TIME TO THINK ABOUT OUR POLLINATORS AGAIN AND HOW WE CAN HELP!

Pollinators are still in need of our help. There are so many helpful and easy things we can do regarding this issue right in our own back yards. Many people working together nationwide are saving and reclaiming habitat for all kinds of pollinators. As we plan for the coming spring, summer and fall seasons plantings, please consider native plants. Below is some information you might find useful that I read about at the United States Department of Agriculture's website www.nrcs.usda.gov/pollinators.

- **Pollinators by Numbers:**

  Did you know three-fourths of the world’s flowering plants and about 35 percent of the world’s food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce? More than 3,500 species of native bees help increase crop yields. Some scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators like bees, butterflies and moths, birds and bats, and beetles and other insects.

- **How Animal Pollination Works:**

  Pollinators visit flowers in their search for food (nectar and pollen). During a flower visit, a pollinator may accidentally brush against the flower’s reproductive parts, unknowingly depositing pollen from a different flower. The plant then uses the pollen to produce a fruit or seed. Many plants cannot reproduce without pollen carried to them by foraging pollinators.

- **Pollinators Are in Trouble:**

  You may have heard that bees are disappearing and bats are dying. These and other animal pollinators face many challenges in the modern world. Habitat loss, disease, parasites, and environmental contaminants have all contributed to the decline of many species of pollinators. Shrubs and trees such as dogwood, blueberry, cherry, plum, willow and poplar provide pollen or nectar, or both early in spring when food is scarce.

  If we each find a spot in our yard, window box or pots for our pollinators to visit, we can collectively make a difference. Please check in at the above-mentioned website for further information.

*United States Department of Agriculture*
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, May 1st, 7 p.m.
IDENTIFICATION OF SHOREBIRDS AND
THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THE CHICAGO
AREA
Geoffrey A. Williamson

Many individuals shy away from
shorebird identification because "shorebirds
all look the same." This presentation aims to
dispel that notion. We stress the importance
of shape, structure, and proportions in
identification, with plumage features
coming into play only to decide between two
or three species. This approach is illustrated
using several pairs of similar shorebird
species as well as to differentiate between
major types of shorebirds. We also discuss
where and when to find shorebirds in the
Chicago area.

Geoff Williamson loves to share with
others his extensive birding experience
within Illinois, the United States, and various
parts of the world. He has led more than 700
field trips in the Chicago area as well as out
of state, and he is active in leadership
positions in local, state, and national birding
organizations. He is a recipient of the
American Birding Association's Ludlow
Griscom Award, given for outstanding
contributions in regional ornithology. He is
co-editor of the Illinois-Indiana regional
reports for North American Birds, the journal
of ornithological record published by the

American Birding Association. He serves
as Secretary of the Illinois Ornithological
Records Committee. He is a past president
of the Chicago Ornithological Society and the
Illinois Ornithological Society (IOS) and
currently serves as chair of IOS's
Ornithological Research and Data
Committee. When not birding, he plays ice
hockey and works as a professor of electrical
and computer engineering and associate
dean of engineering at the Illinois Institute of
Technology.

A REMINDER FOR YOU...
PICK UP NATIVE PLANTS ON MAY
19th AT THE IZAAK WALTHER
PRESERVE AT 1199 RIDGE ROAD IN HOMEWOOD.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR AUGUST
Goodenow Grove in Beecher will once
again be hosting Vernon Kleen at their
Hummingbird Festival on Saturday, August
17. More information to come.

THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY TO
ELECT NEW OFFICERS AT MAY 1
GENERAL MEETING.

New officers for 2019/2020 will be
officially elected. The new slate will be Diane
Hicks, President; Terrie Spillers, Vice
President; Judy Johnson, Treasurer; Alice
McBride, Secretary. Directors at large, Bob
Bryerton, Greg Hejnar, Penny Kneisler and
Marlys Oosting.
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 FORECAST FOR THE TRIP DATE, CALL THE TRIP LEADER THE PRIOR EVENING FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

Wednesday, May 1st, 9a.m.
ORLAND GRASSLAND SOUTH
Gene Rothgery (erothgery@comcast.net)

At this grassland location these are the birds that had been sighted in early April for Orland Grassland South on ebird: Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Pied-billed Grebe, Killdeer, Caspian Tern, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Shoveler, Bufflehead, Wilson’s Snipe, Cooper’s Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, American Tree Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird.

There could be more or less by the time of this trip as things are changing at this time of the year. Perhaps we shall see native plants in bloom also.

For Orland Grassland South go north on Lagrange Rd (Rte.45) to 179th Street. Turn left (west) at the light. Go to the next light (104 Avenue) and turn left (south). The entrance is on the left at the top of the hill.

Saturday, May 4 – SPRING BIRD COUNT

Wednesday, May 8, 8 a.m.
PILCHER PARK PRESERVE
Al Thomas (708-957-9847)

Hickory Creek runs right through Pilcher Park, with its deepest water right before the dam. The Park has a diverse natural system of water systems, plants and wildlife. Aside from Hickory Creek there are several areas of wetlands.

Several species of water birds, including Cormorants, Egrets, Great Blue Herons and a variety of ducks have been seen. Also, Beavers, Woodchucks and River Otters have been spotted. Perhaps we shall also see migrants and spring blooms.

To get to Pilcher Park take Route 30 West to Highland Park Drive, go right (north east) to the nature center and parking at 2501 Highland Park Drive, Joliet.

Hickory Creek inside Pilcher Park | Source

Saturday, May 11, 8 a.m.
HAMMOND BIRD SANCTUARY
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)

The Hammond Lakefront and Bird Sanctuary, is also known as the “Migrants Trap”. It is comprised of 9.5 acres and true to its name, the Bird Sanctuary produces great concentrations of migrant birds beginning in early May. Hopefully, this will provide a long list of sightings of Wrens, Warblers, Thrushes, Vireos and Sparrows. Sturdy footwear is recommended. Take Sauk Trail to Calumet Avenue, go left (north) on Calumet to a sign for the casino and the Hammond Marina. Turn left and follow the curving road to the Marina sign.
Field Trips Cont/

**Wednesday, May 15 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 the nature center. We will meet in the parking lot below the nature center building. The area has a large woodland and some open prairie.

We hope to see Eastern Bluebirds, Blue-grey Gnatcatchers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Eastern Towhee, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouse and warblers.

**Saturday, May 18**
PLANT SALE PICK-UP AT IZAAK WALTON IN HOMewood.

**Wednesday, May 22, 9:30 am**
GIBSON WOODS
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)

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.

Spring is one of the best times to see a variety of migrating birds species including Thrushes, Warblers, Sparrows and Vireos, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Blue-winged Teals.

Take Route 30 (east) to Indianapolis Blvd, (Route 41) go left north to 165th Street, then east to 6201 Parrish Avenue Hammond, IN.

**Saturday, May 25, 8 a.m.**
COWLES BOG
Linda Hickey – linh1000@comcast.net

The Cowles Bog area includes a pristine beach habitat, black oak savannah, and a lowland forest of red maple and yellow birch. These diverse habitats attract a great variety of birds, including such wetland species as Bitterns and Rails. Also sighted here are Sora's, Common Nighthawk, Kingfishers, Brown Creepers, Sandhill Cranes and Marsh Wrens. The Bog is also an Important Bird Area (IBA).

Take I-94 east to Route 20, go north on 20 to 1618 North Mineral Springs Road, Dune Acres, IN.

**Wednesday, May 29, 8 a.m.**
MIDEWIN TALL GRASS PRAIRIE
Gene Rothgery – erothgery@comcast.net

Many songbirds, sparrows, waterfowl and other nesting birds, as well as a full selection of migrants can be seen here along with the Buffalo herd and spring flowers.

Take I-57 to Wilmington-Peotone Road, then west on Route 53, then north to Midewin offices.

**Saturday, June 6, 8 a.m.**
KANKAKEE SANDS/NATURE CONSERVANCY OFFICE – RTE 41
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)

Kankakee Sands is a Nature Conservancy owned multi-acre restored prairie near Morocco, Indiana. We expect to see a variety of prairie and woodland birds, such as Hawks, Turkeys and Bob-white Quail, along with late blooming flowers.

From I-65, take exit 220 to go west on IN State Road 14 for 9.5 miles. Turn right on to US 41. Travel north for 2.3 miles. The project office is located in the large red pole barn on the west side of the highway.
Field Trips Cont/...

Wednesday, June 5, 8 a.m.
GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST LOT
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)

We will meet in the east lot of the University. This is an opportunity to see gigantic outdoor sculpture and do some al birding at the same time. We hope to see w-Warblers, Hawks, flocks of Cedar Waxwings. There may even be migrating ducks to be seen.

This is a lovely place to take a bird walk so please join us.

GARDEN CORNER

I think it's spring isn’t it? Although I’m not sure after the three inches of snow last Sunday, but there are signs of it. There are paper whites, tulips and daffodils popping up all over the garden. We have been raking up last year's leaf litter that we had left for the critters to use as shelter and find food.

I have tidied up my fairy garden, a small area near the house that I keep for some garden fun. It’s too wet as yet to put out the little houses and fairies, but soon.

WILDFLOWER HIKE

Sunday, May 5, 1-3 p.m., Raccoon Grove Nature Preserve, Monee Township. Enjoy the colors of spring with a leisurely stroll through pristine woodland. Raccoon Grove is a restoration success story. Stop by any time between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. A naturalist will be posted at the trail entrance, and you can pick up a flower guide to help you explore the 0.25-mile loop at your own pace. The program is for all ages. Registration is not required.

This small preserve is one way to see our beautiful spring flowers. There are many flowers to be seen but I must say that the bluebells are spectacular here. For more information on this and other activities, visit the website www.reconnectwithnature.org.

It won’t hurt to bring along your binoculars for some bird spotting or your camera to photograph the flowers.

Take Route 50 south to Pauling Road, go left and the entrance is on your right.

Terrie Spillers

Today the yard is warming in the sun, the snow has melted and the Red Admiral butterflies are back feeding on the white flowers of the pachysandra. This small people friendly butterfly seems just as curious about me as I was trying to take pictures of them. There are so many of them this year. Hubby says there are lots of little bees at the pachysandra flowers too. Sorry, don’t know what kind of bees.

We also have a nesting pair of White-breasted Nuthatches in our Bur Oak. Its fun to watch the going back and forth with beaks full of grubs and such. We are keeping a watchful eye for signs of new life. It's a lovely thing.

Terrie Spillers
FIELD NOTES

TO REPORT ANY SIGHTINGS CALL TERRIE SPILLERS AT 708-747-1999. When you leave a message please leave a phone number where you can be reached. Thank you.

FEBRUARY
02/15 Red-winged Blackbirds and a Kingfisher were seen at Bartel.

Georgiana Srachta
02/19 3 Cedar Waxwings and a flock of starlings were seen in the yard. Joan Crabb
02/23 Eastern Meadowlark, 3 females and 1 male Northern Harrier and a small flock of Red-winged Blackbirds were seen at Bartel Grasslands.

Al Thomas
02/28 25/30 Sandhill Cranes were spotted heading north over Marian High School.

Rich Fifer

MARCH
03/12 Sandhill Cranes were spotted while walking the dogs. Also, many winter visitors to the feeders, Goldfinches, Cardinals, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Downy Woodpeckers.

Vicki Jones
03/13 3 flocks, totaling 51 Sandhill Cranes seen heading north.

Rich Fifer
03/13 Red-headed ducks, Canvasback Ducks, Common Mergansers, Red-breasted Mergansers seen at Wolf Lake.

Al Thomas
03/16 Visited Park Forest Wetlands and saw Robins, a Tree Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbirds, Sandhill Cranes, Canada Geese, a Dove, Song Sparrow and the Beaver Lodge but no Beaver!

Terrie Spillers
03/22 Just noticed we have a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches nesting in our oak tree.

Terrie Spillers

03/24 Hen and Tom Turkey, American Bald Eagle, Black Ducks and Northern Shovelers were seen at Big Marsh, Lake Calumet Area.

Al Thomas
03/24 American Bald Eagle, Horned Grebe, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal and a Mute Swan were seen at Wolf Lake, Illinois Side.

Al Thomas
03/24 Common Snipe, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, American Bald Eagle were seen at Bartel Grasslands North.

Al Thomas

SIGHTINGS FROM OUR BIRD HIKE AT GOODENOW GROVE ON APRIL 13.

Canada Goose 2, Wood Duck 6, Mourning Dove 2, Great Blue Heron 2, Turkey Vulture 2, Red-tailed Hawk 1, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 2, Red-bellied Woodpecker 3, Downy Woodpecker 2, Hairy Woodpecker 1, Pileated Woodpecker 2, Northern Flicker 2, Eastern Phoebe 4, Blue Jay 4, Tree Swallow 4, Black-capped Chickadee 1, Tufted Titmouse 2, White-breasted Nuthatch 4, Brown Creeper 1, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2, Eastern Bluebird 8, Hermit Thrush 8, American Robins 22, Field Sparrow 3, American Tree Sparrow 1, Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored) 1, Song Sparrow 4, Eastern Towhee 4, Red-winged Blackbird 2, Brown-headed Cowbirds 8, Yellow-rumped Warbler 1 and Northern Cardinal 4.

A total of 32 species in all. We had a great morning and a great start to the day. All sightings were reported on eBird.

Come and join us on future outings and join in the fun!

Terrie Spillers
2019 Audubon Convention: Audubon For Everyone
July 26-29, 2019 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Join us in Milwaukee for Audubon’s biennial convention designed to bring together Audubon’s vast network of dedicated chapter, state, center, national, and international leaders from across all four flyways. This can’t-miss event will feature an array of inspiring speakers, in-depth workshops and discussions, exciting field trips, and the camaraderie and networking opportunities that only the Audubon Convention can provide. Situated on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee is a beautiful and historic place to gather, learn, and network. The Wisconsin Audubon Council, Milwaukee Audubon Society, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, and the Audubon Great Lakes team are excited to welcome the whole Audubon network to Milwaukee.

The Audubon Convention will take place at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center—a beautiful, historic Art Deco hotel centrally located in Milwaukee and a Travel Green Wisconsin-certified business. All activities will take place under one roof, and you will be a short walk from Lake Michigan and numerous parks and attractions.

Online registration is now open. For general queries, please contact us at convention@audubon.org. See you in Milwaukee!

Bill Heck, Regional Director - Mississippi Flyway North
National Audubon Society

URGE CONGRESS TO PROTECT OUR GREAT LAKES

A few weeks ago, the White House released a proposed budget for fiscal year 2020, which slashes the budget for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) by 90 percent. The GLRI has been critical to efforts to improve water quality in the Great Lakes by cleaning up toxic pollutants, protecting wildlife by restoring critical habitat, and helping combat devastating invasive species. There is still so much work to do, so we can’t leave the fate of our Great Lakes up to political games. We need your help to make sure Congress protects the GLRI. Contact your members of Congress and tell them to fully fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative!

The GLRI has been successful in turning around many of the most degraded natural areas in our region and driving real impacts for our water, wildlife, and economy. A 90 percent cut to this program would be devastating for the 30 million people and the more than 350 species of birds in the region, like Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Once abundant in the Great Lakes region, these marsh birds have experienced a dramatic decline in the last 20 years and depend upon efforts through the GLRI to restore their wetland habitat. We need your help again to make sure that Congress passes a budget that includes the full $300 million for the GLRI. Anything less would be unacceptable.

Together, we can make sure that our efforts to clean up the Great Lakes continue to move forward, for our birds, our communities, and future generations.

Rebecca Sanders, Vice President, Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Flyway, National Audubon
THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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NEWSLETTER STAFF
Editor: Terrie Spillers  Database: Sue Putnam

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
email hillbrit@comcast.net

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society’s website is thorncreekaudubonsociety.org

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