PLUM CREEK FOREST PRESERVE EVENT

Come and join us to volunteer on Saturday, October 26th for a bird hike beginning at 7:30 a.m. From 9 a.m. through noon, we will be cutting away Autumn Olive. Forest Preserves of Cook County’s (FPCC) ecologist for Plum Creek, Dan Spencer, announced that FPCC staff will be cutting Autumn Olive at the same time as the volunteers on Oct. 26th. This is welcome news. There are concerns that this invasive shrub affects breeding populations in this sensitive grassland.

The work day is being organized by Laurel Ross, who is the site steward of Somme Prairie Nature Preserve and is a Chicago Audubon Society board member (and served as a monitor for the piping plover nest on Montrose beach this summer), and myself, former president and conservation chair of Thorn Creek Audubon Society (TCAS), who has been advocating for Plum Creek Forest Preserve for a number of years. This forest preserve has varied habitats, especially its huge grassland, which is an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA). The Bird Conservation Network is looking for someone to take over the monitoring route of TCAS’s late Bob Harrison. Could that be you?

On a recent hike collaboration was evident given the fellow hikers who included Jim Herkert, executive director of Illinois Audubon Society; ornithologist Doug Stotz of the Field Museum; Daniel Suarez and Stephanie Beilke of Audubon Great Lakes, co-authors of the State of the Grasslands report with Herkert last year; Judy Pollock, president of Chicago Audubon Society and Juliette Lowry, also of CAS. Alan Anderson of CAS, who has recorded decades of data on the birds of Plum Creek, led the group through a scene reminiscent of how Illinois prairies may have looked in the past. A Sedge Wren and 8 Henslow’s Sparrow were among the 34 species he tallied for this visit. Both of these species are classified by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as Illinois species in greatest need of conservation. Plum Creek Forest Preserve provides critical breeding habitat for habitat-sensitive birds that are in decline elsewhere.

For more information, contact Mary Bernat at mbernat@fastmail.com or Laurel Ross at laurelmross@gmail.com.

Mary Bernat

Photo by Alan Anderson
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, September 4, 2019
JAKE MERRIL AND PATTY MESSERSMITH
Thorn Creek Audubon Grants

This program will feature recent recipients of Thorn Creek Audubon Grants.

Come and meet Jake Merrill, the Eagle Scout who built the chimney swift tower at the Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve and learn about his Eagle Scout project.

Patty Messersmith will present a slide show about the Conservation Ecology Internship for middle school students at the Homewood Science Center and the native garden the students designed and planted. She co-taught and designed this program with the help of the grant money that was awarded to her from the Thorn Creek Audubon Society.

While working at the Museum of Science and Industry as a Curriculum and Instruction Specialist in the Education Department developing and teaching science courses for teacher professional development in 3rd-8th grade, Patty also teaches science content in physics, space science, life science and earth science, her area of focus is ecology. Patty has been designing and teaching educational programs in both informal and formal settings in the Chicago area for about 30 years. She grew up in Park Forest and is currently living in Homewood.

Wednesday, October 2, 2019
MARY HENNEN
Illinois Peregrines - From Decline to Recovery

Once on the Endangered Species List and extirpated in Illinois from 1951 until 1986, the Peregrine Falcon population is now past historic levels. Mary’s presentation will take us through the recovery of the Peregrines in Illinois. As the majority of the population now lives in an urban habitat, learn what it means to live in close proximity to this remarkable bird.

Mary Hennen is the Assistant Collections Manager in the Bird Division at the Field Museum. In addition to her regular duties of caring for the ornithological collections, she directs the Chicago Peregrine Program.

Mary has been involved with Peregrines since 1989. Work with Peregrines involves banding young, retrieving injured birds, and monitoring wild breeding pairs in Illinois.

WALK WALTON
SUNDAY OCTOBER 20th
From 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Homewood Science Center Fundraiser

Mark your calendars for this event at Izaak Walton Preserve in Homewood! It’s a wonderful way to spend a fall day. Bring your binoculars for a stroll and some fall bird watching, bring the grandkids, the neighbors and your friends for this nature walk, festival, food and fun.

For more information call (708) 206-3369 at the Homewood Science Center.
CHIMNEY SWIFTS AT IZAAK WALTON PRESERVE

Due in part through a TCAS grant, the Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve (HIWP) now has a welcome sign for Chimney Swifts in the form of a 13-foot, stand-alone chimney built under the direction of Jake Merrill, an Eagle Scout candidate from Boy Scout Troop 364. At the suggestion of a Thorn Creek Audubon Society member, Jake researched the little birds and found that their population is declining due to loss of habitat. Chimney Swifts perch and nest only on vertical surfaces. They evolved using hollowed trees, but when those became less available, they adapted to breeding in chimneys. They eat 1/3 of their body weight every day in insects, including mosquitoes. In the fall, Chimney Swifts migrate thousands of miles to the Amazon River basin, especially Peru. Locally, Chimney Swifts can sometimes be seen just before dusk, and now there’s hope some will head to the friendly confines of the new tower at HIWP.

Located in the eastern portion of HIWP, not far from the cul-de-sac at the end of Presidents Drive, the tower can be seen from many vantage points on the 3.6-mile loop west of President’s Drive. It can also be seen from the trail along the northern border of the Sand Pit Lakes.

At its June meeting, TCAS Board commended Jake: "There are many ways to construct a Swift Tower and Jake chose the most durable and difficult. It is beautiful and we are so impressed." Jake will present his project at the TCAS regular meeting on Sept 4th.

Judy Johnson

To begin his project, Jake drew detailed plans. He then began construction in June with a reinforced concrete foundation 4' by 4' and 4' deep, which was needed to support the tall, heavy tower. Brick laying followed. The tower consists of an inner wall of cinder block and an outer wall of common brick. At the top, stainless steel sheets extends down about 3 feet; these will prevent squirrels, raccoons, and other predators from climbing into the chimney and eating the eggs. At the bottom there’s a stainless-steel door, which offers ventilation and can be opened during annual fall clean-outs. The project required hundreds of man-hours to complete, which included professional masonry and many other HIWP volunteers.

Photo by Judy Johnson

Jake Merrill and Crew
FIELD TRIPS

TO TELL US YOU WILL ATTEND AND FOR DETAILS, PLEASE CONTACT THE TRIP COORDINATOR. IF RAIN IS FORCAST FOR THE TRIP DATE, CALL THE TRIP LEADER THE PRIOR EVENING FOR FURTHER DETAILS.
Saturday, September 21st, 8 a.m.
GOODENOW GROVE/PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER
Bob Bryerton – rbryerton@fpdwc.org and Mary Anne McLean – 708-704-6611

Come and join us on a morning walk and let’s see what we can see. Late migrants? Perhaps some of your local favorites, such as Tufted Titmice, American Crows, Blue Jays, Chickadees, Cardinals, White-breasted Nuthatches and even the Pileated Woodpecker might be there for us. Some fall colors may be in the offing too. Goodenow Grove is 2 miles east on Route 394 on Goodenow Road. Take Goodenow Road to Dutton Road and follow to the Preserve entrance.

Wednesday, September 25, 9:30 a.m.
GIBSON WOODS NATURE PRESERVE
Mary Anne McLean – 708-704-6611

Tucked away in the heart of the industrial region of Northwest Indiana is an island of nature with some very unusual features. This 131-acre parcel of virtually “undisturbed” land is known as Gibson Woods Nature Preserve.

This nature preserve is one of the last sizeable remnants of high-quality dune and swale topography remaining in Lake County.

Because of widespread urbanization and industrialization in Northwest Indiana, this type of topography and its associated natural communities have been almost entirely eliminated. To date over 130 species of birds have been recorded at this location at 6201 Parrish Avenue, Hammond, IN.

Saturday, September 28, 8 a.m.
OLD PLANK TRAIL AND BARTEL GRASSLANDS
Al Thomas – 708-957-9847

Prairie flowers enhance this walk along a paved trail flanked by trees and shrubs and leading to a small lake.

Caspian Terns, Cormorants, Wood Ducks, Green Herons and Sora’s have nested here. A Bald Eagle, Kingfishers, Cedar Waxwings and late migrants have also been spotted here. We will meet at Central Avenue, ¼ mile south of Highway 30.

We will then proceed to Bartel Grasslands where we hope to see migrating shorebirds such as fledgling Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons.

Wednesday, October 2, 8 a.m.
IZAAK WALTON NATURE PRESERVE
RIDGE ROAD ENTRANCE
Al Thomas – 708-957-9847

Lakes, woodlands, ancient sand dunes, native prairie and wetlands make up the 193 acres of the Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve. This is a lovely place to take a birding walk with so many different habitats on offer. Please join us.

Saturday, October 5, 8 a.m.
LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE
Mary Anne McLean 708-704-6611

We may see both woodland and water birds. Red-headed Woodpeckers have been seen here too. The school house entrance is on 104th between 107th and 95th at 9800 Willow Springs Road.
Field Trips continued/...

Wednesday, October 9, 8 a.m.
THORN CREEK WOODS
Al Thomas – 708-957-9847

In this 985 acre preserve there is an oak-hickory woodland, floodplain forest, scenic ravines and pine plantations. Pileated Woodpeckers have been seen and photographed here. Tufted Titmice, Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Carolina Wrens have also been seen here. We will meet in the parking lot of the nature center at 247 Monee Road, Park Forest.

Saturday, October 12, 8 a.m.
EGGERS WOODS
Diane Hicks – diane.hicks77@gmail.com

Eggers Woods is an excellent location for may species of birds with its 241 acres of marsh, sand savanna, slag flats and bottomland woods. Virginia Rails and Yellow-headed Blackbirds have been seen here.

The address is East 112th St & South Ave E, Chicago, entering from 112th Street.

Wednesday, October 16, 8 a.m.
KANKAKEE SANDS
Greg Hejnar – gregofstjohn@sbcglobal.com

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 prairie flowers.

We will meet at the Sands headquarters parking lot. Take Route 41 south until you see the large red pole barn on your right.

Saturday, October 19, 8 a.m.
GOODENOW GROVE
PLUM CREEK NATURE CENTER
Bob Bryerton – rbryrerton@fpdwc.org
Mary Anne McLean – 708-704-6611

Fall migration brings large numbers of Flycatchers, Vireos, Thrushes and Warblers to this preserve which consists of woods, fields and a kame. We will meet at the nature center.

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FIELD NOTES

TO REPORT AREA SIGHTINGS CALL TERRIE SPILLERS AT 708-747-1999. WHEN YOU LEAVE A MESSAGE PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER.

AUGUST

08-09 A juvenile Red-tailed Hawk seen bathing in the bird’s water dish this morning. He could barely squeeze in but there he was fluffing up like a Robin! Also, this week one juvenile Flicker and two juvenile Hairy Woodpeckers.  Georgiana Dodd

08-15 A juvenile Pileated Woodpecker was seen in this Monee yard.  Reva Hersch

08-18 So far, the baby count is one Hairy Woodpecker and two Downy Woodpeckers with 40 plus Red-winged Blackbirds, with the young males getting their shoulder patches which are still stripy.  Georgiana Dodd

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The sound of birds stops the noise in my mind.

Carly Simon
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: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________  City/Zip: ____________________________
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

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**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**

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**AUDUBON BIRDSEED SALE INFORMATION**

The annual birdseed sale is one of our primary fund-raising events to help fund our environmental programs and projects. We endeavor to offer our customers the best competitive prices. The DeLong Company, one of the largest in the Midwest, will supply the seed this fall. Proceeds from last fall’s sale helped fund the 2018-2019 grants for local projects benefitting the environment totaling $2000.00.

**A big Thank You to all of our customers that helped make these grants possible.**

- **DeLong Premium Blend Birdseed**: White Processed Millet, Black Oil Sunflower, Cleaned Cracked Corn, Gray Sunflower Seeds, Red Millet, Safflower, Sunflower Meats, Niger, Peanuts and Calcium Grit.

- **Delco Special Blend**: Cracked Corn, Black Oil Sunflower, Recleaned Wheat and Recleaned Sorghum. (Recleaned removes the chaff that would collect on the ground).

- **Premium No Waste**: Millet, Sunflower Chips and fine Cracked Corn.

If you wish to receive a Native Plant Sale Order Form please check the box at the bottom of the seed sale order form on page 7. Thank you.
THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY
2019 FALL BIRDSEED SALE

ORDER YOUR WINTER/SPRING BIRDSEED SUPPLY NOW. We have a top supplier, competitive prices and a centralized pick-up location. Proceeds from the birdseed sale help support environmental projects in the south suburban area. Send your order with check payable to Thorn Creek Audubon to Al Thomas, 1460 Linden Rd., Homewood, IL 60430. For information or more order forms call Al at 708-957-9847 or visit our website (www.thorncreekaudubonsociety.org).

ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 20, 2019. PICK-UP DATE IS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2019 from 9:00 A.M. TO 12:00 NOON at the PARK FOREST AQUA CENTER, 30 N. ORCHARD DR., DIRECTLY NORTH OF THE LIBRARY. All orders MUST be picked up on delivery day. If YOU cannot be there, please make arrangements with a friend or neighbor to pick up your order.

PLEASE FILL IN ORDER FORM COMPLETELY!!

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TOTAL AMOUNT DUE

SEND ME SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE FORM

www.thorncreekaudubonsociety.org

PLEASE DON’T FORGET – SEPTEMBER 20th DEADLINE !!!
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
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Printed by Quasar Printing on 30% recycled paper

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