



# Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

Wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) were nearly extinct in the 1930s. Today, there are more than 7 million wild turkeys. A wild turkey's gobble can be heard up to one mile away.

Dec. 2011—Jan. 2012 Newsletter  
[www.nwilaudubon.org](http://www.nwilaudubon.org)

## SMALL IS BIRDIFUL—Avian Life at the Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve

NIAS Monthly Meeting

December 6, 2011

St. John United Church of Christ



Though small in size, our chapter's Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve in Ogle County has hosted an amazing array of birdlife over the years. The current species total is 124. From Willow Flycatchers and American Woodcocks to Winter Wrens and Yellow-Breasted Chats, Preserve visitors have enjoyed this avian diversity. Anne Straight and Mary Blackmore, Preserve volunteers, will show slides of a sampling of these species, including both nesting birds and those just passing through. They also will discuss the habitat types on the Preserve that attract all of these birds, as well as provide an update on the bluebird trail monitoring.

Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. for announcements; program at 7:30 p.m. followed by refreshments.

### NIAS Monthly Meetings:

- Held on the 1st Tuesday of the month.
- Oct.-Mar., location is St. John United Church of Christ, 1010 S. Park Blvd., Freeport; 7 p.m. for announcements and reports. Program begins at 7:30 p.m. followed by refreshments.
- April, May & Sept. special mtg. times/place.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

## The Making of a Landscape: The Geology of Northwestern Illinois

NIAS Monthly Meeting

January 3, 2012—St. John United Church of Christ



Practice a little escapism on a winter's evening and visit wave-washed beaches, tropical seas, and yes, a glacier or two. Travel back in time as we investigate the long and varied geologic history of the place we now call Northwestern Illinois. HCC geology instructor, Steve Simpson, will give a program describing some of the processes and events that have produced the landforms that make our corner of this state such a special place. Feel free to bring in some interesting rocks or fossils from the area and see if you can stump the geologist!

Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. for announcements; program at 7:30 p.m. followed by refreshments.

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# Calendar Considerations

**December 1—The NIAS Conservation Committee** and all other interested individuals will meet at Amigos Restaurant, 306 N. Galena Ave. in downtown Freeport at 5:30 p.m. Join us for fine food and a stimulating discussion. We wrap it up before 7:30 p.m.

**December 6—Small is Birdiful—Avian Life at the Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve.** NIAS monthly meeting; see details on the front page.

**December 13—“Talking About the Issues” monthly discussion session**, 7-9 p.m. at the home of Carol and Fred Redmore, 1643 Hilltop Place, Freeport (815-721-3375). Everyone is welcome at these informal discussions of various environmental issues. Directions: from Hwy 26, turn east onto Young’s Lane at the stoplight by Cub Foods. Before the block ends, turn south onto Hilltop Place. The Redmore home is the last place on the left before you get to the apartment complex.

**December 17—Annual Christmas Bird Count.** All are welcome to join in this fun day of bird watching. See page 6 for details.

**January 3—The Making of a Landscape: The Geology of Northwestern Illinois.** NIAS Monthly meeting; see details on the front page.

**January 19—“Talking About the Issues” monthly discussion session**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Freeport Public Library, 100 E. Douglas (815-233-3000). Everyone is welcome at these informal discussions of various environmental issues. **Please note the time change.**

**January 10—NIAS Board Meeting**, 7-9 p.m.; St. John United Church of Christ.



**The public is welcome at all chapter activities.**

## BIRDSEED SALE SUCCESS

The northwest Illinois bird-feeding community has once again strongly supported Audubon’s principal fundraiser. This year folks purchased nearly 9 tons of bird food resulting in about a \$2700 profit. The proceeds will be used to support the many chapter programs, activities and publications.

Many thanks go to the volunteers who worked to make the sale operate so smoothly; Vern Ruthe, Chuck Thorp, Joe and Molly Doolittle, John Jankowski, Norene Caliva, Dan and Diana Nye, Dan Barron, Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Kara Gallup, John Nienhuis, Dave Derwent, Jeremy Dixon, Larry Seffrood and Tony Grahame. A special thanks goes to the Bird Seed Committee: Chris Kruger, John Walt, Tim Smith and Keith Blackmore.

The yearly success of our sale is only possible because of the fine cooperation of the O’Mara Transport Co. and the area drop-sites at the homes of John Day, Anne Straight, Lyle Sykora, Greg Ryan and Chris Kruger.

Jim’s Ear Corn was again graciously provided by the Joe Akins family. A large thank-you goes to them and to the corn harvesters: Anne Straight, John Walt and the Blackmores.



John Walt and the Blackmores pick 'Jim's Ear Corn' for the annual NIAS Birdseed Sale. Picture taken by Anne Straight.

## THANK YOU TO...

↳ Fall Prairie seed collectors at the Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve: **John and Anita Nienhuis, Judy and Harlan Corrie, Tom and Chris Hartung, Dan and Diana Nye, Larry and Phyllis Seffrood, Mary and Keith Blackmore, Carol and Fred Redmore, Kara Gallup, Anne Straight, Sharon Shaw and Melody Farringer.**

↳ **Nancy and Randy Ocken** for hosting this year's Elkhorn Creek volunteer potluck.

↳ **Anne Straight** for monitoring the bluebird boxes at Elkhorn Creek.

↳ Those who cleaned prairie seed this year: **John and Anita Nienhuis, Willem and Claudia Dijstelbergen, Judy and Harlan Corrie, Tom and Chris Hartung, Larry and Phyllis Seffrood, Mary and Keith Blackmore, Anne Straight and Diana Nye.** Special thanks go to **John and Anita** for hosting this event.

↳ Volunteers who cleaned, made repairs, mowed, trimmed and did many other tasks at the former Knight farm: **Carol and Fred Redmore, Tim and Teresa Smith, Tom and Chris Hartung, Judy and Harlan Corrie, Mary and Keith Blackmore, John Walt, Larry Seffrood, Eve and Christine Wilczewski, Dan Barron, Jeremy Dixon, Wendell Kurr and Richard Benning.**

↳ **Mary Blackmore and Kara Gallup** for revising our chapter's membership brochure.

↳ **Chris Hartung** for setting up a chapter display at the Lindo Theater during the two-week run of "The Big Year," and to **Jamie Spelman**, Lindo manager, for her great cooperation.

↳ **Dan Barron and Eve Wilczewski** for creating flyers and signs for our chapter's 350 action on September 24.

↳ **Chris and Tom Hartung** for hosting a wonderful enchilada supper for volunteers after the final workday at the former Knight farm.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

**Delisa Fredrickson, Mount Carroll**

**Darla Korth, Apple River**

**Blondena Best, Shannon**

**M. Thill, Stockton**

**Sue Merchant, Pecatonica**

**Luann Winter, Freeport**

**Robert Cowen, Mount Morris**



## MEMBERSHIP QUESTION

When does my membership to Northwest Illinois Audubon Society expire? It is a common question that can be answered by looking at the address label on your newsletter. If you belong to the National Audubon Society and you live in the NIAS region, you automatically belong to NIAS. The month and year that your membership expires to both the national and Northwest Illinois Audubon Society is printed in the upper right corner of the address label on this newsletter.

If you belong only at the local level, the expiration date is not printed on the address label of the newsletter, however you will receive a renewal postcard from the membership chair one month prior to the expiration of your membership.



## Toward a Cooler Planet

25th in a series



### THE CLIMATE CONNECTION

Well, it appears that the planet has gotten a momentary reprieve from the Keystone XL, TransCanada's proposed pipeline from Alberta's tar sands development to Houston's oil refineries. In early November the Obama administration announced that it would ask the State Department to study an alternative route to avoid the sandhills region of Kansas and Nebraska which lies over the Ogallala aquifer. Please thank the President for taking a second look at this project.

This pipeline is an extraordinarily bad idea for any number of reasons, not the least of which is that oil derived from tar sands releases more carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per unit of energy than any other extracted oil type. Given the fact that this past year saw global CO<sub>2</sub> production increase by 6 percent, and the same report which noted that, indicated we have no more than 5 years to reverse course in a big way, finding more oil to burn is especially foolish.

Considering the status of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, it seems almost irrelevant to point out that the mining of tar sands oil is nearly as environmentally irresponsible as is mountain-top removal to mine coal. Thousands of acres of boreal forests are being cleared to get at the tar sands deposits. These forests are, of course, the principal nesting area for many of our warbler species.

If ever there was a time to write to President Obama and urge him to outright kill the participation of the U.S. in this project, now is that time. It is certainly not the case that if the U.S. doesn't burn the oil, no other nation will. It would, however, put us in a much stronger position to argue persuasively for a binding international policy to curb climate change emissions.

Contact President Obama by mail at President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington D.C., 20500; or by e-mail at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>; or by phone at the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121).

— Keith Blackmore



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT GOES OUT WITH A **BANG!**

Participants at the November 5 Food For Thought workshop enjoyed delicious local food, heard interesting presentations and had opportunities to exchange ideas about how ordinary people can positively influence the direction of agriculture. "Don't just watch — participate in the change we need," was the message from many of the presenters.

Our thanks go to the following individuals and businesses for their important contributions: **Speakers**—John Torgrimson, Thor Jenson, Theresa Westaby, Michelle Princer, Tom Arnold and Ken Rosmann; **Cooks and Bakers**—Richard Benning, Laura Dufford, Heidi Thorp and Mary Blackmore; **Volunteers** who registered participants, provided A-V support, created the event flier, moved tables and chairs, loaned equipment, and helped with set-up, clean-up, food preparation and food serving—Judy Kurr, Chris Hartung, Joe Garrity, Kathy and Rick Weber, Keith Blackmore, Terri Clark, Anita and John Nienhuis, Teresa Smith, Kara Gallup, Dan Barron and Larry Seffrood; **Food Donations**—Donna Lubbers of Cedar Creek Crossing, Organic Valley Cooperative, and Wright-Way Farms.

Special thanks go to the members of the NIAS Sustainable Agriculture Committee—Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Laura Dufford and Heidi Thorp—for their hard work, planning and food donations.

After 15 years of workshops, the committee has decided to end this activity due to its labor-intensive nature. The committee appreciates the assistance and support from many NIAS members over the years who have helped to make the workshops so successful.

The committee plans to move forward with a new activity next year. In addition to publishing a 2012 Local Foods Brochure, the committee will organize one or two local growers farm tours. Look for more information in upcoming newsletters!



### NEED BIRDSEED?

It's not too late to purchase limited quantities of Our Own Mix, black-oil sunflower seed and peanut pieces. To purchase birdseed while supplies last, contact Dan Barron at 815-541-3261. The extras are stored at Freeport Press, 1031 W. Empire in Freeport.

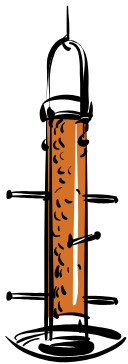
## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT COMING UP SOON

It is time once again for the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count. This will be the 36th time that our chapter has taken part in this endeavor to take one-day snapshots of bird diversity and population in predetermined areas.

You are invited to be a part of this year's count. It will take place on Saturday, December 17. We will meet at the Spring Grove Family Restaurant, 1521 S. West Ave. in Freeport at 6:30 a.m. for a "dutch-treat" breakfast. After eating, we will assign territories and divide up. If you are a beginning or novice birder, we will assign you with a more experienced person. The count generally lasts through late afternoon. If you can only help for morning or afternoon, we will be meeting at 12:00 noon at the Stephenson County Convention and Visitors Bureau on US Rt. 20 East to eat lunch and discuss afternoon plans. Bring a sack lunch, binoculars and dress for the weather. For those wanting to get an early start, we will meet at the Staples parking lot to go owling at 5:00 a.m.

You may also be a part of the count by being a feeder counter. See the bird list and instructions below. Feeder counters must reside within a 7.5 mile radius circle centered in the middle of Freeport.

Please call either Richard Benning (815-865-5279) or Keith Blackmore (815-938-3204) if you wish to participate in the Christmas Bird Count or have any questions about it.



### Christmas Bird Count Feeder Count Portion

Participating in a CBC Feeder Count is easy and fun! First, be sure that your feeders are in the official count circle, a 15-mile diameter circle with Read Park in Freeport as the center. If you aren't sure if you are in the circle, call Keith Blackmore (815-938-3204) to check. On the count day, Saturday, December 17, simply watch your bird feeder(s) for at least 4 hours and record the largest number of each species present at any one moment. For example, don't add together the 8 juncos seen at 10 a.m. and the 10 juncos seen at 11:30 a.m. The final number should be 10, that is, the most seen at any one time. You don't have to be glued to the window either, watching every bird for every minute. Just check your feeder often during the hours you are counting. Then complete the form below and mail as indicated by Dec. 30. Thanks!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mourning Dove

\_\_\_ Tufted Titmouse

\_\_\_ House Finch

\_\_\_ Common Flicker

\_\_\_ White-breasted Nuthatch

\_\_\_ Pine Siskin

\_\_\_ Red-bellied Woodpecker

\_\_\_ Red-breasted Nuthatch

\_\_\_ American Goldfinch

\_\_\_ Red-headed Woodpecker

\_\_\_ Brown Creeper

\_\_\_ Dark-eyed Junco

\_\_\_ Hairy Woodpecker

\_\_\_ Carolina Wren

\_\_\_ Tree Sparrow

\_\_\_ Downy Woodpecker

\_\_\_ European Starling

\_\_\_ White-throated Sparrow

\_\_\_ Blue Jay

\_\_\_ House Sparrow

\_\_\_ Song Sparrow

\_\_\_ American Crow

\_\_\_ Northern Cardinal

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Black-capped Chickadee

\_\_\_ Purple Finch

(other)

Please mail form to: Keith Blackmore, 9024 W. West Grove Road, Forreston, IL 61030.



## Looking for a Gift Idea for the Holiday Season?

If you know someone that is enthusiastic about nature and birds, you might consider giving an Audubon gift membership. No driving required; just complete the membership application on the back of this newsletter and forward the application to the address listed. Happy Holidays everyone!

### FUN FACTS ABOUT WILD TURKEYS

(our featured newsletter cover bird)

Wild Turkeys can be wild fun when you consider how unique and incredible these birds really are. While most birders and non-birders alike can easily recognize the distinctive plumage and gobbling call of these game birds, how much do you really know about them?

1. There are approximately 5,500 feathers on an adult wild turkey.
2. Wild turkeys have very powerful legs and can run at speeds up to 25 miles per hour. Their top speed in flight is 55 miles per hour. Domestic birds, on the other hand, are bred to be heavier and cannot fly.
3. These birds are omnivorous. Most of their diet is grass and grain, but they will also eat insects, berries and small reptiles.
4. Because it is a native bird with a proud demeanor and protective instincts, the wild turkey was Benjamin Franklin's choice for the national bird.

Look for some of these books that feature the turkey and Thanksgiving:

- **A Plump and Perky Turkey**, Teresa Bateman. "Funny story about a turkey outsmarting the town of Squawk Valley." Ages 3 to 8.
- **I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie**, Alison Jackson. "A favorite Thanksgiving read! You'll laugh out loud." Ages 2 to 7.
- **In November**, Cynthia Rylant. "Wonderful illustrations about autumn." Ages 3 and up.
- **Setting the Turkeys Free**, W. Nikola-Lisa. "Unusual twist, but enjoyable for young children 3 and up."
- **This First Thanksgiving Day: A Counting Story**, Laura Krauss Melmed. "Simple counting story for little ones. Gorgeous illustrations and a turkey surprise on every page." Ages 2 to 5.



**BOARD MEMBERS:**

**President**-Teresa Smith  
1975 Mound Hill Rd.  
Dixon, IL 61021  
815-835-5109  
**Vice President**-Vacant  
**Secretary**-Judy Kurr  
**Treasurer**-Mary Blackmore  
**At large**-Steve Simpson, Tony Grahame, Tim Smith, Sharon Shaw, and Willem Dijstelbergen.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

**Conservation**-Carol Redmore  
**Programs**-Keith Blackmore  
**Education**-Eve Wilczewski  
**Publicity**-Dan Barron  
**Membership**-Chris Hartung  
**Field Trips**-Rick Weber  
**Sustainable Agriculture**-Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Laura Dufford and Heidi Thorp  
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(815) 871-8014  
karagallup@msn.com

**Regular Contributors:**

Keith Blackmore  
Carol Redmore

**Yes, I would like to give a gift membership in the National Audubon Society/  
Northwest Illinois Audubon Society to:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School (if student):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gift card to:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Type:**

- Individual** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$20)
- Student** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$9)
- Senior Citizen** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$15)
- Chapter only** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$15)

**Make check payable to NORTHWEST ILLINOIS AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail to:  
Treasurer, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, P.O. Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032**

**X Sorry, this discount does not apply to renewals**

**ADDRESSES OF YOUR LEGISLATORS**

**Federal**

Senator Richard Durbin  
Kluczynski Building 38th Floor  
230 S. Dearborn  
Chicago, IL 60604

Senator Mark Kirk  
Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

(16th District)  
Rep. Don Manzullo  
415 S. Mulford Rd.  
Rockford, IL 61108

(17th District)  
Rep. Bobby Schilling  
3000 41st St., Suite 2  
Moline, IL 61265

**State**

Sen. Tim Bivins  
State House  
Springfield, IL 62706 (45th District)

Sen. Mike Jacobs  
State House  
Springfield, IL 62706 (36th District)

Rep. Jim Sacia  
State House  
Springfield, IL 62706 (89th District)

Rep. Jerry Mitchell  
State House  
Springfield, IL 62706 (90th District)

Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121  
State House Switchboard (217) 782-2000  
(When using either switchboard, simply ask to be connected to the legislator's office.)

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