



Thorn Creek AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUME 39 – ISSUE 5 SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2011

NEWSLETTER

EXPERT ON HUMMINGBIRDS ON TCAS PROGRAM

Our smallest bird, the hummingbird, sparks a big interest in many birders. Anyone interested in this unique little creature has an opportunity to learn more about it, and perhaps even hold one and feel its heartbeat, on Wednesday evening, September 7, and Thursday morning, September 8. Both events are open to the public and free of charge.

HUMMINGBIRD, TALK, SLIDE SHOW WEDNESDAY

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society has scheduled hummingbird expert Vernon Kleen of Springfield, Illinois, as the speaker for its first fall program. On Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Freedom Hall in Park Forest, Kleen will give a slide program and explain what happens at hummingbird festivals, when the tiny birds are captured, banded and then released. Banding helps avian specialists learn how far south hummingbirds go for the winter, where they stop during their migration, how long they live, and whether they come back to the same places year after year. Although there are many different species of hummingbirds, nearly all of those found in Illinois are the ruby-throated.

Kleen, an avian ecologist recently retired from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, has been a birder since the age of 7 and got his first bird banding license at the age of 18. He sponsors hummingbird festivals throughout Illinois.

HUMMINGBIRD BANDING THURSDAY – ADOPT ONE

On Thursday, starting at 9 a.m., conditions permitting, Kleen will capture hummingbirds, and after weighing, sexing, and measuring them, will attach an official band to each bird's leg. This event will take place at the hummingbird garden at the Wetlands Discovery Center at the Park Forest Aqua Center, just north of the library on North Orchard Drive. Michelle O'Connor, TCAS member and environmental educator, has installed a number of hummingbird feeders which will attract the tiny birds to the area. The hummingbird garden is also part of the science education curriculum for District 163 classes, and students from three classrooms will attend to observe the banding.

Anyone who would like to "adopt" a hummer by making a \$5 contribution to the Illinois Audubon Land Acquisition Fund will be allowed to hold and release a banded bird and will receive a special adoption certificate with information about "their" bird. If the bird is recaptured, the donor will be notified. All adoption fees go for land acquisition to preserve Illinois wildlife.

PROJECTS HELP FUND LAND FOR WILDLIFE

Along with his work with birds, Kleen administers a "Stamps for Wildlife" program for the Illinois Audubon Society. By collecting and selling commemorative stamps, both used and unused, and picture postcards, both new and used, he raises money for land acquisition for wildlife habitat in Illinois. Commemorative stamps are "special issue" stamps, not stamps such as flags or liberty bells that are issued regularly. Anyone who would like to donate stamps or postcards may bring them to the meeting on Wednesday or the hummingbird event on Thursday.



FALL PROGRAMS

THE THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY HOLDS PROGRAMS THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY. PROGRAMS ARE HELD AT THE PARK FOREST LIBRARY EXCEPT FOR THE SEPTEMBER PROGRAM, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT FREEDOM HALL. ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

**September 7, 7 p.m., Freedom Hall
HUMMINGBIRDS AND HUMMINGBIRD
FESTIVALS IN ILLINOIS**

**September 8, 9 a.m., Wetlands Discovery
Center, Park Forest Aqua Center
Vernon Kleen**

See article on front page. Both events are free and open to the public.

**October 5, 7 p.m. Park Forest Library
BIRDS OF ECUADOR AND THE GALAPAGOS
ISLANDS**

Glyn and Sylvia Dawson

Ecuador is a magnet for birdwatchers, a small, friendly South American country that has a bird list exceeding 1,800 species. We see birds occupying diverse habitats including the high Andes, the Amazonian rain forest, the cloud forest, and the coastal dry forest. Offshore on Isla de la Plata we see nesting boobies and albatrosses and in the Galapagos we see the wonders of nature that inspired Charles Darwin to write *On the Origin of Species*. At the grasslands we will see ibises, Andean condors and giant hummingbirds; in the cloud forest feeders attract more than 20 species of hummingbirds in minutes. We fly to Coca see unique birds such as Hoatzins, macaws and antbirds; in the coastal forest are wattled umbrella birds and elegant crescent chests. At the shore we see pelicans and frigate birds and on the islands are Darwin's finches and

mockingbirds. These remarkably complex islands have done much to shape the way we believe life has evolved.

**November 2, 7 p.m. Park Forest Library
ADVENTURES IN BELIZE
Marilyn Campbell**

The program will feature birds and wildlife, as well as some of the rural scenery, of this small but interesting country, which is home to hundreds of species of birds. It will also feature some Mayan ruins.

BARTEL PARTNERS WITH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Bartel Grassland Volunteers continued to develop their partnership with the Matteson Historical Society by planting a rain garden on the society's property at the Old St. Paul's Church on Vollmer Road.

"We planted a rain garden in a wet spot on the site this year by putting in blue flag iris. We'll be adding more species next year," said Bartel steward Dick Riner. "We also did away with a strip of weeds and planted a prairie, 32 plugs of little bluestem, 64 plugs of compass plant and 64 plugs of American trefoil. It's really growing."

Bartel volunteers now meet at the Historical Society's quarters, usually the last Thursday evening of the month. A TogetherGreen grant awarded to Bartel by the Toyota company was for the purpose of forming partnerships with local organizations.

Riner also said the Open Lands organization is considering making Bartel and Tinley Creek Wetlands an interpretive site, so that its activities can be monitored by the public through audio and even video media. "The project would take 2 to 5 years, but at some time the public could hear and see what's going on here from their home computers," Riner said.

BIRD NUMBERS DOWN DUE TO CONSTRUCTION, HEAT

The extreme hot weather conditions this summer have caused nesting disturbances along the four TCAS bluebird trails at Goodenow Grove, Monee Reservoir, Park Forest Central Park Wetland and Glenwood School Campus.

Nesting activities began rather late in the season and loss of eggs and young birds has increased. As of August 8, the following numbers of birds fledged have been reported - last year's total nesting results appear in parentheses:

Eastern Bluebirds - 53 (71)

Tree Swallows - 94 (133)

House Wrens - 39 (127)

Tree swallows are through nesting, but several active bluebird and house wren nests remain along the trails. Potentially, 21 additional bluebird young and 60 house wrens may still be fledging one of these days.

An additional problem has arisen at Goodenow Grove due to a construction project involving new trails and roadways. Already we have had to remove 12 nesting boxes to make room for the trails. More disruptions are to be expected. The Forest Preserve District of Will County has been helpful in keeping us informed as to their plans and assisting with the removal of boxes.

A big thanks to all bluebird volunteers who have monitored the boxes during extreme weather conditions. Kathy Dehn deserves a special mention as she has continued to check the boxes while construction is in progress at Goodenow and has been a great help in removing and storing the boxes.

The annual potluck dinner for volunteers is to be held at noon on Sat., Sept. 17 at the Duke's residence (35 Braeburn Rd., Park Forest). We hope all 25 invaluable volunteers will be able to join us!

Aura Duke

APPLY FOR GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS

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 to promote the protection and enhancement of wildlife and the environment, focusing on environmental education, habitat preservation and wildlife protection.

Grants are often awarded to schools or nature centers that can reach many people, but are also given to individuals. Scholarships may be used for tuition 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 to complete 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 Aura Duke (708) 748-6407. Completed applications should be sent to Pierce at 20623 Corinth Road, Olympia Fields, IL 60461. Recipients will be announced at the TCAS meeting Nov. 2.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES FUND DRIVE CONTINUES

TCAS is ready to order the 2011-2012 *Audubon Adventures* for area teachers to use with grades 3 through 5. It is not too late to help more teachers receive this colorful and informative environmental. Contributions in any amount are welcome, but \$45.95 will provide a kit for a classroom. Send to Sue Putnam, 3704 W. 213th St., Matteson, IL, 60443.

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.

Saturday, Sept. 3, 9 a.m.

KANKAKEE SANDS*

Charles Habecker – 708-747-6061

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. Meet at Sands headquarters at 9 a.m. if you do not caravan from the library. Drive Indiana Rt. 41 past Rt. 10 about 2 or 3 miles until you see the house/headquarters on the west side of the road. There is a sign but it is not conspicuous. Call Charlie for additional instruction if needed.

Saturday, Sept. 10, 7 a.m.

WOODED ISLAND with Glyn Dawson*

Charles Habecker – 708-747-6061

This is a migrant bird paradise and a history buff magnet. Located just east and behind the Museum of Science and Industry, this lagoon was built for the 1892 World's Fair by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead. We often see 30 to 40 species in a short morning, then have brunch at a site chosen by Glyn and Sylvia. Meet at the Clarence Darrow Bridge at 7 a.m. or at the Park Forest Library parking lot at 6 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 14, 8 a.m.

THORN CREEK WOODS TRAIL WALK

Mary Anne McLean – 708-672-5494

mclean908@comcast.net

Thorn Creek Woods trail begins at the Thorn Creek Nature Center, located about 2 miles west on Old Monee Road from Western Avenue. Thorn Creek Audubon members are helping to monitor the trails this fall while birding. Take this 3.5 mile wooded walk and we may see the resident barred owls, red-headed woodpeckers, titmice, nuthatches and even a flying squirrel. At Owl Lake we may see a wood duck. Terrain is mildly rugged and hilly but not too challenging for most hikers.

Saturday, Sept. 17, 8 a.m.

OLD PLANK TRAIL ROAD

**Al Thomas – 708-957-9847, or
woodduck_1999@yahoo.com**

Herons, cormorants, Caspian terns, native sparrows, cedar waxwings, various ducks and even peregrine falcons may be spotted on this convenient local walk. 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.

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 8 a.m.

HAMMOND BIRD SANCTUARY*

Pat Strange (219-923-5164)

Rain Date Saturday, Sept. 24, 8 a.m.

This is a stopover for migrating birds, and it is hard to predict what birds might be landing to refuel and rest for the rest of the journey. Take Calumet Avenue North to a sign for the casino and the Hammond Marina. Turn left and follow the curving road until you see the the Marina sign. Turn into the parking lot. The sanctuary is by the Marina.

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 8 a.m.

PILCHER PARK AND CONSERVATORY

Mary Anne McLean - 708-672-5494

mclean908@comcast.net

Rain date Saturday, Oct. 1

Pileated woodpeckers have been seen here. We will also be looking for migrating fall

warblers, native sparrows and woodland birds. Later we will visit the nearby conservatory to see interesting plants. Take Route 30 beyond New Lenox to Gouger Road (a stop light), turn north and take the third entry to the left to get to the nature center parking lot.

Saturday, Oct. 8, 8 a.m.

BARTEL GRASSLAND

**Al Thomas – 708-957-9847, or
woodduck_1999@yahoo.com**

Migrating shorebirds will be coming through and stopping wherever there is water, either at Bartel or Tinley Creek Wetlands. A few fledgling great egrets and great blue herons may still be in the southeast corner of Bartel, also late migrants and harriers. Possibly a few Sandhill cranes may be coming by.

Wednesday, Oct. 12, 8 a.m.

THORN CREEK WOODS TRAILS WALK

**Mary Anne McLean - 708-672-5494
mclean908@comcast.net**

Once each month Thorn Creek Audubon members walk the trails at the Thorn Creek Nature Center, birding and monitoring the condition of the trails. Some interesting ducks might be stopping at Owl Lake this month.

Wednesday, Oct. 19, 8 a.m.

**CHERRY HILL WOODS AND /LITTLE RED
SCHOOL HOUSE***

**Joan O'Keeffe – 708-633-0467
joanokeeffe@sbcglobal.net**

Cherry Hill Woods is in Palos at 104th Avenue, about ½ mile north of McCarthy Road. The entrance is at the top of the hill on the east side. There are woods and a pond but mostly prairie, and we will probably see late migrants. The Little Red School House is farther north on 104th Avenue, between 107th Street and 95th Street. Entrance is on the west side. We may see both woodland and water birds; red-headed woodpeckers are often found here. We can also visit the new nature center that opened recently.

**Saturday, October 22, from 9 am. to noon
BIRD SEED SALE PICKUP**

**Wetlands Discovery Center at Park Forest
Aqua Center on North Orchard Drive**

Wednesday, November 9, 8 a.m.

THORN CREEK WOODS TRAILS WALK

**Mary Anne McLean – 708-672-5494
mclean908@comcast.net**

Another walk to bird and monitor the trails.

Saturday, November 12, 3 p.m.

JASPER-PULASKI – CRANES

**Al Thomas – 708-957-9847, or
woodduck_1999@yahoo.com**

Rain date November 19

At Jasper-Pulaski there is a good viewing stand where we can see 10,000 to 15,000 birds flying in at sunset to spend the night. Occasionally a whooping Crane may join them. Dinner on the way home. Call to see about carpooling from Park Forest or to get directions.

**VOLUNTEERS STILL KEEPING
NATURE CENTER OPEN**

Thorn Creek Audubon Society volunteers are still helping the Thorn Creek Nature Center staff the building and monitor the trails. Lack of funding has forced the center to lay off its paid naturalists and rely on volunteers until more funds become available in January 2012.

Friends of Thorn Creek Woods member Penny Chamberlain said things are going well but more volunteers would be welcome. The Center is open from noon to 4 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

TCAS members are staffing the center the third Friday of each month and monitoring trails, combined with regular bird walks, on the second Wednesday of each month. To volunteer with TCAS members, call Aura Duke at 708-748-6407. For other volunteer opportunities, call Chamberlain at 748-2227.

FIELD NOTES

TO REPORT SIGHTINGS CALL
MARY WHITE AT 396-0794

JUNE

6/13 6 Baltimore Orioles consistently on her Homewood feeders for the past 3 weeks.

Jan Neumann

JULY

7/13 Trail walkers at the Thorn Creek Nature Center saw a mother wood duck and 7 young at Owl Lake.

Mary Anne McLean

7/14 and 7/17 Heard a wood thrush singing in Thorn Creek Woods at location just across from Indianwood Boulevard.

Joan Crabb

7/15 7 egrets feeding in the wetlands in the southeast part of the Bartel Grassland.

Dick Riner

7/18 A sharp-shinned hawk hunting for more than an hour at Bartel Grassland.

Dick Riner

7/25 At least 3 indigo buntings on Centennial Trail in Willow Springs.

Mary White

7/25 At W. 171st St., Tinley Park, a sharp-shinned hawk cooling off in a large puddle for several minutes while I watched less than 40 feet away.

Sarah Hendrickson

AUGUST

8/04 Hercules, the resident Cooper's hawk at Dick and Peggy Riner's Matteson home, was seen swooping down and catching a mourning dove for lunch.

Dick Riner

8/05 6 young mute swans were seen with their parents on Lake Katherine.

Mary White

BIRDSEED SALE HELPS FUND TCAS PROJECTS

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

The birdseed sale is one of our primary fund-raising projects, supporting educational and environmental projects that benefit the community, such as grants and scholarships which totaled \$2,000 last year.

Although we try to offer our customers the best prices possible, we know costs are up. Because of increases in the price of petroleum products such as fertilizer and herbicide, grains of all kinds are much higher this year; therefore, seed prices have risen significantly.

We are thankful for the part of your budget you have devoted to benefit birds and Thorn Creek Audubon Society by participating in this sale.

The DeLong Company, one of the largest in the Midwest, will supply the seed this fall.

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.

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 you may check the box on the seed order form.

Al Thomas

THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY

2011 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 Al Thomas, 1460 Linden Rd., Homewood, IL. 60430. For information or more forms call Al Thomas at 708-957-9847 or visit www.thorncreekaudubonsociety.org.

ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 1, 2011. PICK-UP DATE IS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 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. Be sure to fill out information below.

Name _____ Home telephone _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

No.	Description	Price	\$Total
	25# Black Oil Sunflower Seed	19.00	
	50# Black Oil Sunflower Seed	36.00	
	25# DeLong Premium Blend	13.00	
	50# DeLong Premium Blend	25.00	
	40# Delco Special Blend	13.00	
	40# Premium No Waste Bird Seed	25.00	
	25# Safflower Seed	19.00	
	25# Medium Sunflower Chips	29.00	
	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	
	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		
	SEND ME SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE FORM		

PLEASE DON'T FORGET – OCTOBER 1st DEADLINE !!!

SEE OPPOSITE PAGE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.