

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

May 2018



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday



Spring is here at CSBBS!

by Julie Dorfman and Jerry Herst

It's been a very busy "behind the scenes" winter for the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary! Design work for the next phase of CSBBS regeneration is underway, as is development of more formalized policies and procedures to streamline our tasks. We have received major donations from friends of Missy Hedges, and an additional donation in memory of Carolyn Smith and Millie and Don Funk, long time members of ENSBC (see p. 2 for remembrances of Carolyn and the Funks).

Our Landscape architect, Ryan Kettlekamp, is currently working on plant selection and design for both 2018 and 2019 plantings, focusing on shrubs and flowers/forbs that will especially attract both birds and pollinators. This winter Marcia Weflen researched soil testing. She and Heidi Levin dug multiple soil samples and sent them to a commercial lab for testing. The results are helping Ryan select plants that should thrive in our sandy soil. In December several of us also spread seed gathered at CSBBS on a snowy cold beach. Thanks to all who participated.

Suzanne Checchia has set up a bird monitoring program for spring migration. We have a team of monitors to cover each morning of the week. Sightings are posted on eBird at the Evanston IL Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary hotspot.

Tim Tobin, Libby Hill, and Jerry Herst have worked on a detailed spreadsheet of the plants in the sanctuary, which we can use for our own education and tours. We anticipate several special "planting days" and look forward to some new volunteer groups coming to help us. As we will be doing significant preparation in some areas, our weeding routine will be adjusted a bit.

And...we now have a Steering Committee, as well as a website clarkstreetbeachbirdsantuary.org (still a work in progress). Many thanks to Joan Linsenmeier, David Pelzer, Heidi Levin, Tim Tobin and Jerry Herst for all of their work in making it happen. Lots more to come. Stay tuned!



Happy Birthday ENSBC!
The Club will be 100 years old on March 6, 2018!

Give us your input on how to **commemorate** this significant milestone. **Share** your ideas. **Join** the anniversary task force. To help **plan** this important celebration, contact Gerry Ginsburg at gnginsburg@sbcglobal.net

In Memoriam Gift

A generous gift was made to the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary by a long-time friend of Carolyn Smith and Millie and Don Funk, to celebrate their lives and honor their memories. The gift will go towards the purchase of new plants as well as to cover some operational overhead. Carolyn, Millie and Don are remembered as follows:



Carolyn Smith was a long-time resident of Evanston. She was passionate about Evanston's beauty and its livability. She loved every plant and living creature and created a beautiful garden in her front and back yards to welcome wildlife, long before anyone else did. Neighbors and strangers alike would stop by her garden to admire her plantings, and many would leave with a gift of a seedling, or two...or twelve! Flower petals and dried leaves of all kind would make their way into her house as decorative elements. Birds were at home in her backyard, as well as all kinds of pollinators and critters; one year, Monarch butterflies by the hundreds took refuge in her yard, covering an entire tree and turning it orange through the color of their wings.

Millie and Don Funk grew up in IL and settled in Evanston where they were long-time residents, and highly supportive of the Evanston and Northwestern communities. Millie earned her Ph.D. at Northwestern University with her research dedicated to the study of animal cognition, particularly the study of birds. Millie and Don traveled extensively for professional conferences related to birds, as well as to see birds in their natural habitat. Don enjoyed gardening and the natural world. Throughout the years, he maintained his garden with great love and care. In retirement he volunteered at the Chicago Botanic Garden and became a certified University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener.



Leucistic Robins Sighted This Spring

We don't know much about how this happens, but it is the result of mutations that lead to imperfect production of the typical plumage. This illustrates how complex the genetic architecture can be because of how seemingly haphazard the lack of color disposition can be in the patches on these birds. They aren't particularly uncommon in nature, but these mutations may not be easily passed on. If they are passed on, they aren't likely to proliferate (either because individuals stand out and are picked out by predators or because such individuals are not preferred by mates). Obviously, one thing the leucism does for birders is give us the opportunity to assess when and whether an individual is hanging around or not.



Photo and comments by John Bates

To learn more , go to [Evanston RoundTable](#)
for Libby Hill's article

The following were elected April 24th as Directors of the ENSBC Board for 2018-19:

<i>President</i>	Gerry Ginsburg	<i>Membership Chair</i>	Kathy Stohrer
<i>Vice President</i>	Jim LaRochelle	<i>Conservation Chair</i>	Suzanne Checchia
<i>Treasurer</i>	John Hockman	<i>Field Trip Chair</i>	Libby Hill
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	Nancy Halliday	<i>Assistant Field Trip Chair</i>	Mark Vaughan
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	Nancy Halliday	<i>Bird Calls Editor</i>	Marj Lundy
<i>Program Chair</i>	Libby Hill	<i>Archivist</i>	Sarah Miller

**Join us for these May Field Trips to witness
this year's spring migration.**

*Yellow Warbler
by Mark Vaughan*



Perkins Woods -- Thursdays May 3, 10 and 17:

7:30 a.m. at the corner of Ewing and Grant. Park along Ewing Avenue.

Skokie Lagoons -- Fridays in May:

7:30 a.m. at Erickson Woods Forest Preserve parking lot, just east of Edens and north of Willow.

Northwestern University Campus -- Saturdays, May 5, 12 and 19:

8:30 a.m. Park on the lake side of the south parking lot, upper deck.

Gillson Park -- Sundays in May

8 a.m. at the top of Wallace Bowl amphitheater. Sponsored by our partners Go Green Wilmette.

The Grove -- Wednesday, May 9:

8:00 a.m. (the Grove is on east side of Milwaukee, just south of Lake), in the second parking lot that leads to the Interpretive Center.

Jackson Park and Lakefront, Wooded Isle -- Sunday, May 13:

7:00 a.m. in the parking lot south of the Museum of Science and Industry.

Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary -- Tuesdays, May 8 and 15:

8:30 a.m. by handicapped parking at the entrance to the sanctuary on W. Montrose Harbor Drive.

And you won't want to miss...

Willow Slough and Kankakee Sands, Indiana -- Sunday, May 20:

Near Morocco, Indiana, this 8,000-acre prairie and wetland restoration was originally part of the 500,000-acre Grand Marsh of the Kankakee River. The site is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy, which describes it as a "birders paradise" with over 200 species recorded since restoration began in 2001. Last year we spotted 62 different species on the trip. The destination is a two-hour drive from Evanston and carpooling is recommended and may be arranged through the trip leader. Details TBA. RSVP to Leader: Mark Vaughan, markvaughan60201@gmail.com.

Further details on all trips at www.ensbc.org.

And Now, a Word about Sparrows....

As the late comedian, Rodney Dangerfield used to say, "I don't get no respect." Likewise, sparrows face such disrespectful comments as "it is only a sparrow," or worse, they are described as "LBJs" or Little Brown Jobs.

Thus, began my project. During an Illinois Master Naturalist training session at the Field Museum of Natural History, conservation ecologist Tatzana Wachter mentioned the Field Rapid Color Guides, produced and offered free online by the Museum. The wheels started turning in my head: why not produce a color guide for sparrows?

After a bit of background research in the various bird guides, I identified 19 sparrows that reside in or traverse the Chicago region. Some are common year-round residents, many nest/breed here, while others migrate through with the seasons.

The next step was to search my photographic archives. I had quite a few shots which met my criteria. Some photos were not readily available, so I looked at my travel plans and seasonal bird locations. Quickly I could snap shots of the American Tree, Vesper and Swamp Sparrows. Still missing a few images, I received help from Jaculin Bowman at Naturesjoyphotography.com, Matthew A. Young, collection management leader from the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and my friend, Chuck Tuttle, a fellow bird "nut."

Next, captions and labels. The first task was to define "common" and "uncommon." *Common* (labeled in black)

was used for sparrows routinely observed year-round or

seen frequently during seasonal migrations. *Uncommon*

(labeled in red) are birds rarely observed during the calendar year or seen briefly during migration. The three



White-throated Sparrow

Article and photo by Mark Vaughan

major reference guides weighed in on these determinations.

And now a word about House Sparrows: a species in the finch not the sparrow family. They are non-native, invasive and not protected by migratory bird safeguards. On the positive side, they eat prodigious amounts of harmful insects and weed seeds. On the negative, they are very aggressive, they out-compete native birds for food and nesting sites, and can be killers of less aggressive species like bluebirds and chickadees.

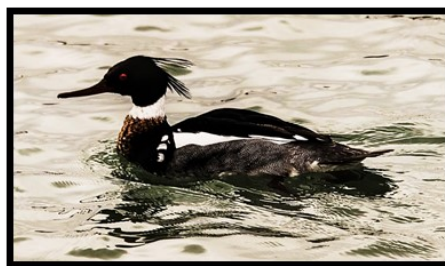
And Kudos to Mark...

This was Field Museum's most frequently downloaded field guide last year. 4,000 times!

To help identify those "LBJs" visit <http://fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org/guides/guide/881>.

Red-breasted Merganser

by Lloyd Davidson



Bird Calls is a publication of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club.

Send ideas, comments, photos to Editor Marj Lundy, catbird3@comcast.net.