

## 2023 CFC Fall Bird Hikes Recap

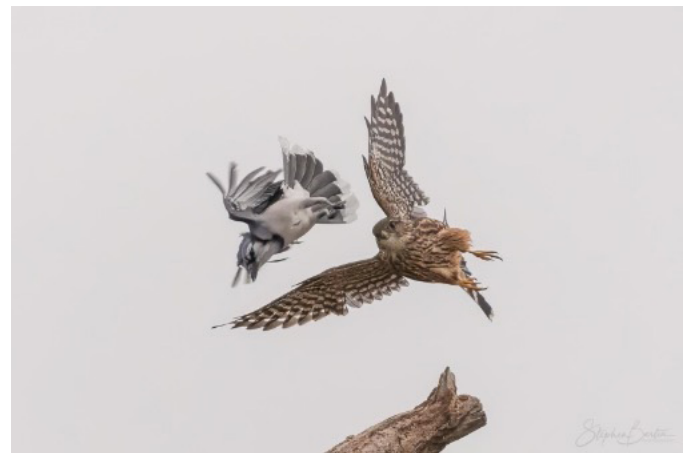
Citizens for Conservation hosted 11 bird hikes this fall to track migration. The hikes were held at area forest preserves as well as CFC's newest preserve, Hill 'N Dale. The hikes were led by naturalists Wendy Paulson, Barb Laughlin-Karon, and Laura Simpson and organized by Susan Baert. Year after year, the hikes generate great interest, which is reflected in the number of participants. There were a total of 65 people who participated in one or more of the hikes, with nearly 30 people attending each week.



*Common Nighthawk. Photo by Steve Barten.*

New this year were two early evening hikes at Hill 'N Dale Preserve. Restoration work has just begun at this beautiful preserve, and it is rewarding to see this important habitat already supporting so many bird species. Luke Dahlberg led off the evening with a talk about the target bird of the hike, the Common Nighthawk. (see photo) As the sun began to set, hikers had the chance to see the spectacle of the Common Nighthawk foraging in flight. These amazing aerial

insectivores were joined by several Chimney Swifts, also circling overhead and eating in flight. Another highlight from this hike at dusk was watching an interaction between a Merlin and Blue Jay. (see photo)



*A Merlin and Blue Jay interacting. Photo by Steve Barten.*

Bird sightings changed by the week as summer nesting season came to an end and birds began migrating south. They were quickly replaced by a new mix of birds from points farther north, including the Swainson's and Hermit Thrush and the fall warblers in their drab coats. These birds were passing through our area on their way to their wintering grounds in the south, or even on to Central and South America. As we moved through the fall, hikers were thrilled to see the elusive Great Horned Owl at Crabtree Nature Center. (see photo) Owls in general are challenging to spot – their coloring serves as excellent camouflage when roosting in trees. The Crabtree Great Horned Owl was often discussed on previous hikes, but never seen before October. Red-Headed Woodpeckers at both Crabtree and Deer Grove East were enjoyable to see, including this young one (pictured with a Blue Jay, as its red feathers were just emerging). (see photo) We saw Rusty Blackbirds (see photo) at Crabtree this fall as well. Since they tend to travel in mixed flocks, it is a good idea to check all birds in a flock, in case there are different species. We were fortunate to see so many Rusty Blackbirds because the species is in steep decline. The hikes continued deeper into fall, and many of these birds were leaving or passing through

while others were returning to spend the winter. We observed the return of the Dark-Eyed Juncos, Brown Creepers (see photo), and Purple Finch, bird species that will be with us throughout the winter.

Bird hikes are free and open to all. We welcome those who are new to birding, as well as very experienced birders. Keep an eye out in the late winter for our spring schedule with registration information for the spring hikes, which will begin in April.

— Barb Laughlin-Karon, Laura Simpson, and Susan Baert



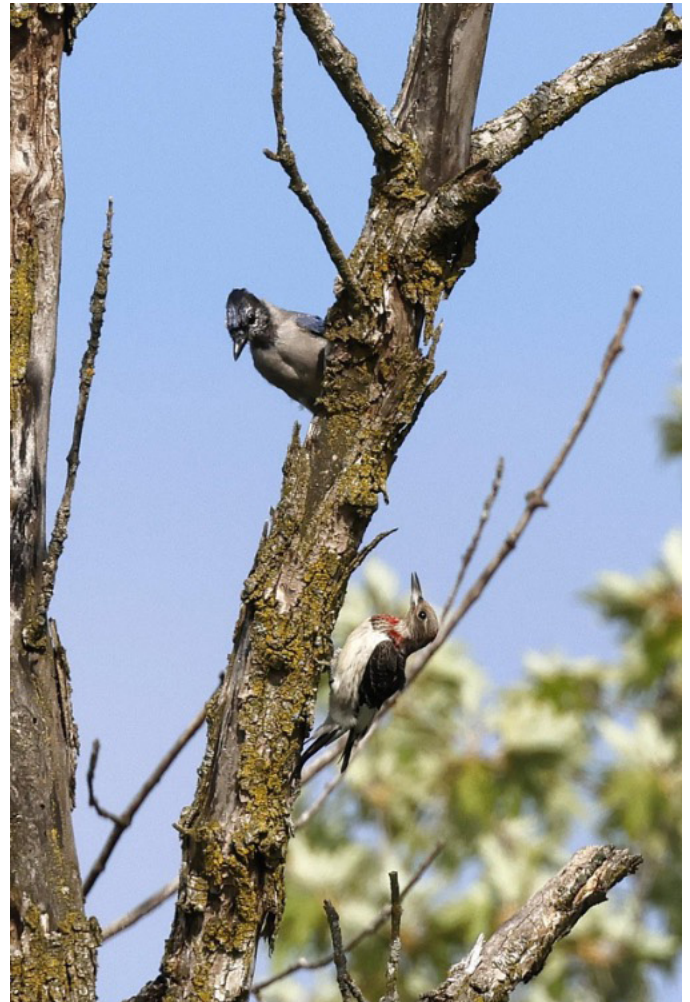
Great Horned Owls are elusive. Photo by Steve Barten.



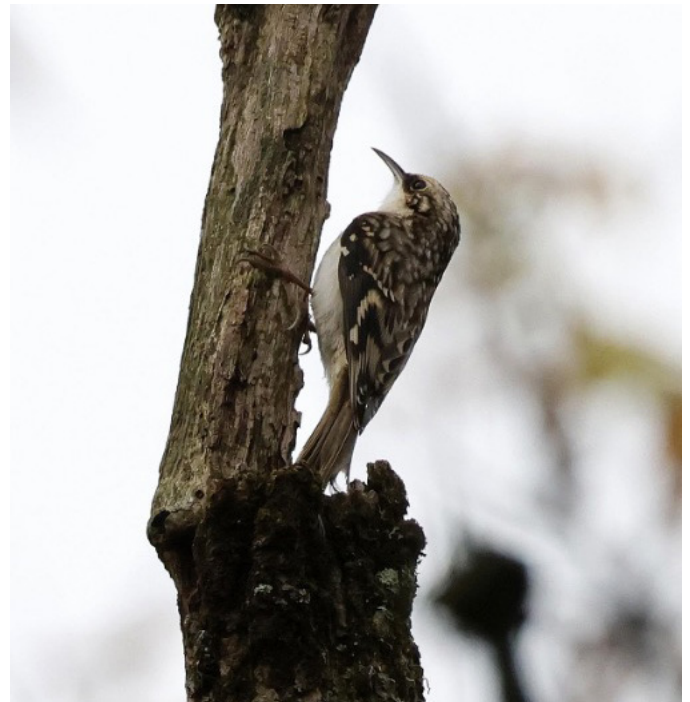
Nearly thirty people attended fall bird hikes weekly. Photo by Steve Barten.



The Rusty Blackbird travels in mixed flocks. Photo by Tom Auchter.



A young Red-Headed Woodpecker and Blue Jay. Photo by Tom Auchter.



The Brown Creeper mainly forages on tree trunks and limbs. Photo by Tom Auchter.



# 2024 Community Education Programs

## Hill ‘N Dale Preserve restoration plans

by Jim Anderson

January 13, 2024

CFC’s newest acquisition is the 246-acre Hill ‘n Dale Preserve, along Spring Creek in Barrington Hills. This purchase and planned restoration have saved the former horse farm from development. With wetlands, the most endangered habitat in northern Illinois, this land, just north of Spring Creek Forest Preserve and the Spring Creek Illinois Nature Preserve, will expand that critical habitat. Learn about the process that has begun at Hill ‘N Dale to restore Spring Creek to wetlands. Jim Anderson will also share plans to restore sedge meadow, wet prairie, prairie, and savanna communities within the preserve, creating habitat for a variety of native plants and animals.



Jim Anderson is Vice President of Citizens for Conservation’s Board of Directors and an active restoration volunteer. He previously was the Director of Natural Resources for Lake County Forest Preserve. Jim also serves on the Steering Committee of Chicago Wilderness Alliance.

## The dark side of nature: the meaning of night to you and the world

by Ken Walczak

February 10, 2024

“For the entire history of life on Earth, dark nights followed sunlit days. In a little more than a century, we’ve altered that natural pattern by illuminating our nights.”

Mr. Walczak will explain how excessive artificial light can harm humans, wildlife, and our climate. Many species of plants, insects, birds, and other animals benefit from the absence of disturbing artificial lighting. His presentation will describe the principles of responsible outdoor lighting.

Ken Walczak is the Senior Manager of Far Horizons at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago – a scientific



*Outdoor lighting can impact wildlife. Photo by Ken Walczak.*



research and engineering program engaging students, volunteers, and the public in hands-on science. He helped design and implement innovative instruments for light pollution research and has co-authored numerous papers on the subject. He helped lead the successful designation of the world's largest Urban Night Sky Place, The Palos Preserves, southwest of Chicago. He is a board member of DarkSky International and helped co-found the local DarkSky Chicago chapter.

**Caring for our native oaks**  
**by Charlie Keppel and Chelsi Abbott**  
**March 9, 2024**

Our native oaks provide many ecosystem services to our habitats, as well as being beautiful editions to our landscape. This program will identify ways that property owners can care for their oaks to keep them healthy and thriving for their long lives and help identify which oak species grow best in different habitats.



*An oak tree in a yard creates a quality habitat for local wildlife.*  
*Photo by Charlie Keppel.*

Charlie is semi-retired from The Care of Trees, now The Davey Tree Expert Company. He now works with community outreach and education in the Barrington and Chicagoland area. He graduated from Penn State in Forestry in 1976 and started the company's Barrington office in 1978, providing tree care and tree preservation in the area. He has worked with many Chicago Wilderness groups on Ecological Restoration and long-term tree care.

Chelsi Abbott is a technical advisor and education specialist with the Davey Institute. In her role, she provides diagnostic and management support, conducts research, participates in educational outreach

and builds educational content and curriculum. She received her master's degree in plant pathology from Purdue University, she is an ISA certified arborist, TRAQ qualified, and a certified forest therapy guide.

**Bumblebees of Barrington**  
**by Stephen Barten**  
**April 13, 2024**

Lake County Forest Preserves developed a bee monitoring program to document which preserves host the federally endangered Rusty-patched Bumblebee (RPBB). There have been 74 total RPBB observations in all of Lake County in 2023, 36 of them - almost half - were on CFC property. Steve will show his great photos of an RPBB queen and interesting/rare photos of bumblebee interactions with other species, plus all 10 local species of bumblebees and many other pollinators and bumblebee mimics. He will share what he has learned about the bumblebee's natural history and identification.



*CFC properties are home to the Rusty-patched Bumblebee.*  
*Photo by Steve Barten.*

Steve Barten is a CFC/LCFPD/BGI Bumblebee Monitor. Last year he monitored at Flint Creek Savanna and Grigsby Prairie, and this year he added Craftsbury East and Grassy Lake. Part of the protocol is to photograph every species observed and post it on iNaturalist for documentation and confirmation of IDs. As a result, Steve has many great images to share!

How to Register

Programs will be presented at the Barrington Village Hall. Arrive at 9:30 for coffee and displays. Programs run from 10:00-11:30.

RSVP 847-382-SAVE (7283) or to [communityed@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:communityed@citizensforconservation.org). Please provide your name, email, phone number & program name.

Community Education programs are included as a benefit of CFC membership; the program fee is \$10 for non-members.

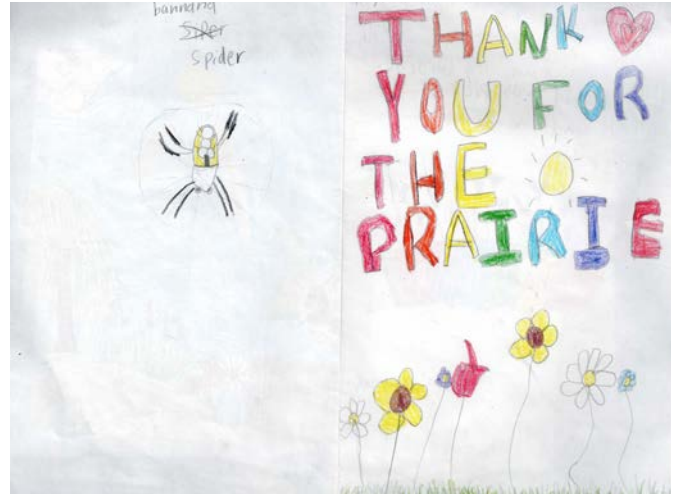
# Fourth Graders on the Prairie Recap

This fall, CFC and Barrington School District 220 collaborated for the 15th year to bring students and nature together.

Fourth Graders on the Prairie combines classroom learning with field study. Students first learn about prairies, including in-class presentations from our CFC volunteers. This is followed by a field experience at one of our nature preserves. These field trips take place in the fall, which allows students to see the prairie at the end of the season, when the grasses are tall and the insects large. Being engaged as Citizen Scientists leaves a big impression on students, as can be seen in the thank you letters students wrote after their experience.

In all, we hosted 570 students. This was made possible through the combined efforts of D220 personnel, chaperones, and over 330 hours from 35 of our own volunteers. Many thanks to all who make this program possible year after year. Special thanks to Edith Aughter and District 220 Director of Elementary Curriculum & Instruction Becky Gill in bringing this program to life.

— Julia Martinez



Students were treated to very showy yellow garden spiders. These are large spiders commonly seen in prairies in the fall. Many students made reference to the spiders in their thank you letters.



# 2024 Fall Plant Sale Recap

Teamwork, organization, and many hands helped to ensure a successful Fall Plant Sale! Mother Nature definitely didn't coordinate on Saturday, but the cool rain made for very happy plants.

In all, we had 94 orders totaling \$15,700 in sales. More importantly, we added many new native plants to enjoy for ourselves and the environment and educated many more property owners on the importance of working with nature.

Thanks to Susan for making the decision to keep all the paperwork inside the barn; I still recall the year we ended up with shreds of unreadable paper at the end of the sale.

Thanks to all the volunteers who sorted the plants and loaded them in the vehicles. This was all done with smiles on our faces. Thanks to Matt, Dave, Amanda, Susan, and the office for the countless hours behind the scenes. It is a challenge to coordinate the various nursery suppliers and their inventories and then match up the plants to the various sales orders. Despite the challenge, we look forward to the next opportunity to support nature in home gardens.

— Charlie Keppel



The rainy weather didn't put a damper on the volunteers' spirits. Photo by Charlie Keppel.

## Introduction

Please join us in welcoming our new Restoration Program Manager, Megan Hart.

## Megan Hart



Hello everyone! My name is Megan Hart. I am a recent graduate from UW-Madison, with a degree in Forest Science and a certificate in Life Sciences Communication. Volunteering, working, and studying in the environmental field for about six years now has fueled my passion

for this work, and I cannot see a better fit for me than CFC. I am truly honored to be working with this community of nature-minded folks and hope to build on that legacy throughout my time here. Please come out to a workday or stop in the office to say hi, I would love to meet you all!



Volunteers sort plant orders. Photo by Charlie Keppel.



## Intern Reflections

### Catie Stumpf

Over the course of these past 10 weeks, I have had the privilege of working through one of the most educational, hands-on internships offered to me by CFC. With the help of every employee and volunteer on CFC's team, I have gained new knowledge and experience through species monitoring, conducted studies, planting, and many other valuable activities. Notably, I thank the incredibly supportive and intelligent Luke Dahlberg for instructing us on species' classification, transplanting and propagation techniques, and a multitude of instructional demonstrations. Through this work, I have learned how to identify native and non-native species, methods of invasive plant control, and ecosystem management practices. This range of hands-on learning has taught me about so many different pathways in conservation. From stream assessments to landscape architecture, this internship has introduced me to so many different fields of study and the significant, inspiring people within it. Working firsthand through these fields has widened the range of my abilities and knowledge of potential pathways for my professional future.

Finally, I would like to attribute a lot of my learning to my fellow hard-working and compassionate interns. Working together as a team, we overcame challenges, motivated one another through hard times, and found solutions through collaboration and compromise. Being a part of CFC's team has not only taught me the importance of protecting remnant and repurposed preserves, but the indispensable value of teamwork that it takes to do so. Thank you to Citizens for Conservation and the Oberweiler Foundation for making this opportunity possible!

### Jenna Sorenson

In receiving this internship opportunity from Citizens for Conservation, I never could have predicted the amazing people I would meet and the knowledge

I would acquire over the course of this summer! I had such an amazing time participating in things like: birdbox monitoring, bumblebee monitoring, stream assessments while identifying mussel species, and so much more, as well as learning from those who taught us. Our everyday tasks like seed collecting, planting sedges or milkweed in the floodplain, removing invasive species, cleaning seeds, or other small projects taught me so much about environmental conservation that has strengthened my Environmental Studies major.

What continued to fuel my passion throughout this internship were the phenomenal stewards, volunteers, and other employees who work for CFC because you can tell how dedicated they are to their work and the environment. It was also enlightening to see multiple job paths within the realm of conservation work that broadened my career horizons for the future!

Every day was a rewarding day for me; whether it was patting myself on the back for getting to work on time or celebrating with my fellow interns about how many flats we planted, I always looked forward to heading to work each day. The team dynamic that was created between our leader, Luke Dahlberg, and the rest of us interns was so inviting and nurturing. I was always excited to ask questions, hear his extensive knowledge of birds, or suffer through one of his many puns.

My favorite parts of this internship were all of the times we were able to bring humor into the workplace.

Whether it was doing a 5-minute meditation after planting, watching Katia fall over with the wheelbarrow, seeing Catie sprint away from a wasp, or trying to keep up with Luke (he walks at the speed of light), working with these individuals made each day so much fun. I feel so lucky to have met them and be able to work with them throughout this summer! I am so thankful for each and every one of them, as well as the volunteers, stewards, and others who helped us through this journey. A sincere thank you to Allison Frederick and the Oberweiler Foundation for this experience!



*Interns participated in stream assessments this summer.  
Photo by Tom Burke.*

# Katia Horn

I have lived in Barrington for the majority of my life and had not heard of Citizens for Conservation. I saw a posting on Facebook that they were accepting applications for this summer's interns. I fell in love with Citizens for Conservation from my first day.

The community is extraordinarily welcoming; everyone shares a passion for the environment. This internship has proven that I want to discover more sustainable ways to restore damaged lands using natural resources. Working with CFC throughout the summer has shown me how large an impact just a few people can make. After spending lots of time in nature, whether we were planting, collecting seeds, or learning, I felt at home. This experience is something I wish everyone could have.

In addition, I hope that others can have a more complex understanding of the connection between the land and ourselves; this is only one thing I have gained during my time at CFC. Citizens for Conservation opens others' eyes to the beauty of wildlife, the importance of native species, and biodiversity. These are not only necessary to support ecosystems but also to save us and our planet.

— CFC Interns

## Restoration Report The Mammals

The last quarterly newsletter discussed the birds of CFC's preserves. In this two part report I am going to summarize the mammals I have seen, discuss what may exist, and finally I'll make some recommendations about how we can move forward. My sole source for the list of mammals that may be here is *The Fieldbook of Illinois Mammals*, first published in 1957 by Donald F. Hoffmeister and Carl O. Mohr, and still considered an authoritative guide on the subject.

The first mammal in the Fieldbook list illustrates the difficulty of really knowing about the mammals on our preserves given our human habits—the Virginia opossum is fairly common in the Chicago area and yet I have never seen it on any of our preserves. This animal is highly nocturnal and I spend very little time at our preserves after it turns dark. Another mammal that supposedly lives in our area is the Eastern mole. The mole spends almost its entire life digging underground—does it live at our preserves? I do not know; in 2022 I saw a network of what appeared to be animal burrows at the Golden Triangle of Flint Creek Savannah—were those made by moles? The

mounds were not there this spring. This observation really made me think about the practicality of nature preservation in a highly urbanized place like Chicagoland. Does a digging animal like a mole survive a hundred years of plowing, tilling and harvesting? Or does it get wiped out? If it does get extirpated, can it repopulate?



*While the Virginia opossum is common to the Chicagoland area, it is not common to see on our preserves. Photo by Steve Barten.*



*Moles would be right at home on our preserves, but do they live there? Photo by Steve Barten.*

The next obscure group of mammals in our area are the shrews. There are three species of shrews in Chicagoland; we have twice seen the most common of the three, the short-tailed shrew, at Grigsby Prairie. There are said to be ten to twenty shrews per acre in an Illinois woodland—fewer in a grassy area. We have also seen masked shrews at both Grigsby and Flint Creek South. This animal is less common than its short-tailed brethren and likes wetter habitats. The final member of this family is the least shrew, which is supposedly fairly common in Illinois. No one has ever reported seeing one on any of our properties—of course, very few people would have even known it if they saw it so we have to concede our ignorance. Does it live there? Should it?



We were equally ignorant about another order of mammals—the bats - until a chance sighting and then some help from technology. No one at CFC had ever attempted to identify any bat, though we surely saw some flying overhead in the evening. We knew that the big brown bat was the most common bat in Illinois, so we assumed that was the type flying overhead. About ten years ago, my brother Tom and I saw a bat in the late afternoon at Baker’s Lake that was acting unusual. It was flying well before dark and in a direct line so we were able to focus our binoculars on it - to our surprise it was a ruddy color. After checking our field guides, we determined that based on its coloration and behavior it was an Eastern red bat. CFC had finally identified a bat species! The field guide also confirmed that red bats are more likely to fly while it is still light out in the evening.

Our knowledge of bats soared when we purchased a computer application developed by some genius mammal-watching geek, that could identify bats by analyzing the frequency of their echolocation squeaks! That summer, Tom, my sister-in-law Gail and I would sit and enjoy the sunset from their balcony. We had noticed that bats would appear at the same time each evening and follow the same routine—a smaller species would appear first, right before sundown, and a larger one would arrive at dusk. We assumed the smaller bat was the little brown myotis and the larger the big brown bat since they were the two species we had heard of. Well, the new technology rocked our world! I’ll never forget the excitement in Tom’s voice as he exclaimed “It’s a silver-haired bat!” as the first bat flew from its oak grove and wheeled above the prairie. Soon after, the second type appeared and the computer confirmed the presence of the big brown bat. Again, we checked our field guides and the behaviors were confirmed; silver-haired bats roost in the bark of oak trees but hunt their preferred prey of mosquitos in the open. They could reach the insect-rich prairie first because they did not have to fly from a far away hollow tree like the big brown bat.

Next, we tried our new toy at Flint Creek Savanna during our “Creatures of the Night” summer moth watch led by Rich (the “Moth Man”) Teper. First, Tom and Gail spotted a tiny bat hovering erratically over Flint Creek in Hospital Grove. The bat app scored again! It flashed “little brown myotis.” A later check of the field guides confirmed that this species of bat likes to feed on large aquatic insects. Rich Teper was very excited that night when he found a Dobsonfly in his black light. That insect signified improvement in the water quality at Flint Creek because its aquatic larvae cannot tolerate too much pollution. The little brown myotis is a species of concern in the Chicago Wilderness, because of its indirect dependence on clear water. We had gone from total ignorance about local bats to four confirmed species in a few months,

but the excitement did not end there—as we walked from Hospital Grove a huge bat flew squeaking overhead and the screen shouted “hoary bat.” A quick look at the field guide confirmed that the hoary bat is the only American bat whose squeaks are audible to the human ear. The size was also distinctive—the big brown bat is the size of a tree swallow, while a hoary bat is as big as a purple martin.

Despite the other sightings, CFC has never identified the Northern myotis, which is very hard to distinguish from its close relative the little brown myotis, or the evening bat, which is the final bat species native to Northern Illinois, and is considered rare north of Urbana. I attended a bat program at the 2023 Wild Things Conference, where researchers presented a study on bat populations and confirmed that the big brown bat is by far the most common bat in the Chicago Wilderness area, making up about 80% of the total number found. In response to a question from the audience whether land managers should be doing anything to improve habitat for bats, the expert stated bats respond well to restoration management. He also urged managers not to remove snags, or standing dead trees, unless safety requires.

If shrews and bats are the least known orders of mammals, carnivores are probably the most familiar - and they will be the subject of Part 2 of this series.

— Jim Vanderpoel  
Edited by Bird Hoggren



*Big Brown Bat. Photo by Steve Barten.*

# CFC Participates in Barrington Hills Fall Festival 2023

Sunday, September 17, 2023, CFC participated in the 11th annual Fall Festival in Barrington Hills.

Events like this draw many members of the community, giving CFC the opportunity to connect and reconnect with our neighbors. The event was moved indoors due to the weather, but the rain clouds didn't discourage hundreds of people from visiting the event.

Several volunteers donated their time to represent CFC at this event. Karen Daulton Lange, the new FCSCWP coordinator, attended the event along with Edith Auchter, Victoria Self, and Julia Martinez. Attendees took the opportunity to ask questions regarding wildlife in their home gardens, plans for Hill 'n Dale, and the general mission of CFC. We invited children to make bookmarks using repurposed materials and ink stamps and to look at insect specimens.

— *Julia Martinez*



*Board member Edith Auchter answering questions from the community. Photo by Julia Martinez.*



*CFC took the opportunity to introduce itself to a wide range of the Barrington Hills community. Photo by Julia Martinez.*

## Upcoming Events

**Ongoing Thursdays and Saturdays –  
Restoration Workdays 9–11 a.m.**

### **Community Education**

January 13 – Hill 'n Dale restoration plans  
February 10 – The dark side of nature  
March 9 – Caring for our native oaks  
April 13 – Bumblebees of Barrington

### **Annual Meeting**

March 14, 2024

### **Spring Plant Sale**

May 3–5 – Native Plant Sale

### **Ignite the Night! Save the date!**

September 21, 2024

Join us for an evening of music, dinner, wagon rides, and more!





# CFC PURPLE MARTIN HOUSE PARTY



SAVE THE DATE

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 30  
5-8 PM**



**WILD ONION BREWERY  
2221 N. PEPPER RD.  
LAKE BARRINGTON, IL**

**CASH BAR AND FOOD SERVICE  
NO ENTRANCE FEE**

## Our Purple Martin population is growing and needs new houses!

Join us for a fun, bird-friendly social event that also supports a vital cause.

Purple Martins are completely dependent on human-created nesting structures. We are thrilled that our CFC-maintained Purple Martin houses are fully-occupied each season.

To help us purchase the materials for two new houses, we will be holding a silent auction and raffle. You can bid on original artwork and handmade bird-themed items or sponsor a Purple Martin "condo".

## SPONSORED BY CITIZENS FOR CONSERVATION



By helping to control insect populations, Purple Martins are important ecosystem contributors. Citizens for Conservation (CFC) is a local organization that has been supporting our Native Purple Martin population for more than five years. Learn more at [www.citizensforconservation.org](http://www.citizensforconservation.org)

# President's Report

On Thursday, September 21st, I attended the Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce Women's Biz Net luncheon as one of four honorees for their 2023 Outstanding Women Leaders. It was a beautiful and delicious luncheon, and an event so well run by emcee Suzanne Corr, President and CEO of BACC. Thank you again, Suzanne, and congratulations to Michelle Streit, Dori Squires-Hough and Dr. Avis Proctor for receiving your OWL Awards.

As President of CFC, I was honored to receive the award for Nonprofit Leadership, but I was most especially honored that it was my association with CFC that was recognized. Since I joined the Board in 2018, we have worked to focus our efforts by updating management plans for our properties by taking advantage of new techniques and equipment to allow for better property management; celebrating our 50th Anniversary while imagining the next 50 years; developing a strategic plan and corresponding implementation plan for our next five years, which led us to welcoming Allison Frederick as

our Administrative Director; all while acquiring several properties, including that Big One in 2022! Whew!

This on top of everything CFC does on a day-to-day basis. Clearly, all of those accomplishments are not done by any one individual, but rather through the tireless efforts of CFC's Board and staff, volunteers, members, and donors who have worked together over five decades toward the restoration of our native environment, whose work we continue to build on with our collaborative partnerships, both old and new. Congratulations CFC!

— Kathleen Leitner



Kathleen Leitner was formally recognized for her leadership this fall. Photo compliments of Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce.

## CitizensForConservation.org

To learn about membership benefits and volunteer opportunities call 847-382-SAVE.

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*Saving Living Space for Living Things*