



Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

Pursuing flying insects at dusk and dawn, the **Common Nighthawk** can be seen flying its floppy flight in rural or urban areas. Its white wing patches and erratic flight make it look like a big bat with headlights, and it is known in some areas as the "bullbat."

October–November 2011 Newsletter
www.nwilaudubon.org

GREEN FIRE—THE STORY OF ALDO LEOPOLD

NIAS Monthly Meeting

Oct. 4, 2011

St. John United Church of Christ

The first full-length, high-definition documentary ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. *Green Fire* shares highlights from his extraordinary career, explaining how he shaped conservation and the modern environmental movement. It also illustrates how Leopold's vision of a community that cares about both people and land continues to inform and inspire current projects across the country and around the world. Our showing of *Green Fire* is made possible through the loan of the film from the Natural Land Institute. Meeting begins at 7:00 for announcements; program at 7:30 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.

MEMBER'S NIGHT—WHEN WE ARE THE PROGRAM!

NIAS Monthly Meeting

Nov. 1, 2011

St. John United Church of Christ

Once a regular feature of our program year, we're happy to revive the fun and serendipity of Member's Night. This is a great opportunity for chapter members to share those wonderful nature experiences. Slides, stories, and pictures in whatever format one wishes are welcome. Please contact Keith Blackmore (815-938-3204) if you have something to share so the program can be timed appropriately.

The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. for announcements and reports. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. followed by refreshments.



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Calendar Considerations

Sept. 30—Order deadline for NIAS Birdseed Sale. See details on page 3.

Oct. 1—National Solar Tour Day. Solar homes all over the country, including some in our area, will be open from 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. for visitors to learn more about solar technologies and applications. To find homes near you consult www.illinoisolar.org or www.illinoisrenew.org.

Oct. 4—Join us for a viewing of Green Fire, the story of Aldo Leopold, 7:00 p.m., St. John United Church of Christ. The first full-length, high-definition documentary ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. See front cover for more details.

Oct. 9—Seed collecting at the Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 2-4 p.m. No experience necessary! Equipment, water, snacks and directions provided. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 1:30 p.m. *The Preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreston in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. Parking is off of West Grove Road.*

Oct. 14 and 15—Annual Birdseed Sale Pickup Days. See details on page 3.

Oct. 15—Field Trip to Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, 8:30—10:00 a.m. The trip will include a demonstration of the bird banding process and an opportunity to make a net run. We will carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 7:30 a.m. If weather is questionable or you want directions, call Rick Weber at 815-801-4663.

Oct. 19—"Talking about the Issues" monthly discussion session, 7-9 p.m. at the home of Claudia and Willem Dijstelbergen, 8730 N. Triumph Rd., Leaf River (815-738-2853). Everyone is welcome at these informal discussions of various environmental issues. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 6:15 p.m. or call Dijstelbergens for directions.

Oct. 22—NIAS Potluck and Reflections for Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve volunteers at 5:30 p.m. We'll gather at the home of Nancy and Randy Ocken, 3445 W. Haldane Rd., Polo (815-938-3506). Bring a dish to pass. After supper, we'll discuss 2011 Preserve stewardship and consider ideas for 2012. Any

and all Preserve volunteers, from wood cuts, prescribed burns, brush cuts, seed collecting or any other activity, are welcome to participate. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 4:45 or call Ockens for directions. Please call Ockens if you plan on attending.

Oct. 25—Last campfire of the year at the Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve. Join us for a prairie stroll at 5:30 p.m., with the campfire to follow at 6:00 p.m. S'mores and water will be provided. Bring a lawn chair and flashlight. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 5:00. See Oct. 9 calendar item for directions.

Oct. 27—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.

Nov. 1—MEMBER'S NIGHT—WHEN WE ARE THE PROGRAM! Once a regular feature of our program year, we're happy to revive the fun and serendipity of Member's night. For more information, see newsletter cover.

Nov. 5—Annual FOOD FOR THOUGHT Workshop, Oakdale Nature Preserve, Freeport. See article on page 4.

Nov. 8—NIAS Board Meeting, 7-9; St. John United Church of Christ.

Nov. 11—Prairie Seed Cleaning at the Nienhuis Deluxe Shed! Join us from 7-9 p.m. for a fun evening as we prepare our seed collection for planting. No experience is necessary and refreshments will be provided. Seed cleaning is sort of like a botanical quilting bee with lots of good conversation. Anita and John Nienhuis live at 3350 S. Mill Grove Rd. about eight miles west of Freeport. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 6:30 p.m. or call Anita at 815-443-2401 for directions.

Nov. 15—"Talking About the Issues" monthly discussion session, 7-9 p.m. at Richard Benning's home, 704 N. Davis St., Davis (815-865-5279). Everyone is welcome at these informal discussions of various environmental issues. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 6:30 or call Richard for directions.

Nov. 17—Prairie Seed Cleaning and Potluck Lunch, 9 a.m. Details same as Nov. 11 except for this morning work session, bring a dish to pass and table service for lunch after our work.

The public is welcome at all chapter activities.

THANK YOU TO...

- 👍 **Willem Dijstelbergen** for setting up and staffing our booth at the August Illinois Renewable Energy and Sustainable Lifestyle Fair.
- 👍 **Dave Derwent, Mary and Keith Blackmore, Judy Corrie, Larry and Phyllis Seffrood, Anita and John Nienhuis, and Fred and Carol Redmore** for their work at the August Freeport Prairie workdays. Special thanks goes to **Dave Derwent** who continues to work many hours at this wonderful nature preserve.
- 👍 Butterfly Festival volunteers **Chris Kruger, Kara Gallup, Mary and Keith Blackmore, Anne Straight, John and Anita Nienhuis, Richard Benning and John Walt.**

NIAS BIRD SEED SALE REMINDER



Bird seed order forms for this annual fundraiser were sent to Audubon members in early September, with an **order deadline of September 30.**

There's still time to get your order placed for a variety of high quality seeds and seed mixes! Seed will be distributed on October 14 and 15 at numerous locations.

If you need more forms or have questions call Keith Blackmore at 815-938-3204.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Luann Winter—Freeport

Johanna Scace—Freeport

Patricia Fuller—Mount Carroll

Robert Meeks—Rock City

Doris Trickel—Freeport

Sharon Sarles—Stockton

Laura Streif—Stockton

Betty Conder—Freeport

SEED SAVERS AT FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Join us for great speakers and delicious local food at our chapter's 15th annual Food For Thought Workshop, "Making Food Choices For a Healthy Environment and Healthy Communities," to be held on Saturday, November 5 at the Oakdale Lodge just south of Freeport.

Our keynote speaker, from Seed Savers Exchange near Decorah, Iowa, will address the importance of agricultural biodiversity and the role each of us can play in regaining that diversity. Session speakers will include:

- ☛ **Seed Savers staff** explaining the basic how-tos of home garden seed saving,
- ☛ **Theresa Westaby** telling the story of her family's local organic dairy farm and it's connection to the cooperative Organic Valley.
- ☛ **Pam Rosmann** describing the origins and operation of Famous Fossil, the winery that she and her husband Ken own near Cedarville, and
- ☛ **Michelle Princer**, owner and chef of Toni's of Winnebago, cooking up a storm in the kitchen for another terrific local food demonstration.

There will be plenty of time to exchange ideas and browse the many displays of groups supporting sustainable agriculture. You should receive a flier in early October. For more information, contact Laura Dufford at ldufford@dishmail.net or at 815-947-2720. Remember to **register early** as this workshop fills quickly.



FALL PRAIRIE SEED COLLECTING

It's not too late to lend a hand with this important chapter activity. With the exception of 10-9-11, a scheduled seed collecting day, we collect on short notice as weather permits. To get on the call list, contact Mary Blackmore at 815-938-3204. When called you may join us if you are available or, if not, we will catch you another time. No experience? No problem! We provide equipment and guidance as well as snacks and water. We hope you can join us!

TERESA SMITH NEW NIAS PRESIDENT

At their September 13 meeting, the NIAS board appointed Teresa Smith to complete the final 8 months of the presidential term of Lucas Bradley. Lucas has resigned due to increased responsibilities with his job working for the Rockford Park District.

We thank Lucas for his time and effort leading the board and express our gratitude to Teresa for her willingness to now serve as President.



AUDUBON MAGAZINES WANTED

If you have any recent Audubon magazines that you no longer need, your chapter could use them. Simply bring any 2010 or 2011 issues to monthly meetings or any chapter event and we will happily re-use them for membership promotion. Thanks!



A GIFT FROM PAT

This past summer the NIAS Board was both honored and very surprised to learn that Pat Knight had bequeathed her property to our chapter. Pat, a very active Audubon member, passed away last summer.

Pat was a cheerful presence at any Audubon event she attended. She served several terms on the board and helped with many Audubon activities over the years. Pat especially enjoyed participating in prairie stewardship activities and was a regular at work sessions and Elkhorn Creek campfires. Years ago, she donated a wonderful self-propelled mower that we use to mow paths at Elkhorn Creek.

Pat had a keen awareness of the connection between personal actions and the health of our environment. A few years ago, she had solar panels for generating electricity installed on her homesite. She also insured the perpetual protection of her property by securing a conservation easement for the entire acreage with the Natural Land Institute.

Because there are buildings on the property, including an underground home, the board has decided to rent the house on a temporary basis in order to meet operating expenses and provide security for the property. As the board deliberates the ultimate use of the property, we fondly remember Pat and are very grateful to her for her most generous gift.

2011 BLUEBIRD MONITORING RESULTS

Nine bluebird boxes are monitored at Elkhorn Biodiversity Preserve beginning April 13 and ending August 28. This year, there was one successful Bluebird nesting (5 young), one successful Black-capped Chickadee nesting (4 young), and two successful House Wren nestings.

There were two failed Bluebird nestings, two failed Tree Swallow nestings and one failed House Wren nesting.

Boxes were cleaned out of wasps, ants, etc. between nestings. There is no known reason for failed nesting attempts, however it might have been heat related. House Wren nestings are only cleaned out if they have a few sticks but if the nest is completed, it is not destroyed. On August 28, all boxes were empty.

-- Anne Straight



CONNECTIONS: Willem and Claudia Dijstelbergen

Willem and Claudia Dijstelbergen can now claim membership in the groups that have joined Keith Blackmore's ornithology trips. First, Willem proposed to go on this year's May trip to Crex Meadows in northern Wisconsin, and after a while Claudia decided to join him, even though she is a beginning birder who by her own admission says the birds must be the size of penguins before she sees them. She earned her stripes, though, and learned to see a great many birds —as well as keep an eye out for the ticks that feasted on them on this trip. And it was Claudia who saw the two bear cubs, which Willem at first insisted were two filled garbage bags until he saw them move.

Willem grew up in Rotterdam, Holland, but when his parents went on vacation, Willem got to board with a farming family. The family, though very poor, offered a life of joy and freedom in the country near the small town of Oostvoorne — as well as four other kids to enjoy it with. Willem loved the country, playing outside all day, in the meadows and on the dunes, picking berries and bike riding up and down the dike.

Meanwhile, Claudia was also living an urban childhood, but in Chicago; however, the family moved to Joliet, where they lived near a woods with a ravine — which the kids were warned to stay out of because they were told there was a black panther living there. She and her sister sympathized with the birds that banged into their windows and spent a great deal of time nursing them, though usually these efforts were to no avail. In sixth grade, her teacher, who had an Audubon book of birds, would send her to the back of the room to draw birds because Claudia often finished her work ahead of time. Her teacher felt she was quite talented and asked to keep the pictures.

Willem graduated from the Rotterdam Engineering College and then came to the U.S., first to Chicago, but eventually he and Claudia (who had met as two lone Lutherans at a Catholic youth group) settled in Byron, where Willem was an engineer for the nuclear plant. One day they saw an ad for "six acres and a bar" (which was a misprint; it was a 'barn') in the country with an old farmhouse. Willem loved the country and nature and Claudia loved the old farmhouse which had a lot of character. Here they raised cows, though neither of them knew anything about cows. This was successful, though the calves would become pets and it's difficult to persuade children to give up favorite playmates. Also, the cows ate the irises and peonies and once, Claudia was discovered by a neighbor as she was chasing cows out of her flowers with a vacuum cleaner wand while in her nightgown.

Eventually they gave up the cows, but the farmhouse has become a beloved home. Moreover, Willem, in addition to being a nature lover who glories in the freedom and space of the farm, enjoys being as self-sufficient as possible, and both Willem and Claudia are devoted to conservation of natural resources. They have solar panels and Willem is constructing their own private 3 KW windmill.

Youngest child Mia became a nurse and when she needed another credit to graduate from Highland, she took Keith Blackmore's ornithology class. Though she thought she would never survive the legendary Blackmore quizzes, many of us know what that course led to...love of birds and bird watching, and that's what got Mia and her parents involved with NIAS. She first talked her dad into coming along to some of the meetings and Claudia followed suit.

Oldest daughter Christa lives in Albany, New York, where she works as a Physical Therapist. Their middleman, son Andrew and his wife Cassandra currently live temporarily in England, where he is on loan by the U.S. Navy to the British Navy to assist in the design of their next generation submarine fleet.

Fortunately, Mia and her family live nearby, and she and her parents are all valued members of the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society. With this good background, her children have already been out on the prairie and it is likely they will be carrying on the legacy.

—Carol Redmore

Carol's Choices—Kids' Books for Fall: All available at the library



Sky Tree: Seeing Science Through Art, Thomas Locker. Beautiful pictures of trees in the four seasons, with brief, well-written prose explaining each one followed by a question about the art on each page. Example: "How does the painting show how water in the air changes the way we see things?"

Be a Friend to Trees, Patricia Lauber. (Level 2 reading) Basic facts about trees in an appealing format with good illustrations. Example: "What are roots for? How do trees make food?"

What's Inside a Tree? Jane Kelly Kosek. (Lower elementary)

Meadow Habitat, Isaac Nadeau. (Lower elementary) About food chains in a meadow habitat.

Why Do Leaves Change Color? Betsy Maestro. Delightful illustrations. Well-written. Includes directions for leaf rubbing and pressing leaves.



-Carol Redmore

Toward a Cooler Planet



24th in a series

THE CLIMATE CONNECTION

Recently I read a thought-provoking article by author and activist Sandra Steingraber. The article appears in the Sept./Oct. 2011 issue of Orion. I would highly recommend that you track it down and read it. The article, Household Tips From Warrior Mom!, may help to move us from our lethargy regarding climate change. I'll consider one aspect of the piece.

Psychologist Gerhart Wiebe coined the phrase "well-informed futility" to explain why it is that the more knowledgeable we are about overwhelming problems, "the more we are filled with paralyzing futility. Futility, in turn, forestalls action. Eventually, we turn away from the knowledge itself; no one likes to feel intolerably guilty, helpless or afraid."

Fellow Auduboners, we are in a serious pickle. It turns out that if new information doesn't match our present world-view, we reject it out of hand. Alternately, if the information matches our world-view, we suffer from "well-informed futility."

More recently, author Peter Sandman says that "well-informed futility flourishes whenever there are discontinuities in the message we receive, as when we are told that a problem is dire (climate chaos) but the proposed solution (buy new light bulbs) seems trivial. If the problem were truly huge, wouldn't we be asked to respond with actions of equivalent magnitude?"

Woe is me! Is our only option to add alum to the pickling brine so we can keep a stiff upper lip as glaciers disappear, oceans rise, deserts expand, hurricanes intensify and hundred-year floods occur regularly? How do we move forward? Let me know what you think.

— Keith Blackmore



BOARD MEMBERS:

President-Teresa Smith
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Vice President-Vacant
Secretary-Judy Kurr
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At large-Steve Simpson, Tony Grahame, Tim Smith, Sharon Shaw, and Willem Dijkstra.

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Sustainable Agriculture-Richard Benning, Mary Blackmore, Laura Dufford and Heidi Thorp
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Name: _____ **Address:** _____

School (if student): _____

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- Student** _____ (\$9)
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- Chapter only** _____ (\$15)

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Treasurer, Northwest Illinois Audubon Society, P.O. Box 771, Freeport, IL 61032**

X Sorry, this discount does not apply to renewals

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