even American Robins that have been in the deep north for the summer.

If you are a bird watcher of any consequence, you are aware that the American Bald Eagle is growing back to numbers common to their species in the 1950s, and are wintering in this area also.

Al Thomas, Special Projects Chair

PARK FOREST LIBRARY GRANT

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society, Park Forest Library and National Audubon Collaborative Grant Project is underway. The Park Forest Library is a recipient of the National Audubon Collaborative Grant. Thorn Creek Audubon Society contributed $500.00 as matching funds. Proceeds of $1300.00 will be used to start a Junior Audubon program in the summer of 2019. The funds will be used to purchase binoculars, bird guides and other bird educational materials.

The Park Forest Library is home to a stunning native plant garden that surrounds the building. The garden also provides an outdoor classroom setting. This year the beautiful library garden will have a designated bird sanctuary and arbor. This summer young bird enthusiasts will be able to study bird populations and native plants and trees inhabiting the lovely garden.

The program kick-off event will be held at the Park Forest Library, April 20 at 2:00PM. Bob Bryerton, an Interpretive Naturalist with Will County Forest Preserve will be the speaker at this special program which is open to all.

Michelle O’Connor, Gants Chair
FIELD NOTES

TO REPORT AREA SIGHTINGS CALL TERRIE SPILLERS AT 708-747-1999

If you leave a message please leave a phone number where you can be reached

DECEMBER

12-16 10 Cardinals under the feeders, a Song Sparrow and a Fox Sparrow.  

Anne Rosen

12-24 2 flocks of Sandhill Cranes flying over Crete 300- 400. Other birds seen during December were Red-breasted Nuthatches, White-breasted Nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, Chickadees, Goldfinches, House Finches, Cardinals, Juncos, Sparrows, Downy Woodpeckers.  

Anne Rosen

In December Cardinals and Blue Jays were seen at suet feeders.  

Joyce Freudenberg

2-7 3 Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatch, 15 Cardinals, Titmice, Downy Woodpecker, 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers seen at feeders. Also a Coopers Hawk  

Anne Rosen

A Grackle and 10 Cowbirds were seen in the yard.  

Georgiana Srachta

GARDEN CORNER

As I look at my garden it seems that not much is going on and it's probably the same by you. Snow covers everything today, ice expected later on. And yet, I feel the promise of spring. Toward the end of February some buds will start to fatten on branches, and indeed some trees will bear early blossoms in March. I'm looking forward to the migrants returning. Here's part of a poem on just that subject:

The Chickadees' Plan
A modest little Chickadee.
One radiant day in Spring,
Excitedly exclaimed in glee,
"It's just the very thing!"
She whispered to her loving mate,
Who smilingly agreed
To do his best to aid the plan
If she would take the lead.

Her happy thought was that they give,
With all who'd wintered home,
A banquet large and sumptuous
To those who yearly roam;
A welcome to the migrants who'd
Returned, with charming Spring
To Acadie, In nesting time!
Then let the welkin ring!

Claire Harris MacIntosh
THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND  
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The mission of the Thorn Creek Audubon Society is to promote the enjoyment and appreciation of birds, to educate adults and children concerning our natural environment, to preserve, protect, and restore wildlife habitat, and to create awareness of local conservation issues.  
The newsletter is the official publication of the Thorn Creek Audubon Society, an Illinois not-for-profit organization dedicated to conservation and environmental education. The opinions expressed herein are not necessary endorsed by the TCAS board or the National Audubon Society. We welcome editorial proposals and submissions. Please direct all correspondence to: Terrie Spillers, Editor, P.O. Box 895, Park Forest, IL 60466  
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