

BirdCalls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

August 2021



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

Cranes, Cranes, Cranes !

You may well have heard of it, but have you ever been there? The International Crane Foundation (ICF) was established in 1973 in Baraboo, Wisconsin by 2 ornithology students at Cornell University, Ron Sauey and George Archibald. The intent was to combine “research, captive breeding and reintroduction, landscape restoration and education to safeguard the world’s 15 crane species.” After almost 50 years, George is still traveling the world on behalf of the cranes.

In the decades since 1973, working in collaboration with community-based conservation programs, ICF has helped improve the livelihoods of people around the world and protected millions of acres of wetlands and grasslands on the five continents where cranes live. Its global impact reaches from China, Cambodia and Vietnam to India, South Africa, Zambia, Texas, Louisiana and beyond.

In the US, the focus has been on the iconic endangered Whooping Crane. Captive cranes are raised in Baraboo and released in September/October in southeastern Wisconsin, where there are wild Whoopers that have made the migration from Canada to Texas before. Hall Healy, past ICF Chairman of the Board, says, “Being at a release like that is so exciting. The staff are in costumes, as they have been throughout the human interactions since the birds’ hatching in Baraboo, so that the birds don’t become ‘imprinted’ on humans”. After World War II, Whooping Cranes numbered only 12 birds; now, through the efforts of ICF, the population totals about 800 in 2 flocks, the migratory one and a non-migratory flock in Louisiana.

In the US and throughout the world, education and collaboration with the local people are key. They must see the benefit for themselves as well as the cranes. In a win-win example, ICF specialists showed locals a better way of releasing the water at a dam on Africa’s Zambezi River, thereby providing needed power but no longer damaging crops and valuable habitat for cranes and other wildlife. In another project, ICF developed a not very tasty coating for corn and other seeds; cranes won’t eat the seeds so farmers benefit and the cranes are safer.

Close to home, the ICF Baraboo headquarters hosts a captive flock of some 100 cranes, including the only complete collection of all 15 species in the world. The site features live crane exhibits, tours, a research library, visitor center and 4 miles of nature trails. It is visited by more than 25,000 people annually. The prairie, when blooming this time of year, is worth the trip by itself. And the site is a wonderful place to bird anytime. Definitely a destination!



Whooping Crane by Ted Thousand

Closed for many months due to construction and covid, ICF is now open daily through October 31, and a Grand Opening is planned for Sept. 18 from 9 to 5. Check out [International Crane Foundation \(savingcranes.org\)](http://International Crane Foundation (savingcranes.org)) and click on “events.”

So, when Sandhills are migrating through this fall, look to the skies; you might just be lucky enough to see a big white bird flying along with them!

by Marj Lundy

Thoughts for Fall: Putting our Gardens to Bed

With fall coming, our thoughts turn to migrating birds and those confusing fall warblers. But for those of us with yards, our thoughts turn to tidying up gardens and all that raking. Leslie Shad, Co-leader of Natural Habitat Evanston, provides us with insights about how we can spend less time raking and neatening our yards, provide for the insects that birds need, and thus, spend more time birding.



Leave the Leaves!

by Leslie Shad

Songbirds, and the insects they depend on, have suffered steep population declines. What can we do about it? Here are some ideas.

First, many insects overwinter in leaves, top-soil, debris and plant stalks as eggs, larvae or adults until late spring or early summer. Some even spend years as eggs or larvae in the debris. So, don't shred or haul away those leaves. Mulching and hauling kills or removes the insects birds need. Instead, rake leaves off turf grass and walkways into flowerbeds and under trees and shrubs. Leave 3 inches of space around tree trunks and shrubs to avoid rot. Let stalks and seedheads remain standing. If you must tidy them up, wait till June if possible; break them off and put in a dry, protected area, such as under a shrub. They will decompose and become natural fertilizer tailored to your plants – nature's way to store nutrients through winter.

For example, some butterflies such as coppers or hairstreaks, overwinter as eggs laid on a host plant or twig. They require 8-10 days of 50°F temperatures to hatch, and then they must still develop into butterflies. It could be June before they can fly, a time when most garden debris has been blown, shredded and hauled away, perhaps several times.

Other insects thrive in messy gardens. Native bumblebees and mason bees burrow into the top-soil. Firefly larvae and our native ladybugs need cover for overwintering, hunting and habitat; firefly larvae may live for years in our leaves and topsoil.

Native mason bees (stingless and critical for pollination) and others lay eggs or burrow into the hollow stems of plants. Have you ever collected seeds and found your seed tray full of tiny beetles and spiders? Many insects overwinter in seedheads which birds rely on for both seeds and tiny insects.

With all the time and energy you're saving, not collecting and hauling leaves, why not get busy replacing your turf grass with native shrubs and plants to serve as hosts or nectar sources. Insects, birds and we will all be winners!

Want more info? Try the links below:

<https://greenerevanston.org/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/realestate/fall-garden-cleanup.html>

<https://awaytogarden.com/fall-cleanup-with-ecology-in-mind-with-doug-tallamy/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/15/opinion/nature-lawns-environment.html>

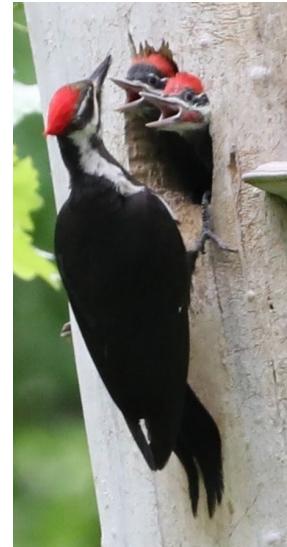
<https://xerces.org/blog/leave-the-leaves>

CLUB NEWS

Thanks Jim! We're saying goodbye to Jim LaRochelle who is stepping down after 2 years as President and 2 as Vice President of ENSBC. A long-time volunteer in the community, Jim was President of the Evanston United Way, a member of the Evanston Environmental Association as well as the Ladd Arboretum Committee. He's been involved with Earth-watch research programs in France, Italy, Kenya, Brazil and the U.S. Jim was a guidance counselor and classroom teacher in the Evanston/Skokie schools for 31 years. Many thanks, Jim. ENSBC will miss your leadership. (Libby Hill will finish out Jim's term as President.)

Here's to Suzanne Checchia, Volunteer Extraordinaire!

Suzanne is retiring from the ENSBC Board after several years as our Conservation Chair. An invaluable Board member, she has brought vital conservation issues to the attention of our members and the public, and contributed in countless other ways, including keeping us up to date via Bird Notes, our ENSBC eblasts. A long-time volunteer in the birding community, Suzanne started the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary bird monitoring program and was its coordinator until earlier this year; she wrote program protocol and recruited many CSBBS bird monitors. Suzanne has been on the Board of Chicago Audubon Society and the Executive Committee of the Bird Conservation Network; she is an active bird collision monitor, collecting injured or killed birds from downtown and Northwestern University, to be cared for at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum or added to the bird collection at the Field Museum. We know Suzanne will continue to be actively involved in area birding; we wish her the best and will truly miss her as a member of our Board.



Pileated Woodpeckers at Ryerson Woods
by Jake Sullivan, summer 2021

Welcome to Amanda Ziegler, incoming ENSBC Board Publicity Chair

Amanda is a fourth-generation North Shore birdwatcher, starting with her great-grandmother in Winnetka! Her fascination with birds led to a job at the Field Museum, as a Research Assistant in the Bird Division, where she met her partner Josh Engel.

After working at the museum, she moved to the Washington, DC area where she became involved with the Smithsonian's Migratory Bird Center as a volunteer working on the Migratory Connectivity Project. Back in Chicago, she worked at the Chicago Architecture Foundation (now Center), where she spent

windows of Illinois Center and "preaching the gospel of bird-friendly building design to anyone who would listen"!

Today, Amanda is a Real Estate Broker and is passionate about connecting people to homes where they can experience nature in their own backyard. Josh and Amanda reside in South Evanston where they're always looking to add to their "yard list" which is up to about 130 birds. But the most exciting addition is coming in December, when they are expecting their first child. Welcome to the board, Amanda!

Haven't renewed your ENSBC membership, but you've been meaning to? It's never too late. Go to <https://www.ensbc.org>. You can renew online or by check. You'll see how under "Membership/renew."



And Another Welcome: to Marcia Weflen...

Our new ENSBC eblast communicator. Marcia is a volunteer at Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary and secretary for the Sanctuary's steering committee. Her professional life has been in child welfare, and retirement is enabling her to pursue her interest in birds.



Monarch on Ironweed

Fall Field Trips Comin' Up

Perkins Woods, September 2, 9, 16, 23 – Thursdays: We will look for fall warblers, thrushes and other migrants. Meet at 7:30 a.m. corner of Ewing Ave. and Grant St. Leaders: John Bates and Josh Engel.

Northwestern University Campus, September 18 and 25 – Saturdays: NU has long been a stopover for migrants. Park on the lake side, upper deck, south parking lot off of Sheridan Rd. and Clark St. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Leaders: Libby Hill and Sarah Flax.

In-Person Programs Again

ENSBC will resume in-person programs at the Ecology Center, 2024 McCormick Blvd. Evanston, in September. Programs are on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm and are open to ENSBC members and their guests. Masks are required by the city of Evanston. We will not be serving refreshments. Check <https://www.ensbc.org/> for updates.

September 28: John Bates, “Why and How do Birds Molt their Feathers?” During development and as part of their annual cycles, all birds change their feathers through molts. This has led to a wide array of molt strategies in different species. John Bates, Curator of Birds at the Field Museum, will give an overview of how, when and why birds molt, emphasizing how community scientists can participate in documenting molts as they go birding throughout the year.

October 26: Peggy McNamara, “Evolution of the Artist in Residence at the Field Museum.” Peggy McNamara, an art history major, came to the Field Museum in her mid-to-late 20s. Daily she came and drew from the exhibits, eventually landing in birds; they charmed her. Her subject matter has evolved from birds in museum cases to birds in their habitat, then birds migrating and nesting. She has published four books. Join us to hear the rest of her story.

November 23: Heather Skeen, “Kirtland’s Warblers’ Microbiomes.” What is a microbiome? Within each bird species are communities of micro-organisms that interact with each other and the environment. This community is known collectively as the microbiome. Kirtland’s Warblers offer a unique opportunity to understand how the changing environments of migratory birds impacts the composition of the microbiome. Heather Skeen, of the Integrative Research Center at the Field Museum, will describe research centered around the microbiomes of individual Kirtland’s Warblers that were tracked using geolocators from the Bahamas to Michigan.

Welcome to the Flock! Please welcome the following new members:

Kim Ainis, Chicago

Todd Carlson, Glencoe

Diana Chiropulos, Evanston

Marlo Del Percio, Evanston

Jill Fink, Evanston

Jan Fitzgerald, Glenview

Sandy Gershom, Chicago

Sue Hansen, Evanston

Judith Koehler, Evanston

Jason Lauren, Evanston

Melody Metzger, Mt. Prospect

James Nathan, Chicago

Madeline Phipps, Seattle, WA

Stephanie Russell, Lake Bluff

Michael Stein, Skokie

Bob & Angie Weszely, Evanston

Susan Williams, Evanston

Junko Yokota, Evanston

Amanda Zeigler, Evanston

