



Thorn Creek AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUME 36 - ISSUE 1 • JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 2008

Newsletter

Think Spring and Native Plant Sale

For low-maintenance bloom from March to October, gardeners can choose from the expanded offerings of Thorn Creek Audubon's annual native plant sale. This year's offerings include eleven trees and shrubs, 30 perennials and eight grasses, said chairman Dory Grosche.

Order forms for the plants will be mailed to everyone who has previously ordered or expressed interest in the sale. The forms will be in the mail after the first of the year and must be returned to Dory by February 22. Plants will be picked up on June 7. To request a form, call Dory at 481-3166.

Many of the plants will come from Possibility Place, the regular supplier, while some perennials will also come from Keith Nowakowski, a landscape designer and author of *Native Plants in the Home Landscape*, published by the University of Illinois.

Trees and shrubs available will include river birch, redbud, pagoda dogwood and American linden trees, as well as indigo bush, bottlebrush, wahoo, staghorn sumac, elderberry and nannyberry viburnum.

Some of the new perennials being offered are especially for gardeners with shady spots, Dory said. These include early blooming woodland flowers like the great white trillium, wild hyacinth and spring beauty. However, plants for summer and late summer bloom that will thrive in full sun are also included, such as butterfly weed, asters, coreopsis, prairie milkweed and an unusual perennial sunflower.

Gardeners will find these plants low maintenance, needing little extra water and fertilizer, because they are suited by nature to thrive in the Northeastern Illinois soils and climate. Many are also beloved by birds and butterflies.



FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, Jan 26

Starved Rock State Park for Eagles

Call coordinator Al Thomas, (708)-957-9847 or email Wooduck_1999@yahoo.com by Jan. 19 to arrange for a carpool. Otherwise meet at the Illinois Water-way Visitor Center at 10 p.m. Take I-80 west to the Utica exit, go south on Rt. 78 to the base of the bridge, and turn left to the IWVC.

Saturday, Feb. 23

Owls with Wannetta

All who want to attend this trip must register with Dick Riner, 708-720-5683. Attendance is limited to 25 people. The date may be an earlier or later Saturday based on the cooperation of the Long-eared, Great Horned, Saw-whet and perhaps other owls. Time will probably be 9 a.m.

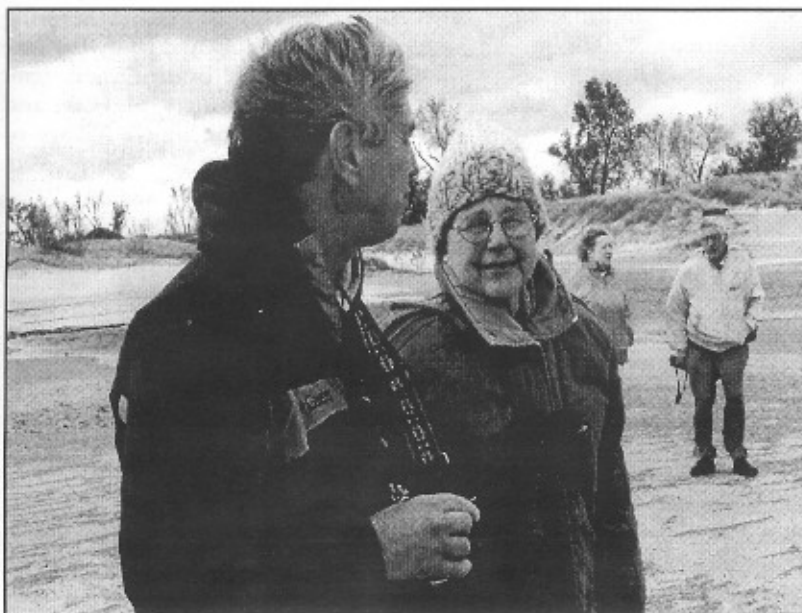
Regular spring field trips will begin on April 2. See the March newsletter.

Applications Open

for TCA Grants

Each year the Grants Committee of the Thorn Creek Audubon Society provides financial support for local projects that promote environmental education and the protection and enhancement of wildlife and the environment. Grants are not to exceed \$500 per program. Last year grants were awarded to several schools and organizations in the area.

Applications for this year's grants must be received by March 12. Forms may be obtained from Grants Committee Chairman Bob Pierce at 20623 Corinth Road, Olympia Fields, IL 60461, phone 747-2047. Other members of the Grants Committee are Dory Grosche, 481-3166, Joan Crabb, 481-4962, and Aura Duke, 748-6407. TCA is creating a new web site and application forms will be posted there when it is operative.



Cold winds did not keep ten intrepid TCA birders away from the recent Miller Beach field trip, but they did discourage the birds. However, a rare view of several closed gentians and a good lunch saved the day. Here Al Thomas and Mary Anne McLean compare notes.

Owls Flying at Annual Dinner - See Page 3



Winter Programs

Our monthly meetings will continue on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Park Forest Public Library. Note that the annual dinner is on a Tuesday

Wednesday, February 6, 7 p.m.

Joe Nowak, a well-known nature photographer from the South Side, will give a program titled "Preview of Spring." He will show slides of Great Horned Owls nesting in January and Long-eared Owls perched in Austrian Pines in February. He will continue with the arrival of Great Blue Herons, Red-winged Blackbirds, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and others. Also he will show the succession of flowering plants found in woodland areas in springtime. Joe and Marlene Nowak have a photography business in South Holland and will have a display of their photographs at the meeting.

Tuesday, March 4, 6:30 p.m.

Annual Dinner and Live Owl Show

TCA Annual Dinner at Faith United Protestant Church in Park Forest. Live raptor show featuring owls. See page 3 for more information

Wednesday, April 2, 7 p.m.

"The Amazing Birds"

Vernon Kleen, recently retired Nongame and Endangered Species Section manager of the Illinois Department of Conservation, will present the program. It is a combination of inter-related parts: slides of birds, vocalized sounds of birds, and animated bird behavior. The slides show a variety of familiar and not-so-familiar species that occur in Illinois plus a handful of species from exotic locations. The sounds are personal renditions of songs and calls that birds use to communicate with each other, and the animation shows some interesting bird behaviors.

Among his many contributions to ornithology, Kleen initiated Illinois' statewide Spring Bird Count (through the Illinois Audubon Society) in 1972, coordinated Illinois' Breeding Bird Atlas Project, and is senior author of The Illinois Breeding Bird Atlas published in 2004.

- Charles Habecker

Thoughts on Nature

Abide the change of time.

Quake in the present winter's state,
and wish

That warmer days would come.

- William Shakespeare

From Cymbeline, Act II, Scene iv.

Backyard Bird Count needs You

The 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count will take place during Presidents' Day weekend, February 15-18. During these dates both new and accomplished birders can do a service for science simply by counting the birds they see and submitting the results to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Birders can take part wherever they are at local parks or wildlife refuges, even counting birds from their home windows or balconies. Observers count the highest number of each species they see during at least 15 minutes on one or more of the count days. They then enter their tallies on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site, www.birdcount.org. The web site gives directions on how to participate, including maps and identification tips.

Thorn Creek Audubon members are

urged to join the count, said president Dick Riner. Those who are not on the Internet or are not comfortable using the web site may simply call in their count to Riner at 720-5683, and he will send in the results. They may also print out the forms on the web site and mail them to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Wood Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. The National Audubon Society sponsors the count along with the Cornell Lab.

These reports create a real-time picture of where birds are across the continent and contribute valuable information for science and conservation. "Each tally helps us learn more about how our North American birds are doing and what that says about the health and future of our environment," said Tom Bancroft, Chief Science Officer for Audubon.

TCA Helps Bat Roost Project

Bats are a greatly misunderstood group of animals. Because of their secretive nocturnal habits, bats remain mysterious to most people, and many see them as a threat. Yet bats are actually very beneficial in controlling night-flying insect pests such as mosquitoes, crop-damaging borers and cut-worm moths.

Unfortunately many bat species are drastically declining. There are about 1,000 species worldwide, but only twelve occur in Illinois, four of which are endangered. To help bats in their struggle for survival and teach young people about these animals, naturalists Michelle O'Connor and Emily Kenny, through their environmental education program ME4E, are conducting a bat conservation program with fifth grade students in School District 163. The program is co-sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon and the Village of Park Forest. Eight classes from Mohawk and Blackhawk Intermediate Schools and one special needs class from Forest Trail have been learning the importance of bat conservation while

assisting with the construction of eight bat roosting boxes.

The kits to build the boxes were precut to exact specifications by Sidney Duke. Then the fifth graders formed teams to assemble the boxes, first roughing up the inside so bats can cling to them, then putting the boxes together and staining them. The boxes are being placed facing the Central Park Wetland in Park Forest, near the Rich East High School lagoon, and near other local schools.

These boxes are designed for Little Brown Bats, which hibernate and need a warm place to spend the winter. They can live for thirty years and can eat about 500 mosquitoes an hour, O'Connor said. The fifth graders will visit the wetlands in spring when the bats wake up and study the way they interact with the wetland ecosystem. Al Thomas, Vice-President of TCA, and Rob Gunther, biologist for the Village of Park Forest, are helping with the project.

- Aura Duke

Resolutions for the New Year

These resolutions are based on a message from long-time TCA member Mary Anne McLean.

- Let us join forces with gardeners everywhere, nurturing native plants, supporting sustainable forestry, and encouraging environmentally friendly farming at home and in the developing world.
- As we think of the marvels of the universe, let us explore new ways to use energy from sun and wind, bringing an end to pollution of the atmosphere and averting the impending disasters associated with global warming.
- Let us fight to save the oceans - from over-fishing, from the sonar that kills whales and other marine mammals, from the dumping of industrial wastes and the careless tossing of plastics and other pollutants - and for the birds, let us strive to preserve their habitats, from tundra to tropics, wherever they may fly.
- Let us commit to humane practices in the raising of livestock and to stronger protections for threatened and endangered species.
- As human beings we have responsibilities for the other creatures that share this planet with us. Let us gladly assume the burden of stewardship for this extraordinary earth, protecting and restoring, so that it will remain live-giving and beautiful for all.

Field Notes

Call Mary White
708-396-0794
with your
reported sightings



October

- 10/2 Two Juncos in her back yard.
- Daniella Herman
- 10/5: Eight Palm Warblers in her Matteson back yard.
- Peggy Riener
- 10/9: One Red-breasted Nuthatch at her Crete Feeder.
- Debbie Marberg
- 10/11: One Red-tailed Hawk, one Red-headed Woodpecker and two Red-bellied Woodpeckers. Park Forest.
- Elise Ziemann and Sandra Ricardi
- 10/11: One Snow Goose in retention pond at LaPorte and LaGrange Road.
- Peggy Riener
- 10/13 : Several Yellow-rumped warblers at Lake Katherine
- Mary White
- 10/14 - 10/15: One Palm Warbler in her back yard.
- Daniella Herman
- 10/15 : Five Turkey Vultures flying over Joe Orr Road.
- Mary Harrison
- 10/15 : One immature Cooper's Hawk calling from a tree in Olympia Fields.
- Larry Lubertzi
- 10/18 : One juvenile Red-tailed Hawk along with evidence of a squirrel kill in his Worth back yard.
- Dick Thomas
- 10/20 : One Turkey Vulture flying over Sauk Trail woods.
- Elise Ziemann and George Peach
- 10/21 : 200 White Pelicans on the Illinois River near Channahon.
- Dick Thomas
- 10/22 : One Cooper's Hawk dive-bombing birds.
- Elise Ziemann
- 10/22 : A Golden-crowned Kinglet, also a pair of Mute Swans pursued by a pair of Trumpeter Swans at Lake Katherine
- Dick Thomas
- 10/23 : Sandhill Cranes flying over Worth.
- Dick Thomas
- 10/23 : Sandhill Cranes over Chicago Heights.
- Fern Bienias
- 10/23 : A Red-bellied Woodpecker and Common Redpoll. Olympia Fields.
- Larry Lubertzi
- 10/24 : A large flock of Turkey Vultures roosting in her Steger back yard overnight.
- Pauline Small
- 10/24 : A Golden-crowned Kinglet hopping around on a restaurant floor at 1 Illinios Center.
- Robert Price
- 10/25 : First Junco of the season.
- Lou Schoon
- 10/25 : Hundreds of Common Grackles throughout her entire Crete neighborhood
- Debbie Marberg
- 10/26 : One Northern Harrier and Sandhill Cranes. Park Forest.
- Elise Ziemann
- 10/29 : Two Red-bellied Nuthatches, a Red-bellied Woodpecker, a Downy Woodpecker and the usual suspects at her rural Crete feeder.
- Anne Rosen
- 10/30 : One Great Blue Heron and one Brown Bat. Sauk Trail Woods.
- Elise Ziemann

Thank you new and veteran spotters!

THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

Tuesday, March 4, 2008, 6:30 p.m. * Faith United Protestant Church, Park Forest, IL

_____ Number of adults attending at \$15 per person

_____ Number of students and children attending at \$10 each

_____ Total amount enclosed

Your name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Make your check payable to Thorn Creek Audubon and mail to Charles Habecker, 2811 Western Ave., Park Forest, IL 60466, or Dory Grosche, 3703 212nd Place, Matteson, IL 60443. Deadline is Feb. 26. If you wish your tickets mailed to you please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Otherwise you can pick them up at the door on the night of the dinner.

Owls Winging in for TCA Dinner

Live! Live! Live! Wild raptors, this year our nighttime predators the owls, will be featured at Thorn Creek Audubon's Annual Dinner on Tuesday, March 4. Jane Seitz, executive director, and Jacque Muzzo, program director of the Illinois Raptor Center in Decatur, will present the program.

Winging across the banquet hall will be a Barred Owl, a Barn Owl, an Eastern Screech Owl, a Great Horned Owl, a Long-eared Owl, a Short-eared Owl and a Snowy Owl. All but the Snowy Owl nest in Illinois.

Muzzo, who gave last year's program featuring hawks, will tell the audience about the various owls' eating habits, nesting places and time of day or night they hunt. He will also explain which owl barks, which owl hisses and which owl's call sounds like "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you?"

As in past years the dinner will be held at the Faith United Protestant Church of Park Forest at 6:30 p.m. It is open to everyone, with tickets at \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. The deadline for receiving ticket orders is February 26.

Tickets may be ordered by using the coupon above. For more information call Charles Habecker, program chair, 747-6061, or co-chair Dory Grosche, 481-3166, or email dorygro@aol.com.

TCA Offers New Scholarship

This year the Thorn Creek Audubon Society will award an environmental scholarship to a high school student or an elementary or secondary school teacher within the TCA area. The scholarship, not to exceed \$500, may be used for tuition or other expenses associated with a college credit class, workshop, continuing education or the equivalent that will enhance skills and knowledge in environmental studies.

For an application form please contact the grants and Scholarship Committee Co-chairman Joan Crabb at (708) 481-4962. Applications must be received by March 12, at which time applicants will be scheduled for interviews.

The Grants and Scholarship committee also provides financial support for local projects that promote environmental education and the protection and enhancement of the environment. This is the first time in eight years that a scholarship has been offered. TCA is in the process of creating a new web site, application forms for the scholarship will be posted there when it is operational.

(Field Notes continued)

November

- 11/3 : Twenty Goldfinches in fall plumage, a Chickadee and a male Cardinal feeding a juvenile Cardinal in her Steger back yard.
- Pauline Small
- 11-4 : Three unidentified hawks high above the lake on 26th Street.
- Elise Ziemann
- 11-6 : Forty-five Sandhill Cranes flying over Park Forest.
- Elise Ziemann
- 11/8 : A very large Red-tailed Hawk flying low over Vollmer Road.
- Elise Ziemann
- 11/15 : Thirteen Sandhill Cranes over Park Forest in the late afternoon.
- Elise Ziemann
- 11/22 : 200 to 300 Sandhill Cranes over Park Forest
- Elise Ziemann
- 11/27 : Unidentified large owl at 179th and Gottschalk in Homewood.
- Pat Hoganson
- #### December
- 12/2: Two Blue Jays, one Junco, one Northern Flicker, two White-breasted Nuthatches who have been regular visitors at her Park Forest feeder.
- Delpha Williams
- 12/3 : About 100 Sandhill Cranes flying over Wheaton
- Joan Crabb



Thorn Creek
AUDUBON SOCIETY
A chapter of the National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 895 • Park Forest, IL 60466

STD RATE
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #1
Park Forest, IL 60466

6041181964 0021



THORN CREEK AUDUBON OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President**DICK RINER**
720-5683, dickriner@sbcglobal.net

Vice President **AL THOMAS**
957-9847, wooduck_1999@yahoo.com

Treasurer **SIDNEY DUKE**
748-6407, auraduke@aol.com

Secretary **JUDY GLEITSMAN**
748-1745, jjgleits@sbcglobal.net

DIRECTORS

DORY GROSCHE, 481-3166
dorygro@sbcglobal.net

JOAN CRABB, 481-4962
jbcrabb@copper.net

SUE PUTNAM, 747-1986
sputter1986@sbcglobal.net

Development Chair:
SUE PUTNAM

Education Chair:
MARY ANNE MCLEAN

Conservation Chair:
DORY GROSCHE

Publications Chair:
DEWEY HELMICK

Grants & Scholarships:
BOB PIERCE

Special Projects:
AURA DUKE

Programs:
CHARLES HABECKER

Social Chair:
TERRIE SPILLERS

F Y I

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Editor: Joan Crabb

Database: Bob Vance

Printer:

RePro Graphics & Printing,
Inc.

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.

This 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 necessarily endorsed by the TCAS Board or the National Audubon Society.

© 2007 Thorn Creek Audubon Society. Designed/Printed by RePro Graphics & Printing, Inc., Mokena, IL.
We welcome editorial proposals and submissions.
Please direct all correspondence to Joan Crabb, Editor, 201 Krotiak Rd., Park Forest, IL 60466
708-481-4962, jbcrabb@copper.net.

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society is in the process of creating a new website. The new web address will be posted in this space in the March - April newsletter.