LIVE RAPTORS BRING CROWD TO PROGRAM

Almost a hundred people turned out for Thorn Creek Audubon Society's Special Presentation on April 5 to see live birds from the Illinois Raptor Center.

Children and adults alike "oohed" and "aahed" when the Barn Owl stretched his beautiful white wings and flew silently across the room from one handler to the other. Cameras were much in evidence as the owl performed.

Later a few folks said "yuck" when the owl ate a mouse and sat for a moment with the tail sticking out of his mouth. However, most of the young folks thought it was "cool." Program presenter Jacques Nuzzo explained that mice were the owl's regular prey, and that if owls and other raptors did not catch them, we would be overrun with small rodents.

He also explained that Red-tailed Hawks from different parts of the country, or even those from the same area, can be very differently colored and noted how fast the Peregrine can fly.

Handler Jane Seitz walked the Peregrine Falcon and the Red-tailed Hawk down the aisles. However, the Bald Eagle stayed on the stage; he is so big his outstretched wings might hit someone in the face if he became agitated.

A big surprise was the chance to see a baby Great Horned Owl which the Center had just found. He was not part of the formal program, but many young people and adults got to see the furry ball of down that would someday become one of the largest owls we have.

TCAS President Al Thomas was very pleased with the big turnout in spite of the rainy unpleasant weather. He said TCAS will continue with the yearly program that shows live animals.

TCAS WILL ELECT NEW OFFICERS

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society will elect officers for the 2017-2018 year at the May 3 meeting at the Park Forest Library. The slate to be presented is Al Thomas, president; Terrie Spillers, vice-president, Michelle O'Connor, secretary; Judy Johnson, treasurer; and four directors: Linda Hickey, Bob Bryerton, Kate Caldwell and Penny Kneisler.
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 3  7 p.m.
GARDENS OF THE DESERT: AN INTRODUCTION TO ILLINOIS PRAIRIE
Jack Shouba

Called "the most beautiful country imaginable" by French explorer Pierre Liette, and "gardens of the desert" by poet William Cullen Bryant, the Illinois prairie is all but gone and the word "prairie" has lost its meaning. We are still "the prairie state" but today it is Silicon Prairie, not Silphium prairie.

In this program we explore the question of just what is an Illinois prairie and we look at the way the relationships of people to the prairie have changed over time. We look at prairie plants and their adaptations, prairie animals, and the role of fire. We search for places that still contain scraps of prairie, and consider why we must save these precious remnants.

The program includes "Prairie Reverie," a humorous look at the (mis)use and misspelling of the word prairie. Suitable for all audiences.

Jack Shouba is a retired biology and chemistry teacher from Lyons Township High School in Western Springs. He has taught classes on flowers, trees and other natural history subjects at the Morton Arboretum for over twenty years. Long active in conservation, he was one of the founders of Save the Prairie Society that works on the preservation of Wolf Road Prairie in Westchester. Now a resident of Kane County, he helped develop Campton Township's Open Space Program and led the restoration of a wetland owned by his homeowner's association.

He has received several honors for his conservation activities, most recently the Dick Young Lifetime Achievement Award from the Kane-DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District and the Lucinda Muirhead Corron Award from the Corron Farm Preservation Society. His photographs have been published in Chicago Wilderness magazine, Outdoor Illinois magazine and elsewhere, and are used by conservation organizations such as Save the Prairie Society, the Conservation Foundation, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, and Campton Township (www.campton-parks-and-open-space.com).

SPRING BIRD COUNT SET FOR SATURDAY, MAY 6

The Annual Spring Bird Count will take place May 6, when teams of birders will go out into the field to tally species and numbers of birds for the Illinois Audubon Center.

Other birders will be watching their feeders and calling in their tallies to Joan Crabb at 708-481-4962.

DON'T FORGET TO PICK UP YOUR NATIVE PLANTS ON MAY 20 AT THE HOMEWOOD ISAAC WALTON PRESERVE AT 1100 RIDGE ROAD
TREE PLANTING AT PARK FOREST LIBRARY IN HONOR OF CHARLIE

A memorial tree planting ceremony will be held at the Park Forest Library soon in memory of and thanks to Charles "Charlie" Habecker and his many contributions to conservation education. Charlie loved birds and bird watching. He also loved trees, wild flowers and the many bugs that frequented them. His passion for nature was unlimited. For more information regarding the ceremony, please check our website early in May regarding date and time.

Charlie Habecker

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION: Two ways to join:

DUAL MEMBERSHIP $20 – NATIONAL AUDUBON and 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__________________________________________ Local Chapter Code-C72G590Z

Address________________________________________ City/zip________________________

Make check payable to: National Audubon
Send to: Thorn Creek Audubon, P.O. Box 895, Park Forest, IL 60466
OR Renew membership at www.audubon.org

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 Dues-$25.00
Benefactor Annual Dues-$50.00

Name________________________________________

Address________________________________________

City/Zip________________________ Phone________________________

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 FORECAST FOR
THE TRIP DATE, CALL THE TRIP LEADER THE
PRIOR EVENING FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Wednesday, May 3rd, 8 a.m.
GOODENOW GROVE/PLUM CREEK
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)
McLean908@comcast.net
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 by the Nature Center building.
The area has a big woodland and some open
prairie. Bluebirds, gnatcatchers, and even a
yellow-breasted chat have been seen here.

Saturday, May 6.
ANNUAL SPRING BIRD COUNT

Wednesday, May 10, 8 a.m.
LEVASSEUR PARK
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)
McLean908@comcast.net
We will stroll along the Kankakee River and
look and listen for warblers and other spring
migrants. To reach the meeting place at
LeVasseur parking lot, drive south on Rt. 50
from the intersection with I-57, past Armour
Road and Mulligan Street, to North Street and
follow to the dead end at Kennedy and go
about two miles to Fifth Street, just before the
YMCA at 1075 Kennedy Drive, on the right.
This is the fourth light south of North Street.
Go ½ mile to the parking lot. Or call Mary
Anne to ask about a car pool.

Wednesday, May 17, 8 a.m.
BARTEL GRASSLANDS
Al Thomas (708-957-9847)
woodduck_1999@yahoo.com
Migrating birds will be coming through and
stopping wherever there is water, either at
Bartel or Tinley Creek Wetlands. This site is
also a haven for bobolinks and other grassland
birds. Sandhill cranes have also been seen
here. We will meet in the parking lot at
Flossmoor and Central on the south side of the
road.

Saturday, May 13, 8 a.m. *
COWLES BOG INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL
LAKE SHORE
Linda Hickey (708-363-6851)
linh1000@comcast.net
We will meet at the Park Forest Library at 7
a.m. Cowles Bog is located on the south shore
of Lake Michigan north of Chesterton. We
should see shore birds and migrants.

Wednesday, May 24, 9:30 a.m.
GIBSON WOODS NATURE PRESERVE
Pat Strange (219-923-5164)
We may see various woodpeckers and
warblers coming through, and a good chance
of seeing indigo buntings. We might see a
hermit thrush or a Swainson's coming north.
Take Rt. 30 to Indianapolis Blvd, go north to
165th St, then east to Parrish Ave. Turn north,
go to the end of Parrish Ave to the Nature
Center.
Saturday, May 27, 8 a.m.  
HICKORY CREEK PRESERVE  
Linda Hickey (708-363-6851)  
To reach the preserve, go west on  
LaPorte Road from LaGrange Road (Rte.34);  
entrance to the preserve will be on the left  
(south) side; follow the preserve road to the  
third and last parking lot.  
Hickory Creek has a nice variety of  
habitats so we will see a variety of birds  
from woodland vireos, tanagers and orioles  
and many warblers, both woodland and  
prairie.  
There are always bluebirds and  
grosbeaks, and we may just see a pileated  
woodpecker.  

Wednesday, June 6, 8 a.m.  
GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Mary Anne McLean (708-704-6611)  
Meet in the far south parking lot at the  
University. This is an opportunity to see  
gigantic outdoor sculptures and some  
unusual birds at the same time.  
Osprey have been seen here and several  
different thrushes, including the wood  
thrush.  

Saturday, June 17, 8 a.m.  
MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE  
Gene Rothgery (815-274-2994)  
Check the TCAS website for more details, or  
take I-57 to the Wilmington-Peotone Road and  
then West on Rt. 53, then north to the  
Midewin Offices (about 1 mile).  
Many songbirds, sparrows, waterfowl and  
other nesting birds, as well as the full selection  
of migrants can be seen here.  

GARDEN CORNER  
Spring has sprung! I have buds and  
green things. Wonderful. Soon there will be  
daffodils, paper whites and perhaps a tulip  
or two. Lilies, iris and hostas are peeking  
out. My favorite spring flowers, Jacob’s  
ladder, are full of buds, soon to be lovely  
mounds of blue. I also trimmed all the  
clematis vines, which are full of new  
growth.  
We have had some spring visitors in  
the garden; a pair of wood ducks were seen  
standing in the branches of our resident oak  
tree. They stay for a while and then they  
are gone. There are little bugs flitting about  
too, and I love to photograph these little  
creatures, yes, even spiders.  
Spring is a time for renewal, a fresh  
start. It’s also a time to neaten things up a  
little, get rid of the winter debris, set out  
the picnic table and chairs with cushions  
and umbrella at the ready, and when the  
warmer days are finally here I will be ready  
to sit and watch and listen to nature  
opening up before me. I hope you all enjoy  
your gardens too...  

Terrie Spillers  

A Red Admiral Butterfly brightened  
up Terrie’s garden in April.
FIELD NOTES
TO REPORT AREA SIGHTINGS CALL
MARY WHITE AT 708-396-0794
If you leave a message please I leave a phone
number where we can reach you.

FEBRUARY
02/11 100 Common and Red-breasted
Mergansers and a few Goldeneyes. Wolf Lake.
   Al Thomas
02/17 100 White-fronted Geese. Old Plank
Trail Wetlands. Al Thomas
02/18 Short-eared Owls and a Male Northern
Harrier. Killdeer Wetlands.
   Tom Wegryn
02/19 Hundreds of Sandhill Cranes flying all
morning over Lake Katherine.
   Mary White
02/20 2 Bald Eagles, 3 Northern Harriers and
   Al Thomas
02/20 Many Sandhill Cranes in corn fields near
Kankakee River, Knox, Indiana.
   Kathy Bader
02/23 2 Fox Sparrows at her Park Forest
feeders.
   April LeClaire
02/24 5 Northern Shovelers, 2 Green-winged
Teal, dozens of American Coots and Mallards,
hundreds of White-fronted Geese, 6 Ross’s
Geese and 9 Snow Geese in wetlands near
Western and Crete/Monee Road.
   Carolyn Gann and Sue Zelek
02/25 A meadowlark at Bartel Grasslands.
   Georgiana Dodge

MARCH
03/01 Northern Harriers and Snipe at Bartel.
   Al Thomas
03/04 Horned Grebes, 3 Piedbilled Grebes,
200 Redhead Ducks, 300 Canvas-back Ducks,
12 Goldeneyes, 50 Ring-necked Ducks,
Common and Red-breasted Mergansers,
Swans and American Coots. Wolf Lake.
   Al Thomas
03/05 20 Turkey Vultures flying over Steger.
Killdeer and Woodcocks heard at Park Forest
Wetlands. Elise Ziemann
03/09 4 groups of Sandhill Cranes, about 200
total, flying over Park Forest.
   Jeanine Millner
03/10 A pair of adult Bald Eagles in a snag at
the corner of Vollmer and Central.
   Marianne Hahn
03/11 A Robin regularly on his feeder eating
sunflower seeds.
   Tom Wegryn
03/24 2 Song Sparrows, Oregon Junco,
Leucistic Junco (white spots on head and
wings, which has been seen here before), and
1 Fox Sparrow in rural Crete yard.
   Anne Rosen
03/27 8 Blue-winged Teal, 2 pairs each
Shovelers and Mallards, pair of Wood Ducks, in
pond in a field on Cottage Grove in Crete.
   Anne Rosen
03/29 16 blue-winged Teal in same pond.
   Anne Rosen
03/29 A Scaup/Tufted Duck hybrid on Lake
Katherine.
   Stephanie Martin

APRIL
04/01 1 Eastern Towhee (formerly called
Rufous-sided), and 2 Fox Sparrows at feeder in
rural Crete.
   Anne Rosen
04/04 A Great Blue heron, 2 Red-bellied
Woodpeckers and Downy Woodpeckers.
Butterfield Creek Park, Homewood.
   Vicki Jones
04/06 Pair of Wood Ducks in oak tree in Park
Forest back yard.
   Terrie Spillers
HUMMINGBIRD BANDING AT PLUM CREEK AGAIN

The popular program of hummingbird banding by licensed bander Vernon Kleen will return to the Forest Preserve of Will County's Plum Creek Nature Center as part of its new Nature Celebration on August 19.

It will be part of a schedule of events including a ribbon-cutting for the opening of the newly designed garden area. The festivities begin at 1 p.m.

The hummingbird banding is set for 3 to 5 p.m. The tiny birds are caught in cages at the feeders, weighted, measured, sexed, banded and then released.

Visitors will be able to “adopt” one of the birds and will then be notified where and when it is caught again. Information learned from this process helps scientists find ways to protect the hummers in the future.

The hummingbird banding is part of a partnership between the Will County Forest Preserve and the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. It was held in previous years at the Park Forest Aqua Center.

FIELD NOTES continued

04/15 2 Carolina Wrens and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at his Homewood feeders. Also 10 White pelicans and 6 Caspian Terns in a pond on Central Ave. just short of Rt. 30.

Al Thomas

04/15 2 Baltimore Orioles eating a fruit-nut mix at her rural Crete feeder.

Joyce Freudenberg

04/18 Red-breasted Nuthatch on oak tree in her rural Crete back yard. Also two White-crowned Sparrows and about 5 cowbirds.

Anne Rosen

PARTNERSHIP OFFERS NATURE EDUCATION

A partnership of TCAS and the Thorn Creek Nature Center in Park Forest on Monne Road is helping to provide environmental education, especially for young people. This program on bats is jointly sponsored in June.

FRIENDS OF THORN CREEK WOODS: BATS

Sunday, June 11: 1-3 p.m.
Free. All ages.
Registration required by Friday, June 9: 708-747-6320.

The only flying mammals on earth, bats are fascinating yet largely misunderstood creatures. We find them strange because of their squashed faces, their ability to feed in the dark, and their nearly-transparent wings. Come learn from the Illinois Bat Conservation Program bat experts about the latest in acoustic monitoring and mist netting.

Explore why we need bats as predators, see how they care for their young, and find out how you can do to save our dwindling native bat populations. Program is sponsored by Friends of Thorn Creek Woods and Thorn Creek Audubon Society.

Other programs for young people include a Wildflower Hike for Kids 8 to 11 on Saturday, May 20 (free - register by May 18).

A Flower Moon Hike on Wednesday, May 10 at 6:30 p.m. is open to kids age 10 and up (free - register by May 8). Also open to those 10 and up is Hidden Ponds Hike, from 1 to 4 pm. Saturday June 17 (free - register by June 15).

The whole family may take the Historic Farm Walk Sunday, June 4, from 1 to 3 p.m. to see what life on an old-fashioned farm was like. Free but register by June 2.