

News: Woodcock Walk, Grants Awarded, Volunteer to Watch for Nighthawks... and More
From: Thorn Creek Audubon <thorncreekaudubon@gmail.com>



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2024-04

Woodcock Walk Set for Saturday, March 16

The “peenting” call of the American Woodcock is a harbinger of spring to many people in our area. Join us at Governors State University as we listen for their calls at sunset.

For details, go to > [Woodcock Walk](#)



Projects to enhance wildlife habitats

Thorn Creek Audubon Awards Grants to Two Local Projects



Hazel Crest Open Lands .

Each year, Thorn Creek Audubon awards grants up to \$500 for local projects that support wildlife protection, habitat restoration, or environmental education. Grant applications are reviewed quarterly. The newest TCAS Environmental Grant recipients are:

Improve Wildlife Habitat at Open Lands Park: *Hazel Crest Open Lands Arboretum (Hazel Crest, Ill.)*

- The Village of Hazel Crest's main goal for its three Open Lands parks, totaling 53 acres, is to increase tree canopy diversity and provide recreation opportunities to residents. A dedicated volunteer group works with the Village to clear invasive brush, plant and tag trees, install interpretive signs, and contribute other enhancement projects.

Open Lands Park is an accredited Level II ArbNet arboretum. The trees play a key role in reducing local heat islands and flood mitigation. The grant will be used to obtain native shrubs and perennials that will add habitat diversity.

Expand College Campus Ecosystem Diversity: *South Suburban College (South Holland, Ill.)*

- The College has been developing the campus grounds to sustain a diverse living laboratory for environmental education courses and to support local wildlife. In addition, students are encouraged to act as citizen scientists by submitting bird observations on campus to eBird.

The campus now has most tree species native to Illinois and a rain garden with native wetland flora. The grant will be used to obtain native shrubs for an understory to increase habitat complexity and replace invasive, non-native bushes. The shrubs will be planted during a student and staff workday.

"Thorn Creek Audubon is delighted to help fund these projects that combine wildlife habitat improvement with enhancing access to high quality green space for students and local residents," said TCAS President Diane Hicks. "These projects will benefit area students and our local communities."

Congratulations to the grant recipients. We look forward to the results of your completed projects!

Through its annual grant program, Thorn Creek Audubon aims to increase habitat conservation, environmental education, and wild bird appreciation.

Local organizations are invited to submit proposals for grants of up to \$500. Details are on the TCAS website at: [Environmental Grants](#).

The Environmental Grant program and other chapter projects are supported by Thorn Creek Audubon member dues and contributions.

Volunteer to Watch for Nighthawks on Three Nights in June

Select Your Own Locations



Common Nighthawks are one of the fastest declining bird species in North America for reasons not yet fully understood. With the help of volunteers, the Chicago Ornithological Society is looking to answer important questions about what nighthawks need to survive and thrive in the metropolitan area. Do you have three free evenings in June to help track them down? Then join in the mission to make the Chicago area a haven for these special creatures!

Volunteers for The Nighthawk Project commit to monitoring four points on three separate evenings between June 11 and July 1. You select your own locations and watch for 5 minutes at each spot, then enter an eBird checklist for each location. No prior experience or knowledge is required to participate.

The project was launched in 2022. Right now, participation in southern Cook County and in Will County is very low. You can help gather vital data for these areas by volunteering.

- > [About The Chicago Nighthawk Project & How to Sign Up to Volunteer](#)
- > Monitoring Protocol: [An Easy "How to Monitor"](#)

- > [Why Common Nighthawks Like Ball Games](#) and Other Intriguing Facts About These Fascinating Birds
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Thorn Creek Nature Center Event Make a Gourd Birdhouse



When: Sunday, March 17, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Where: Thorn Creek Nature Center, Park Forest, IL

Attend this fun family event and go home with the natural-style gourd birdhouse you create. This backyard nesting cavity is attractive to wrens, chickadees, bluebirds, and other birds. Sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon.

For more information and how to register by March 11, go to > [Make a Gourd Birdhouse](#)

Thorn Creek Nature Center Event Wild Animal Tracks



When: Sunday, March 24, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Where: Thorn Creek Nature Center, Park Forest, IL

This hike will take participants into the preserve searching for tracks and other clues to the identities of animals that live in the woods. Also discover how animals survive. Sponsored by Thorn Creek Audubon.

For more information and how to register by March 18, go to > [Wild Animal Tracks](#)



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