



Thorn Creek AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUME 38 - ISSUE 5 SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2010

NEWSLETTER

NEW LOCATION FOR TCAS 2010-11 PROGRAMS

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society has a new location this fall – the Wetlands Discovery Center at the Park Forest Aqua Center. This facility, completed last year as part of the renovation of the Aqua Center, will be the home for TCAS programs for 2010-2011. The first program, “Bartel Interpretative Program,” will be given there on Wednesday, Sept. 1, by Bartel Grassland Steward and TCAS President Dick Riner.

The Discovery Center will seat more than 50 people and is equipped with screens and projectors, chairs and tables, and some kitchen facilities. There is plenty of parking in the Aqua Center parking lot. It is already the location for TCAS board meetings.

The new site looks out on the Central Park Wetlands. In fact, without the Wetlands, the Discovery Center would not have been built at all, as one of its primary uses is to provide space and house equipment for science education for youngsters. It came about because of “good partnerships” between a number of community groups, according to John Joyce, director of the Park Forest Recreation and Parks Department.

These partners include TCAS and ME4E (Multidisciplinary Education for the Environment) which works with school children in the south suburban area. ME4E is “partnering” with the Village of Park Forest and the Recreation and Parks Department by using the Discovery Center to teach environmental science to south suburban youngsters. ME4E has also been a partner with TCAS, which has provided grants to buy equipment for the students to use.

“We had all this extra space. Why not design it for an education classroom?” Joyce said. “That way, the building is useful throughout the year, not just during the summer.”

Other community groups are also holding activities at the Discovery Center, and TCAS will be using Aqua Center facilities for its annual bird seed sale pickup on October 23.

*TCAS members
Michelle O'Connor,
Charles Habecker and
Jim Spiller inspect the
sign at the Wetlands
Discovery Center, new
site for TCAS program.
It is located at 30 North
Orchard Drive, just
north of the Park
Forest Library.*

Photo by Rob Gunther



FALL BIRDSEED SALE ORDER SHEET ON PAGE 7

FALL PROGRAMS

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF PLACE

Our fall programs will be held in the new Wetlands Discovery Center, a science classroom that is a new addition to the Park Forest Aqua Center. The Discovery Center is at the northwest corner of the building, identified by a large sign. The Aqua Center is at 30 North Orchard Drive, just north of the Park Forest Library. See story on front page.

Wednesday, September 1, 7 p.m.

BARTEL INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Dick Riner, Bartel Steward

The September program will be presented by TCAS president Dick Riner. Come and follow the planning and implementation of Kim Ramirez's TogetherGreen grant for Bartel Grassland. Keith Nowakowski, head designer and Landscape Architect for Clarence Davids & Company, designed an Interpretive Garden to be located by the parking lot and kiosk at Bartel Grassland. With more than 400 plants and over 80 species, the Interpretive Garden was planted by 30 volunteers on June 12, 2010. What is an interpretive Garden? Join us at the September meeting and find out.

Wednesday, October 6, 7 p.m.

BIRDS OF NEW ZEALAND AND TASMANIA

Glyn Dawson

Australia and New Zealand's birdlife have suffered massively from introduced predators, but efforts are underway to remedy this. New Zealand still remains an excellent birding destination and one of the few places in the world where you can watch albatrosses and penguins from a parking lot. Tasmania is a smaller island with a similar temperate climate but is close to Australia and avoided the introduction of foxes. It boasts a flightless hen and a varied bird selection, including honeyeaters, ground parrots and nesting "muttonbirds," - shearwaters that

winter off the coast of California, a 10,000 mile round trip. We end up at last on Kangaroo Island, which is even smaller, and finish with a salute to our favorite Australian birds.

Wednesday, November 3, 7 p.m.

CENTRAL PARK WETLAND RESTORATION

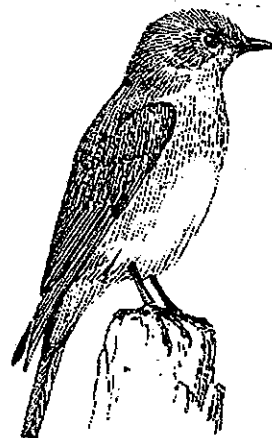
**Rob Gunther, Parks Superintendent,
Village of Park Forest**

The restoration of the 45 acres of peat bog began in 2000. In its first ten years the Wetland has become a well-known natural area and has won widespread recognition and a number of awards. Rob Gunther, who has been part of the project from the beginning, will give us the story.

FALL FEST SEPTEMBER 18-19

AT GOODENOW GROVE

Join the festivities at Plum Creek Nature Center from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, September 18-19. Nature and environmental displays, games, pumpkin painting and other crafts for children, along with food, entertainment, and the usual 5 K race are some of the activities planned. Thorn Creek Audubon Society will be among the non-profit organizations attending and will present a current display on bluebirds.



Eastern Bluebird

***Audubon Adventures* Enhances School Curricula**

Audubon Adventures is a fantastic way to help our local teachers and students. The curriculum addresses current topics that connect with the Illinois Learning Standards. *Audubon Adventures* is a multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning.

The last installment of *Audubon Adventures*, "Action for Planet Earth," is exceptional in the way it covers preservation and protection of our natural resources. Water is an important theme. Students learn about watersheds, where our fresh water comes from and, most important, the conservation of our fresh water. In the issue "Caretaking our World's Water," students participate in a school water audit. They look for possible ways water is wasted in their school building and develop water conservation goals.

The curricula is a perfect fit with Illinois State Standards in the 4th, 5th and 6th grade levels. A multitude of benchmarks in science, language arts, social science and math are met with clarity. Teachers receive a classroom kit that is easy to integrate into classroom activities. Now more than ever, with proposed cuts in school funding, teachers and students need curricular support. *Audubon Adventures* provides an interesting, cohesive element in the classroom.

Thorn Creek Audubon is proactive in the support of our local teachers. For the 2009-2010 school year, the generous support of donors and members provided *Audubon Adventures* to over 60 south suburban classrooms. Contributions in any amount are welcome, but \$45.65 will provide a kit for one classroom and its teacher. To help TCAS keep sending this material to area teachers, please send a check made out to Thorn Creek Audubon Adventures Fund in care of Sue Putnam, 3704 West 213th Street, Matteson, IL 60443.

If you would like more information on the way *Audubon Adventures* correlates with Illinois Learning Standards you may visit this education website: http://education.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/IL_Standards_AA0910.pdf.

Michelle O'Connor

HOT, WET SUMMER DOESN'T HELP BLUEBIRDS

This report is not the final tabulation of nesting activities along the TCAS bluebird trails. As of August 12, some bluebirds and house wrens are still in the midst of nesting activities. Two bluebird nests contain 4 eggs and 4 young, while 26 house wrens have not as yet left their nests.

However, so far it appears that the hot and extremely wet summer has been having a negative effect on the bluebirds and house wrens nesting efforts. Tree swallows, normally being attracted to water, do not seem to be suffering as much.

The total number of boxes is 106, located at Goodenow Grove, Monee Reservoir, Central Park Wetlands in Park Forest and Glenwood School campus. The numbers in parentheses are the nesting results for 2009. A summary of nesting activities from early April to August 12 follows:

BLUEBIRDS:	40 (37) nesting attempts	61 (86) fledglings
TREE SWALLOWS:	47 (50) nesting attempts	133 (127) fledglings
HOUSE WRENS:	36 (44) nesting attempts	81 (98) fledglings

The figures for bluebirds and wrens may improve, as their nesting season continues until mid-September. A big thanks to the 25 dedicated volunteers who monitor the boxes every week. The annual bluebird picnic for volunteers will be held at noon on Saturday, Sept. 11, at the Duke residence.

Aura Duke

FALL FIELD TRIPS

An expanded schedule of 30 field trips for the 2010-2011 year will take TCAS members into some new territory. Along with the tried-and-true sites in the area, birders will visit Miller Beach, Magic Hedge/Montrose, Sagawau Nature Preserve, Indiana Dunes/Wilson shelter, and Goose Lake Prairie.

Please let the trip leader know you plan to attend so you can be notified in case of a change in plans; also notify one of the leaders if you need a ride or want to car pool. Changes in plans will also be posted on the TCAS website, thorncreekaudubonsociety.org. If you are not sure of directions, email or call Al Thomas (woodduck_1999@yahoo.com) phone (708) 957-9847. Following are details of trips to be held between Sept. 4 and Nov. 7.

Saturday, Sept. 4, 8 a.m.

KANKAKEE SANDS, INDIANA

**Al Thomas, woodduck_1999@yahoo.com
(708) 957-9847**

We will be looking for many native plants in this restored prairie of more than 7,000 acres, as well as butterflies and their caterpillars. Some native sparrows and hawks may be spotted. Meet at the headquarters, 3294 North U. S. 41, Morocco, IN. Look for a small white building with a big green oak leaf on the west side of 41 (about half an hour south of Cedar Lake).

Wednesday, Sept. 8, 8 a.m.

OLD PLANK ROAD TRAIL

Al Thomas

Hérons, Cormorants, Caspian Terns, late warblers, including Palm and Yellow-rumped, native sparrows, Cedar Waxwings, various ducks and even Peregrine Falcons may be spotted. More than 140 species have been seen here. Meet along Miller Drive, near the former University of Illinois extension building (Miller runs east from Central, just north of the trail).

Saturday, Sept 11, 8 a.m.

SAND RIDGE PRESERVE

**Bob Harrison, nosira@sbcglobal.net
(708) 889-9693**

Trails with boardwalks make the walking easy and the birding rewarding among the pine plantations, deciduous woods, restored prairie, wetlands and sand ridges that surround the Nature Center. Kingfishers, ducks, and late fall warblers may be seen. Meet at the parking lot on the east side of Paxton Avenue, just a short distance north from 159th Street (about a mile east of the Bishop Ford, but west of Torrence).

Wednesday, Sept. 15, 8 a.m.

HOMWOOD IZAAK WALTON AND WAMPUM LAKE

**Al Thomas and Pat Strange
Strange (219) 923-5164**

This is a good site for all sorts of migratory birds, such as mergansers and Grebes, along with a myriad of wonderful prairie flowers, New England Asters, Rattlesnake Master, all the Goldenrods. Meet first at Izaak Walton, on Ridge Road in Homewood just west of Halsted Avenue.

Saturday, Sept. 18, 7 a.m.

WOODED ISLAND

**Charles Habecker, Glyn Dawson
Habecker (708) 747-6061**

Glyn Dawson will lead a trip to help us sort out those confusing fall warblers on their way south. After a pleasant and productive meander through the park, we'll head for Café Florian and a delectable brunch to celebrate our sightings. We will meet at the Clarence Darrow Bridge, located south of the Museum of Science and Industry.

**Wednesday, Sept. 22 (or see below), 7 a.m.
meet at the Park Forest Library to car pool**

MILLER BEACH

Al Thomas

Because of possible unfavorable weather conditions, two alternate dates, Saturday,

Sept. 25 and Wednesday, Sept. 29, have been set for this trip. Be sure to be in touch with the trip leader.

Weather permitting, we hope to use scopes to see rafts of diving ducks, probably Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Mergansers, along with a number of gulls other than Ring-bills, such as the Great Black-backed. We will lunch at the Miller Beach Bakery.

Saturday, Oct. 9, 8 a.m.

McGINNIS SLOUGH

Mary Anne McLean (708) 672-5494

mclean908@comcast.net

We will hope to see a variety of waterfowl such as ducks and perhaps swans that have been forced off the ponds in Canada as winter takes over. Meet at the McGinnis Slough parking lot about 137th Street on the west side of LaGrange Road (Rt. 45). Although the McGinnis sign may not be visible, there is a turn lane into the preserve.

Saturday, Oct. 16, meet at 7 a.m. at the Park Forest Library

MAGIC HEDGE/MONTROSE BEACH

Al Thomas

This is a bottleneck area for birds traveling through the Midwest flyway. Montrose Beach is an overnight sitdown spot for many migrants and has been restored to accommodate more birds. It is a bird magnet during migration. From Lake Shore Drive get off at Montrose Beach exit east and follow the signs.

Sunday, Nov. 7, 2 p.m. at the Park Forest Library

JASPER-PULASKI for CRANES

Al Thomas, Charles Habecker

TCAS members don't need to go as far as the Platte River in Nebraska to see 10,000 to 15,000 Sandhill Cranes as they head south for the winter. There is a good viewing stand where we can see the cranes flying in at sunset just a little over an hour from Park Forest. Occasionally a Whooping Crane may join them. Dinner on the way home.

APPLY NOW FOR TCAS GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Fall is coming and it's time again to apply for Thorn Creek Audubon's environmental grants and scholarships. Applicants have until October 15 to submit their requests.

The awards go to groups or individuals working in programs which promote the protection and enhancement of wildlife and the environment, focusing on one or more of the following areas: environmental education, habitat preservation and wildlife protection.

Grants are often awarded to schools or nature centers that can reach a number of people, but are also given to individuals. Scholarships may be used for tuition or other expenses associated with a college credit class, workshop, continuing education course or the equivalent.

Grants are not to exceed \$500 per project, and recipients are expected to contribute additional funds or labor toward the completion of the proposed program. Application forms are available on the Thorn Creek Audubon Society web site, www.thorncreekaudubonsociety.org. For more information telephone grants committee chairman Robert Pierce at (708) 747-2047, or committee member Dory Grosche, (708) 481-3166. Completed applications should be sent to chairman Pierce at 20623 Corinth Road, Olympia Fields, IL 60461.

Recipients will be announced at the TCAS general meeting November 3.

**WATCH THE TCAS WEBSITE FOR
INFORMATION ON SCREENINGS OF THE
MOVIE *A CHEMICAL REACTION*, ABOUT
THE DANGERS OF LAWN PESTICIDES.**

FIELD NOTES

TO REPORT SIGHTINGS CALL
MARY WHITE AT 708-396-0794

JUNE

06/10 Pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and fledgling, also pair Downy Woodpeckers and fledgling, Park Forest feeder.

Tony Kurth

JULY

07/03 Adult Titmouse feeding fledgling at her rural Crete feeder.

Anne Rosen

07/04 Caspian Terns at Izaak Walton in Homewood.

Michelle O'Connor

07/09 4 Young Meadowlarks, 3 Savanna Sparrows and 20 Killdeer at Bartel Grassland.

Al Thomas

07/10 8 to 10 Killdeer at farm pond along Exchange Street in Crete.

Anne Rosen

07/22 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers and 1 Great Crested Flycatcher, Raccoon Grove.

Al Thomas and Michelle O'Connor

AUGUST

08/06 4 young Eastern Bluebirds at Goodenow Grove.

Al Thomas

08/07 8-10 Marsh Wrens and 2 young Kingbirds, Central Park Wetlands.

Michelle O'Connor

08/10 House Finches, 1 Tufted Titmouse, pair of Chickadees, Goldfinches at her Crete feeders, 2 female Hummingbirds checking out her petunias.

Kathy Bader

08/10 Great White Egret fishing at retention pond at Walt's Grocery on Exchange Street in Crete.

Anne Rosen

BIRDSEED SALE HELPS FUND TCAS PROJECTS

The order blank on the opposite page may be cut out and used to order your winter supply of top quality birdseed from the Thorn Creek Audubon Society.

The birdseed sale is one of TCAS' primary fund-raisers, supporting educational and environmental projects that benefit the community, such as grants and scholarships for environmental work and studies (which amounted to \$2,250 last year).

TCAS tries to offer customers the best competitive prices. The DeLong company, one of the largest in the Midwest, will supply the seed. This year, seed prices are low, so take advantage of the prices and stock up for fall and spring.

Seed information is as follows: DeLong Premium Blend Birdseed: white processed millet, black oil sunflower, cleaned cracked corn, gray sunflower seed, red millet, safflower, sunflower meats, nyger, peanuts and calcium grit.

Delco Special Blend: cracked corn, black oil sunflower, re-cleaned wheat and re-cleaned sorghum (re-cleaning removes the chaff that would otherwise collect on the ground).

Premium No Waste: millet, sunflower chips and fine cracked corn.

The Hi Energy Suet Cake weighs 13 ounces.

To get the most out of feeding birds, keep the feeders clean, remove leftover seed in feeders and on the ground periodically, and keep fresh water available and change it every day or two.

Thorn Creek Audubon thanks everyone who has helped in its fundraising efforts. In the spring it will conduct the annual native plant sale, another fundraiser. To receive an order blank for the plant sale, you may check the box on the seed order form.

THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY

2010 FALL BIRD SEED SALE

ORDER YOUR WINTER 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. Nature workshops and camps may also be funded for students and teachers. Send your order with check payable to Thorn Creek Audubon to Sue Putnam, 3704 W. 213th St., Matteson, IL. 60443. For information or more forms call Al Thomas at 708-957-9847, Sue Putnam 708-747-1986 or visit www.thorncreekaudubonsociety.org.

ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 1, 2010. PICK-UP DATE IS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2010, FROM 9:00 A.M. TO 12:00 NOON AT THE PARK FOREST AQUA CENTER, 30 N. ORCHARD DRIVE, 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.

Name

Home telephone

Address

City

Zip

No.	Description	Price	\$Total
	25# Black Oil Sunflower Seed	9.00	
	50# Black Oil Sunflower Seed	17.00	
	25# DeLong Premium Blend	10.00	
	50# DeLong Premium Blend	18.00	
	40# Delco Special Blend	10.00	
	40# Premium No Waste Bird Seed	23.00	
	25# Safflower Seed	18.00	
	25# Medium Sunflower Chips	23.00	
	10# Nyjer (Thistle) Seed	10.00	
	25# Nyjer (Thistle) Seed	24.00	
	1 13oz. Hi-Energy Suet Cake (12 per case)	1.25/13.00	
	1 Pine Bluebird Box with Predator Guard	15.00	
	1 Wren Box	15.00	
	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		
	SEND ME SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE FORM		

PLEASE DON'T FORGET – OCTOBER 1st DEADLINE !!!
CLIP THIS PAGE AND MAIL IT IN



Thorn Creek
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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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:
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phone 708-481-4962 or email jbcraab7@att.net

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