BRIEFS

Turkey hunt deadline
Friday is the deadline to apply for permits for the 2018 Illinois spring wild turkey hunting season. Visit the HMSD website for more information. Illinois.gov/huntfishing.aspx.

Hunt education
Successful completion of a hunter safety education course is required by Illinois law for any one born after Dec. 31, 1979 before they can be issued a state hunting license. Classes will be offered at the Will County Sportsman’s Club, 4000 County Line Road, Kankakee, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Feb. 24 and 25. To register, call 815-458-3306. Classes will also be offered those Aug. 11 and 12. Classes will be offered at Calvary Baptist Church, Morris, from 6 to 8 p.m. March 17 and 18, and 6 p.m. March 20. Call 815-440-7568. Classes will also be offered from 6 to 9 p.m. April 7 and 8, and 6:30 to 9 p.m. March 17 at CAFES, 923 N. Lake Chautauqua. Call 815-440-3500.

Trapping education
An Illinois Department of Natural Resources sponsored trapping education course will be offered from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. March 17 at the University of Illinois Teaching Center, 830 S. Matthiessen Ave., Champaign. To register, call 815-289-0200.

Midewin Hotshots
A program about the Midewin Interagency Hotshot Crew will be presented by Midewin Hotshot Joe Peterson, the midwest’s largest hotshot crew comprised of fire fighters, foresters and natural resource specialists. The program is sponsored by the Midewin Conservancy and is open to all ages. The event will be held from noon to 4 p.m. March 17 at the Chicago Program for Midewin, 105 W. Main St., Channahon. For information, call 815-937-3369 or email themer@daily-journal.com.

WILDLIFE

American tree sparrow: watch for treeless flocks
By ROBERT THEMER

Visitors from the far north, where their breeding range stretches across northern Canada and Alaska, the American tree sparrow enjoys the accommodations in John Baxter’s yard in Howell’s Fond

"I am looking forward to spending a week in the outdoors, watching the birds and observing nature. If you have any suggestions or if you see something interesting, please let me know," Baxter said.

Spring life is hiding just under snow
By ROBERT THEMER

As you are reading this, who knows what the weather may be doing your lower back from under snow. "I am not sure what will happen to some of the species, but the snow will certainly keep them hidden until the spring," she said.

American tree sparrow

An American tree sparrow visits John Baxter’s bird feeder in Bourbonnais.

BY ROBERT THEMER

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midewin.edu.

John Baxter, a local bird enthusiast, has been a big fan of the American tree sparrow. "I have been watching these birds in our yard for years, and they are always a treat to see," he said.

The American tree sparrow is a small bird, about 5½ inches long, with a white or gray belly and a black cap. They are often seen in flocks of several hundred to over a thousand birds, especially in open fields or farmlands.

They are mostly found in North America, but they can be found in Europe and Asia as well. Their diet consists of seeds, insects, and nectar. They are known for their preference for nesting in mid-story vegetation, making them a common sight in suburban areas.

The American tree sparrow is a migratory species, spending the winter months in the southern United States and Mexico.

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